Chapter 1

Introduction

1. Motivation
Without exception all Uralic languages have been in contact with Russian. Some, like Hungarian, Livonian and the southern and northern dialects of Saami, have had relatively little contact; others, like the Volgaic and Permic languages, have experienced strong Russian influence for many centuries. For most of the Uralic languages there are also monographs or longer articles dealing with the Russian loanwords of the literary or spoken language.1 Estonian, however, which has been in direct contact with East Slavic and Russian for over a thousand years, and had been part of the Soviet Union for some 50 years, has no such monograph2, a fact, which has been repeatedly bemoaned in the literature.3 The present work

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1 Cf. e.g. Csűcs 1970-72 (Udmurt), Haarmann 1984 (Ingrian), Kalima 1911 (Komi), Kálmán 1961 (Mansi), Krawczykiewicz 1972 (Veps), Plöger 1973 (Finnish), Savatko 1969 (Mari), Stipa 1949 (Moksha-Mordvin) and Winkler 2002 (Livonian).
2 MUST 2000 (based on her 1954 dissertation) deals with the Russian loanwords in Estonian dialects. Of her more than 2000 loans only some 480 are found in the various sources of the written language. As MUST based her work on the dialect collection of the Institute of the Estonian Language many Russian loans from printed sources, even if only dialectal, are not recorded in it.
3 Im übrigen halte ich es sowieso für sehr erwünscht, daß wenigstens den russischen Lehnmörtern des Estnischen noch eine eigene gründliche Untersuchung zuteil wird.’ (Kalima 1956, VII); ‘I detta sammanhang skulle jag isynnerhet vilja fästa uppmärksamheten på den bristfälliga behandlingen av det estniska ordförrådet i Mikkolas BWS (= Mikkola 1894; RB) och särskilt i ÅB (=Mikkola 1938; RB), vilket har påpekats bl.a. även av Vasmer l.c. 449-450.’ (Mägieste 1962, 6); ‘Även de nyare och nyaste länord måste bli systematiskt granskade i alla östersjöf. språk, ty därifrån kan man hämta betydligt mer lärdomar för forskningen på de äldre länordens område än man hittills med tillfälliga stickprov har kunnat göra.’ (Mägieste 1962, 64); ‘Es ist Mägieste (Mägieste 1962; RB) gelungen, in dem schön gerodeten Garten der ostseefinnisch-slavischen Lehnbibliographien an einer von den alten Gärtnern übersehenen Stelle noch ein schönes Blumenbeet anzulegen, das in den Gesamtplan des Gartens bestens hineinpaßt. Aber mit dem Jäten darf man auch jetzt nicht aufhören! (Kiparsky 1965, 434); ‘Russismid eesti keelles vääriksid omaette uurimist, võib-olla mitutki.’ (‘The Russianisms in Estonian merit a separate study, perhaps several’) (Liivaku 1972, 60); ‘Es gibt außerdem eine “fast unübersehbare Fülle später
aims to fill this void for literary Estonian, and, with the aid of an enumeration thus obtained, answer a central question: what do the Russian loanwords in Estonian tell us about Russian-Estonian contacts over time?

The words ‘Russian’, ‘loanwords’ and ‘literary Estonian’ in the title are all problematical terms that need to be defined. We will define them, however, in another order.

a) ‘Russian’

In our case ‘Russian’ is a term encompassing Proto-East Slavic, Old Russian and Modern Russian: it is difficult to (chronologically) delineate the border between the various stages between East Slavic and present-day Russian (KIPARSKY 1963, 17-18; FILIN 1972, 3; ISSATSCHENKO 1980, 45).4 Many Slavists nowadays prefer to speak of East Slavic and then of Russian, Ukrainian and Byelorussian, without a link usually called Old Russian (ISSATSCHENKO 1980, 45; SCHENKER 1995, 74). There is no agreement as to when East Slavic

