

## Development of the Estonian conjunction *kuna* ‘while; because’ during the 20th century\*

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The change from TEMPORAL to CAUSE is one of the well-known grammaticalization paths. This article analyses the change in the Estonian conjunction *kuna*, ‘while; as, because’ from temporal to causal one as well as the attitude of the Estonian language planners towards this change. This change has mainly taken place during the twentieth century. The end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century witnessed the prevailing use of the temporal use of *kuna*. However, during the latter part of the 20th century the use of *kuna* began to shift, and the use of causal *kuna* began to dominate. As an intermediary stage between the temporal and causal usages, *kuna* was used as an adversative temporal conjunction. The impact of this shift in usage of *kuna* as a causal conjunction has also slightly changed the use of other Estonian causal conjunctions. Initially, Estonian language planners adopted a strict attitude towards the change of *kuna*, but language planning could not halt this change. For example, editors continued to cross out the causal use of *kuna*, but they could not increase the temporal use, and this usage of the conjunction hardly appears in the written texts of the 1970s. However, the change was finally accepted in the 1990s.

### 1. Introduction

The change from TEMPORAL to CAUSE is one of the well-known grammaticalization paths. The Estonian conjunction *kuna* is also mentioned as an example of the above-mentioned phenomenon in Heine and Kuteva (2002: 291), and in this article, its change during the twentieth century is followed. The main questions analyzed in this article are how the change from the temporal to the causal

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meaning took place, and how the attitude of the Estonian language planners influenced the development and use of *kuna*. I will also discuss how the development of *kuna* has changed the system of the Estonian causal conjunctions.

### 1.1 Meanings of *kuna*

Estonian *kuna* is polysemous. Whereas it is primarily used as a conjunction, in the spoken language, it can also be used as an adverb. According to the Estonian Explanatory Dictionary (EKSS: 569–570), *kuna* can have the following functions (examples are taken from the Corpus of Written Estonian 1890–1990):

- temporal conjunction. As a temporal conjunction, *kuna* can either start the adversative temporal clause (1) or the adversative comparison clause (2). In the former, the event referred to in the subordinate clause takes place at the same time as the event expressed by the main clause, whereas in the latter case, the conjunction *kuna* marks atemporal (opposite) contrast.<sup>1</sup>
  - (1) Helmut istus siiasamasse kummulipööratud pesuvannile, **kuna** Paul najatas kolmjalale. (ILU1950<sup>2</sup>)  
‘Helmut sat down on the capsized washing tub, **while** Paul leaned back on the tripod.’
  - (2) Endistel aastatel jõudis seemendamine enamasti märtsi-kuu teiseks pooleks juba lõpule, **kuna** tänawu selsamal ajal alles algust wõidi teha. (AJA1890<sup>3</sup>)  
‘In the previous years, insemination was usually finished by the second half of March, **but** this year they had hardly started it by that time.’
- causal conjunction. A causal clause, begun with *kuna*, can either precede (3) or follow the main clause (4).
  - (3) **Kuna** telefoni polnud, siis sõitsime Märjamaale abi järele. (AJA1990)  
‘As there was no phone, we drove to Märjamaa to get some help.’
  - (4) Loobuja kiirustas, **kuna** isa hõikas. (ILU1960)  
‘The quitter hurried, **because** his/her father called him/her.’

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1. Erelt 2010 mentions *kuna* among other (coordinative) adversative conjunctions.

2. Abbreviation ILU stands for fiction, that is, the example is taken from the sub-corpus of fiction of 1950s.

3. The abbreviation AJA refers to the newspapers, which means that the example is taken from the sub-corpus of the newspapers of the 1890s.

- concessive conjunction (5). It is used quite rarely. The concessive meaning can be further emphasized by means of certain particles (for example, *ometi* (*gi*), ‘yet, finally’).
  - (5) Kummalisel viisil need olid kõik lausa moodsad lööklaulud, **kuna** ta siia maani oli tegelnud vaid klassikaliste teostega. (AJA1930)  
‘Interestingly, these were all modern songs, **although** till now s/he had only dealt with classical pieces.’
- interrogative adverb with the meaning ‘when.’ As I will concentrate on the conjunction *kuna*, I exclude all the examples in which *kuna* has this function.
  - (6) *kuna* ßee ometi lõpeb? (ILU1910)  
‘When will this finally end?’

