

Seto translations of The Lord's Prayer

The Orthodox Seto ethnic group living in the South-Eastern corner of Estonia use Estonian and Church Slavonic as liturgical languages. Nevertheless, they have their own translations of the four Gospels, which only exist for the sake of linguistic prestige, and do not serve sacral purposes. Officially, their language is the southeasternmost dialect of Estonian, held to be a variant of the Võro dialect. The Lutheran Võro people do not have any Bible translations. Setos had lived in isolation from the Estonians for a long time, thus their language preserved a number of archaic elements, but it also contains several Russian loans. The first translation of the Gospel was made from Estonian in 1926. The new, revised, 2013 version was based on the Old Greek text. Both translations used the Southern Seto dialect. The Setos want to achieve the autonomous status of their mother tongue.

The current analysis compares the Seto translations of The Lord's Prayer from the Gospel of Matthew with the currently available (Northern) Estonian and the 1686 Southern Estonian translations. Altogether, we cannot talk about language reform. The majority of the words are ancient, Finno-Ugric. The second largest group is that of the German ones. Russian influence can only be found in the case of one conjunction.

Keywords: Estonian language, South-Estonian dialect, seto dialect, võro, orthodox, Lord's Prayer

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