4 As there has not been any early contact between West or South Slavs and Estonians (PŁOGER 1973, 258-262; HAJDÚ - DOMOKOS 1987, 289), contrary to the claims made by some linguists (ŠAHMATOV 1915, 101-103; SETĀLĀ 1932, 42-43; KALIMA 1956, 44), any Slavic loanwords in literary Estonian are most likely to be of East Slavic origin. In southern Estonian dialects, especially the Leivu and Lutsi dialect islands in eastern Latvia, there are some newer Polish loanwords, though these are often difficult to distinguish from Russian or Byelorussian ones (ARISTE 1965, 24; cf. also MOORA 1964, 61). There are of course some South and West Slavic words in literary Estonian: words denoting the national currencies of Slavic nations and the like, but these will not be treated here. The non-Russian Slavic elements in Estonian can be divided into three categories: words of Byelorussian, Ukrainian or Polish origin which have been borrowed via Russian; Russian words which have been borrowed via some local language of the Baltic area, such as Finnish, Latvian or Baltic German, and words which have been borrowed via western European languages from West or South Slavic. Words of the first category are deemed Russian loanwords and are treated as such in the corpus; the others are not and are ignored. Examples of the first category are ksjonds ‘Polish priest’ < Russ. ксёндз < Pol. ksiądz, of the second troska ‘drosky’ < BG Троска (cf. HINDERLING 1981, 28) and of the third e.g. понор ‘swallow-hole’ < Serb. понор ‘id.’.
(ES) broke up into Russian, Byelorussian and Ukrainian or whether ES even existed or not.\(^5\) Linguists (ČERNYH 1954, 9-10; ISSATSCHENKO 1980, 45; VLASTO 1986, 3) tend to place the break-up of ES in the 13\(^{th}\)/14\(^{th}\) century, after the sack of Kiev by the Mongolians (1240), though texts older than this can be found which already show typical Ukrainian features (KIPARSKY 1963, 17). It is unlikely that literary Estonian would have had any contacts with the other two members of East Slavic, Ukrainian and Byelorussian.\(^6\)

b) ‘Literary Estonian’

Estonian belongs to the southern branch of the Finnic\(^7\) languages (northern branch: Finnish, Karelian, Veps, Ingrian; southern branch: Livonian, Estonian, Votic\(^8\)), which constitute a separate branch of the Finno-Ugric languages, which in turn together with the Samoyed languages make up the Uralic language family. The two major dialects of Estonian, North Estonian (on which the present-day literary language is based) and South Estonian, are dissimilar enough to have been considered two separate languages.

Estonian is spoken in Estonia and in the area of the Russian Federation adjacent to the south-eastern border of Estonia. In 2003 Estonia had 1.356 million inhabitants, of whom 68.4% were Estonian-speaking, 25.8% Russian-speaking, with others making up the remaining 5.8% (cf. www.stat.ee). Other groups of Estonian-speakers can be found all over the world, especially in Sweden, the United States, Canada and Australia. All told there are about 1.1 million Estonians world-wide (KULU 1992, 154).

‘Literary Estonian’ is deemed to be the written language, as codified by new dictionaries and grammars (e.g. EKSS; ŌS 1999; EKG I-II).

\(^5\) In Russian there are marginal north-western dialects which are characterized by the absence of the second palatalization of velars (cf. e.g. CARLTON 1991, 120-126), and as this palatalization took place in Common Slavic there cannot have been a homogeneous ES, according to VERMEER (1997, 24).

\(^6\) Specific Byelorussian origin, though very likely for certain words occurring in the Lutsu and Leivu sub-dialects of South Estonian (ARISTE 1975, 27), was suggested for common Finnic words by MIKKOLA (1894, 46), but disproved by KALIMA (1952, 39-43, 194). LOORITS (1932, 29; 1955, 30-32; 1958, 134) suggests Byelorussian origin for certain South Estonian words and calques; ERENBERG (1934, 105) claims that there are Byelorussian elements in the Russian spoken by the poluverniks (Lutheran Russians) in north-eastern Estonia.

\(^7\) ‘Finnic’ seems preferable to Balto-Finnic or Baltic Finnic, as it will not cause confusion with the Baltic languages and is used in the newest English-language literature (e.g. in LAAKSO 2000).

\(^8\) The north-south division is not the only one (cf. ITKONEN 1980, LAANEST 1982, 26-29, WIJK 1996, SALMINEN 1998), but for our purposes it suffices.
1525 is a date often given as the inception of written Estonian, though in fact there is no extant printed work from that time: in that year in Lübeck a barrel with, amongst others\(^9\), an Estonian book (or books) was confiscated (JOHANSEN 1959). These books were probably burnt as heretical Lutheran\(^10\) works (MÄGISTE 1970, 47-51). Thus though none of these books are in fact extant anymore 1525 is often given as the start of written Estonian.\(^11\)

The first extant written (not printed) text in North Estonian dates from a period between 1524 and 1532: these are the so-called Kullamaa prayers, which consisted of North Estonian translations of the Lord’s Prayer, Ave Maria and Credo. It was found in Tallinn in 1923 in a 144-page register of socage holdings.