In addition to the meanings of *kuna* presented in EKSS, the corpus also includes examples where the simultaneity of two events is neutralized; in these cases, *kuna* has a conjoining function (7).

- (7) Et direktor nende nõudmist ei täitnud, siis tahtsiwad nad ka direktorit wälja wiia, aga soldatid jõudsiwad wiimasel silmapilgul appi ja nende nõuu läks nurja, **kuna** paljud soldatite poolt läbi pekseti. (AJA1900)  
‘As the director didn’t obey their order, they wanted to take him out, too, but soldiers went to his help at the very last moment and their plan went to waste, **and** many of them were beaten up by the soldiers.’

However, as the main focus of this article is the change of *kuna* from a temporal to a causal conjunction, neither the conjoining nor the concessive use of *kuna* will be discussed at length. I also do not deal in depth with borderline cases.

## 1.2 Data

The sentences that I have analyzed for this study have been collected from the Corpus of Written Estonian of 1890 to 1990. Both fiction and newspaper texts from the period have been used. Table 1 presents the size of the subcorpora and the number of the instances of *kuna* that were detected and analyzed.

The article consists of two parts. Section 2 presents an overview of the change in the conjunction *kuna* in the period from 1890s to the 1990s as well as discussing the attitude of the Estonian language planners towards this change. An attempt is also made to address the question of how language planning has influenced the use and development of the conjunction *kuna*. In Section 3, the classification of causal clauses will be elaborated on with regard to Estonian causal conjunctions in

Table 1. The size of the corpus and occurrences of *kuna*

	Newspaper texts		Fiction texts	
	Overall size of the corpus (tokens)	Occurrences of <i>kuna</i>	Overall size of the corpus (tokens)	Occurrences of <i>kuna</i>
1890s	193,000	268	155,000	104
1900s	171,000	207	64,000	129
1910s	182,000	222	247,000	104
1930s	117,000	227	252,000	141
1950s	242,000	89	66,000	27
1960s	201,000	44	132,000	24
1970s	168,000	19	257,000	28
1980s	175,000	30	250,000	41
1990s	865,000	455	602,000	132
In total		1,561		730

The newspaper and fiction texts are discussed separately to see whether the change has taken place earlier in either of the two genres.

order to determine what has changed in the system of the Estonian causal clauses due to the emergence of the new causal conjunction.

## 2. Development of *kuna* from a temporal to a causal conjunction

### 2.1 The development of *kuna*

While the temporal use of *kuna* prevailed at the end of the nineteenth century and at the beginning of the twentieth century, the situation changed during the latter part of the twentieth century and this produced changes when the use of causal *kuna* began to dominate. In this section, I will discuss this development in detail.<sup>4</sup>

It should be noted that most instances of *kuna* as a temporal conjunction (as defined by the EKSS) actually begin an adversative temporal clause or even an adversative comparative clause.<sup>5</sup> These are also the uses of the temporal *kuna* that are presented in the EKSS. However, during the 1890–1910, in other words the

4. Unfortunately for technical reasons, it is not possible to determine the actual starting point of the change of the conjunction *kuna*, as the years 1850–1890 are most not available in the Corpus of Early Written Estonian: <http://www.murre.ut.ee/vakkur/Korpused/Kwic2/paring19.htm>

5. Although EKG II (1993:279) names *kuna* a temporal-adversative conjunction, I refer to it here as a temporal conjunction as well as in these functions based on the EKSS.

first decades of the period under examination in this article, there are some instances where the conjunction *kuna* starts a temporal clause. In examples (8) and (9), *kuna* could be replaced by *kui* ‘when’, which is the most frequently used and neutral temporal conjunction in Estonian. Even though these types of sentences are rare, they clearly show that *kuna* was previously used as a neutral temporal conjunction in the sense of “when.”

