

## Illustrations of the IPA: the case of Livonian

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Although the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) exists already from the late 19th century, this system has not been used for the Livonian language. Since the first notations of Livonian until nowadays, Livonian has been written down in several ways. The written Livonian language started forming in the middle of the 19th century, when the first comprehensive language studies appeared (see Ernštreits 2013 for details).

Researchers who study or describe Livonian pronunciation, traditionally use the Uralic Phonetic Alphabet (UPA) or Finno-Ugric Phonetic Alphabet (FUPA) to transcribe the spoken language. Finno-Ugric phonetic transcription is used in many important Livonian studies, e.g. Kettunen 1938, Posti 1942, Pajupuu & Viitso 1986, etc. It has been pointed out that it is not possible to automatically convert a UPA transcription into an IPA one. There are numerous small differences that become relevant for a phonetic transcription. For example, UPA does not systematically distinguish approximates from fricatives (*j* may stand for both the palatal approximant (IPA [j]) or the voiced palatal fricative (IPA [j̥])), etc.

There have been very few attempts to present Livonian in IPA. Several questions arise when presenting Livonian pronunciation with IPA symbols, for example, how to refer to the broken tone or *stød* in Livonian. In Danish, for the lack of more appropriate notation a superscript glottal stop symbol [ʔ] is used to notate a similar phenomenon (Grønnum, Vazquez-Larruscain, Basbøll 2013). The same symbol has been proposed for Livonian (e.g. Tuisk 2015). Another problematic issue is how to mark a long low back vowel. These and other aspects concerning IPA for Livonian will be discussed in the presentation. In the nearest future, a complete IPA for Livonian should be compiled. This is probably the best and utmost time to do it. Livonian is no longer used as an everyday language by the native speakers, but is still actively used and studied by non-native speakers, descendants of Livonians and researchers.

### References

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