The first work written in South Estonian is the *Cathechismus Herrn D. Martini Lutheri* from 1632 by J. ROSSHNIUS. From then on two (literary) languages, one based on North Estonian, the other on South Estonian, existed (reinforced by the administrative division of the Estonian-speaking area into Estonia and Livonia) alongside each other. In 1686 A. VIRGINIUS published a South Estonian translation of the New Testament\(^12\), with which South Estonian became the leading literary language. The New Testament in North Estonian appeared in 1715, the complete Bible in 1739. The battle between the two main dialects did not cease until the late 19th century (RAAG 1999, 40-42) and North Estonian, on which the present-day written language is based, did not attain its final victory until 1857, when the newspaper *Tallorahwa postimees*, written in North Estonian, was founded in Tartu, a traditional South Estonian area. Radical changes in the written language were still being fought over in the 1930s and it was not until 1945, when ELMAR MUUK’s new orthographical dictionary appeared, that the language question finally subsided.

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\(^9\) Whether *livonica* in the text found by JOHANSEN refers to the Livonian language or to perhaps Low German as spoken in Livonia (cf. BIEZAIS 1973, 25-31) is unsure.

\(^10\) These non-extant books are generally thought to be Lutheran (MÄGISTE 1970, 47; PAUL 1999, 155-156; AARMA 2001, 307-319), but it has been suggested that they may have been Catholic (PÖLTSAM 2000, 13-19).

\(^11\) Single Estonian words are already found in the *Henrici Chronicon Livonie* (1224-1227) and other Latin texts from around 1490 and 1510 (VTS 23-27).

\(^12\) Due to a misunderstanding this New Testament in South Estonian is very rare (there are about 10 left of the print run of 800; PAUL 1999, 330-331): because the (North Estonian) New Testament in preparation was being translated from the Greek and not from LUTHER’S German, CHARLES XI, the Swedish king, was persuaded in 1691 by intriguants to have its publication stopped. The king’s chancellery, however, mistook the South Estonian New Testament for a non-existent North Estonian one (which was not to appear until 25 years later) and had its dissemination stopped (SALU 1953, 47; PAUL 1999, 378-381; ANNUS 2000, 103-105).
The present work will concentrate on Russian loanwords found in the present-day literary language; i.e. the one based on North Estonian. We will thus consider all texts in North Estonian as belonging to our sphere of interest, from the earliest extant words or texts (*Henrici Chronicon Livonie* from 1224) onwards. Russian loanwords found in South Estonian but not present in the literary language will be viewed as dialecticisms and are not represented.\(^{13}\) South Estonian is slowly being codified again, and some literature has appeared in it. The new written language tries to unite all dialects, but precisely because of this it is rejected by many speakers.

c) ‘Loanwords'\(^{14}\)

There is as yet no generally established definition of the difference between a ‘loanword’ (G. *Lehnwort*) and ‘foreign word/internationalism’ (G. *Fremdwort*). Common definitions say a *Fremdwort*\(^{15}\) has not yet been phonetically, graphemically, or grammatically adapted (Bußmann 2002, 226-227). Borrowed words in both Russian and Finnic are immediately adapted to the morphological structure of the languages, so that there are directly more loanwords than foreign words. Words with foreign morphological suffixes like Engl. *lemma* are not possible.\(^{16}\) The adaptation of a certain word, however, is (usually) a gradational process from a so-called ‘internationalism’ or ‘Fremdwort’, where no assimilation has taken place (an ‘adoption’, cf. Trask 2000, 9) to a loanword which cannot be recognised as such anymore after being adapted. The degree of assimilation does not, however, necessarily correlate positively with frequency; i.e. a non-assimilated adoption may be very common.

I will have to make a distinction, though, and disregard the foreign words in Estonian of obvious international origin for two reasons: one, they do not contribute significantly\(^{17}\) to our knowledge of Estonian-Russian contacts; and two, they would flood the corpus with international words which might have been borrowed into Estonian from either German or Russian, and about which one cannot say from which one they were borrowed: many will have

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\(^{13}\) For these and other Russian loanwords in Estonian dialects cf. Mägiste 1962 and Must 2000.