- (8) “Mina wõin sind lugema õpetada,” ütles Gusti, **kuna** mõlemad püsti tõusiwad. (ILU1890)  
 “I can teach you to read,’ said Gusti, **when** they both rose.’
- (9) Hiljuti wõetud naisterahwal raudtee waksalis, **kuna** ta ise tõistega juttu ajanud, rätik ära. (AJA1890)  
 ‘Not so long ago at the railway station, a lady’s headscarf was snatched, **while** she was talking to other people.’

At the beginning of the period examined in this study, the causal *kuna* is significantly more frequently used in the newspaper corpus than in the fiction corpus. However, the temporal usage of *kuna* (10) is nevertheless noticeably dominant in both the fiction and newspaper texts from 1890 to 1910.

- (10) Luges weel kord üle ja siis wiskas kirja käest laua pääle, **kuna** ise kärsitult edasi tagasi sammus. (ILU1890)  
 ‘S/he read the letter one more time and then threw it onto the table, **while** marching impatiently back and forth.’

The corpus of the fiction texts of the 1890s includes only 4 sentences with the causal *kuna* (that is, only 2.6 occurrences per 100, 000 tokens<sup>6</sup>), whereas in the newspaper corpus of the same period, *kuna* as a causal conjunction (11) is decidedly more frequent: the normalized frequency is 22.3 in the sub-corpus. At the same time, the normalized frequency of the temporal *kuna* is 55.5 and 86.5 instances, respectively.

- (11) Kuressaarse meremeeste-kooli asutamine on nüüd kindel, **kuna** see ettewõte ministeriumist kinnitatud saanud. (AJA1890)  
 ‘The establishment of sailors’ school in Kuressaare is now certain, **because** this has been confirmed by the ministry.’

There is a substantial increase in the frequency of the temporal *kuna* in the fiction corpus of 1900s (normalized frequency 121.9). This rapid increase is caused by technical reasons: the idiolects of two authors’ exert a strong influence on the

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6. Hereafter, I normalize all frequencies to 100,000 tokens.

relatively small fiction sub-corpus of the 1900s. However, in the newspaper texts during this decade, the temporal use of *kuna* decreases significantly (normalized frequency 64.9 in the sub-corpus).

In the 1910s, the situation remains approximately the same: the usage of the temporal *kuna* decreases, whereas the use of the causal *kuna* increases (12).

- (12) Põhjalikult filtreritud veži on eriteadlaste tunnistuste järelle isegi terwißewastane, **kuna** ßarnaßes wees tarwilikud mineral=ollußeß puuduwad. (AJA1910)

‘According to specialists, thoroughly filtered water is even unhealthy, **because** it lacks necessary minerals.’

The total frequency of the temporal *kuna* decreases during these three decades (except for the fiction sub-corpus of the 1900s), while the frequency of the causal *kuna* increases in both the fiction and the newspaper corpora.

By the 1930s, a major change has occurred in both the fiction and the newspaper texts. This is the first decade in which the causal usage of *kuna* (13) is more frequent than the temporal use (14) in both of the sub-corpora. Compared to the 1910s, the increase in the frequency of the causal *kuna* is rapid – in the fiction corpus, the increase is from 6.5 to 28.2 instances per 100 000 tokens. Nonetheless, in the newspaper sub-corpus, (15) it increases even more rapidly (from 31.3 and 147.0 instances per 100, 000 tokens).

- (13) Ja **kuna** polnud erapooletut meest, kes kaarte oleks hoidnud, ei tahtnud ka pokkerist tulla asja. (ILU1930)

‘As no impartial men were found to hold the cards, the poker game didn’t work out either.’

- (14) Uues kambris aga hõiskasid jookidest lõbusaks muutunud poisid ja kilkasid tüdrukud, **kuna** tormine sügisöö ulus seinte taga ja õhtu muutus ööks. (ILU1930)

‘In the new room, boys shouted, increasingly cheerful with their drinks, and girls screamed, **while** stormy autumn night howled behind the walls and evening turned into night.’

- (15) Oleme jätnud kõrwale igasuguse pidulikkuse, **kuna** tänast koosolekut pole koda weel ise kokku kutsunud. (AJA1930)

‘We have left every kind of festiveness to the side, **because** the chamber hasn’t yet convened today’s meeting.’

