

## **From *Cipollino* to *Happy Ladybug*: Mapping patterns and changes of Estonian kindergarten names**

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This paper aims to analyze naming practices, name grammar and semantics, and changes in the names of Estonian kindergartens based on socio-onomastic, etymological and archival research. Another important facet of our research is to move beyond the traditional focus on the taxonomy and etymology of place names by critically exploring the politics of identity (for details see Rose-Redwood et al. 2009; Vuolteenaho, Berg 2009; Saparov 2017).

Our primary research question: Which are the main kindergarten naming patterns? In our analysis we consider the importance of regional (minority-dense northeastern Estonian, South Estonian language and culture, insular varieties) and urban-rural contexts, national and local identities, and changes in naming practices over time. Material has been collected mainly from the home pages of local municipalities and kindergartens and double-checked with the Estonian education information portal Haridussilm.

A principal change in the naming of kindergartens has taken place in Estonia from the 1980s to 2020s. Before Estonia's reindpendence (1991), urban kindergartens were mostly named by numbers and settlement names, e.g. *8th Day care of Võru* and rural ones only by settlement name, e.g. *Day care of Mõniste*. A rather similar pattern is observed in Latvia (Pošeiko 2014). Most kindergarten names contain a place name (name of a town, village or street) even today, but no numbers.

In the 1980s to 2000s, a new naming approach developed with mostly new independent names given for kindergartens along different thematic clusters. The preferred themes have been characters from children's books (*Sipsik* 'Raggie', *Naksitrallid*, *Krõll*, *Poku*, *Lotte*, *Sinilind* 'The Blue Bird', *Karlsson* etc.) and nature (*Sinilill* 'Hepatica nobilis', *Pääsusilm* 'Primula farinosa', *Sajajalgne* 'Chilopoda' etc.). In addition, there are neologisms-compound words, which may have been created for particular kindergartens, e.g. *Õnne/triinu*, *Kraavi/krõll*, *Männi/mudila* etc. While some cross-country commonality exists, kindergarten names do vary

by regions of Estonia (e.g., Russian (or all-Soviet?) influences in the urban settings of North Estonia).

Name grammar is also investigated, e.g. the role of number categories (singular, plural) and diminutive affixation, use of generics and descriptive adjectives. Name semantics is observed, e.g., the names of national symbols in kindergarten names; the names of role models as group names; translated names from Russian to Estonian, e.g. *Теремок* > *Tareke* 'cottage, cabin.DEM'; *Берёзка* > *Kaseke* 'birch tree.DEM', *Чебурашка* > *Potsataja* 'Cheburashka'. Usually the kindergarten name and names of groups form a series (e.g. kindergarten *Mõmmik* 'bear' has groups *Kaisukarud* 'teddy bears', *Mesikäpp* 'Bruin' (an appellative for bear in fairy tales) etc.). When the kindergarten name and group names do not correlate, then the group names may align thematically. Numbers are rarely used in group names.

## References

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