\(^{14}\) Cf. chapter 3 for loanword typology and identification.

\(^{15}\) The usual English translation ‘foreign word’ is cumbersome and does not seem to be used much.

\(^{16}\) Cf. Miljan (2004, 219-220): ‘Estonian is unique in that in can easily adopt foreign words because of its phonetic spelling merely by phonetizing their spelling and then using Estonian grammar to decline or conjugate them.’

\(^{17}\) The number of foreign words that have entered Estonian through Russian might very well be said to show how pervasive Russian influence was, but then the present work would be no more than a bare list of innumerable words common to many European languages.
been borrowed first from German and later adapted to the Russian word: e.g. the variant 
*harmonie* ‘harmony’ was first noted in 1893, last in 1914; the present form *harmoonia* ‘id.’
since 1925. As the Russian forms of such Greek/Latin words usually end in *-ia* and the
German ones in *-ic*, and older forms show *-ie*, newer ones *-ia*, it seems likely that many of
these have been modified on the model of Russian forms. To draw far-reaching conclusions
concerning Russian-Estonian (linguistic) relations from these words of uncertain origin
would be inexpedient. It is obvious that the older ones (< 1880) have been borrowed from
German, newer (1880-1990) ones from Russian, and the newest ones (1970-) from English
(most through Russian, some directly) with some overlap between the different periods, but it
remains practically impossible for hundreds, if not thousands, of words to say whether they
were borrowed via German or Russian.

In the present work loanwords of obvious Greek, Latin and French origin borrowed via
Russian have been removed from the corpus.\(^{18}\) The great majority of European languages
have borrowed words from these three culturally important languages. English is now
assuming the functions these languages had in the Middle Ages (Greek and Latin as written
languages) and in the 18\(^{th}\)/19\(^{th}\) century (French as the language of diplomacy and
commerce).\(^ {19}\) Words of Central Asian or Caucasian origin loaned via Russian have been

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\(^{18}\) Unless their meaning differs significantly from that in the donor language or the phonetic shape has changed
to a degree that the original is no longer easily recognisable. Therefore e.g. *spionaaž* ‘espionage’ has not been
included (this could well be of German origin too in Estonian), but *tapp* ‘convict transport’ has. ‘Obvious’ and
‘easily recognizable’ are of course relative terms; we assume that people with knowledge of English, French and
German will recognize these words without any problem. Another exception are the Russian loans of Greek
origin pertaining to the Orthodox Church. In eliminating foreign words, i.e. ascertaining their Greek, Latin or
French origin, the latest edition (2000) of the *Võõrsõnade sõnastik* was used. Russian words derived from
proper names are not included if they are used as adjectives only (e.g. SÓS bārkovi [rātas, tōb] ‘Barlov wheel,
disease’ < Russ. Барлов; neither are Russian abbreviations or acronyms used in Estonian such as GOST (ÕS

\(^{19}\) Malkiel (1993, 139) comments succinctly on this problem: ‘Another facet of this difficulty is the painful
decision whether imported, leernèd, exotic, and comparably marginal elements of lexis which are clearly
recognizable as such (…) deserve attention in the etymological dictionary (or loanword monograph; RB) of a
late-twentieth-century language. The problem is by no means new - as a matter of fact, it is traceable, in a
straight line, to Humanism and the Renaissance - but has, of late, been for more acute than before through the
ceaseless influx of thousands upon thousands of scientific neologisms (…). Such lexemes, to be sure, deserve to
be recorded and their rise may justifiably be dated, but this sort of information, to be potentially useful, belongs
in an all-embracing thesaurus of a given language (or in a special compilation of Neo-Hellenic and Neo-Latin
retained, as they reflect the importance of Soviet-Estonian contacts to some degree, regardless of the extent to which they were actually used. Likewise words of non-Russian origin that have been borrowed via Russian have been included if their meaning or form has changed considerably, such as e.g. Est. dress ‘tracksuit’ < Russ. дресс ‘tracksuit’ < Engl. dress, or hunt ‘glassful of brandy’ < Russ. dial. хунт < фунт ‘pound’ < MHG phunt ‘id.’ < Lat. pondō.

This does, however, bring us to the odd situation that some words (e.g. redaktsia ‘Redaktion’; WIEDEMANN 1893) of ultimate western origin, notwithstanding their obvious Russian mediation, were removed from the corpus, and the present work is therefore, regretfully, imbued with an element of randomness and serendipity.