These drastic changes that the conjunction *kuna* underwent caused debate about the meaning of the word among Estonian language planners. The result was that the Estonian language planning advocated a distinctly prescriptive approach towards the causal use of *kuna* (see Section 2.2).

Due to the influence of language planning, the 1950s witnessed a slight decrease in the usage of the causal *kuna* in the fiction texts (norm. freq. 27.3) and a very sharp decrease in its use in newspaper texts (norm. freq. 19.4). However, although the causal usage of *kuna* was not accepted by the Estonian language planning policies of the time, the causal *kuna* remains more frequent than the temporal *kuna*. It is during this period that the usage of the temporal *kuna* decreases drastically in both the newspaper (norm. freq. 12.4) and the fiction corpora (norm. freq. 10.6). Therefore, the whole usage of the conjunction *kuna* decreases significantly by this decade. A hint as to a possible explanation for this phenomenon can be found in Aavik 1936. He supposes (1936:194) that some people (predominantly translators) always replace the temporal *kuna* with *sellal kui*, ‘at the same time as.’ This might be because they recognize *kuna* to be a problematic word and they feel more confident avoiding it completely.

Furthermore, the corpora of the following decades contain only few examples of *kuna*. It is used particularly infrequently in the corpus of the 1970s. This might be due to the influence of the language planners (see Section 2.2), and this resulted in language editors rejecting any uses of the causal *kuna*.

In the 1960s and the 1970s, the trend remained the same: the frequency of both the causal (16)–(17) and the temporal *kuna* (18) decreases significantly. There are 16.7 causal and only 1.5 temporal *kuna* per 100,000 tokens in the fiction corpus of the 1960s, while the figures for the newspaper corpus are 15.9 and 60, respectively. In the fiction sub-corpus of the 1970s, only 9.7 causal and 0.8 temporal *kuna* were detected per 100,000 tokens, whereas the newspaper sub-corpus of the same decade contains only 8.9 instances of the causal *kuna* and 1.2 instances of the temporal *kuna* per 100,000 tokens. Of the two meanings, the causal meaning of *kuna* had become the most frequent meaning.

- (16) Loobuja kiirustas, **kuna** isa hõikas. (ILU1960)  
‘The quitter hurried, **because** his/her father called him/her.’
- (17) Ja **kuna** poeg kinnitas, et ta kopikatki polnud viinakuradile kinkinud, helistas nõrдинud ema parteiorganisatsiooni sekretärile Heino Külale. (AJA1970)  
‘And as the son asserted that he hadn’t given a single copeck to the ‘devil of vodka’, the indignant mother called to Heino Küla, the secretary of the Party.’
- (18) Eile võitis Taškendi “Pahtakor” Bakuu “Nefttši” 2:0, **kuna** AKSK ja Lvovi “Karpatõ” mängisid 2:2 viiki. (AJA1970)  
‘Yesterday the Taškent’s Pahtakor won Baku’s Nefttši 2–0, **while** the game of AKSK and Lvov’s Karpatõ ended in a 2–2 draw.’

During the 1980s, the causal *kuna* experienced a noticeable increase in frequency (norm. freq. 14.8 and 17.1 in the fiction and the newspaper sub-corpora respectively) (19).

- (19) Kevadtööd venisid, **kuna** maad niisked ja savised. (ILU1980)  
 ‘The digging dragged on, **because** the soil was moist and clay-like.’

While the causal *kuna* was frequently used during this decade, there are no instances of the temporal *kuna* in the newspaper sub-corpus, and there are only few examples in the fiction sub-corpus (norm. freq. 0.8). The increase in the frequency of the causal *kuna* can once more be explained by the attitude of the Estonian language planners. During the 1980’s, they no longer condemned the causal use of *kuna*.

By the 1990s, the language planners had given up their fight against the causal *kuna* (see Section 2.2). This shift in stance is reflected in the steep rise in the frequency of the causal *kuna* (20), particularly in the newspaper sub-corpus (norm. freq. 52.0), and to a lesser extent in the fiction sub-corpus (norm. freq. 21.1). The temporal *kuna* (21) remains marginal during this decade (norm. freq. 0.4 and 0.7 in the newspaper and the fiction sub-corpora, respectively).

- (20) Paraku ei saa Eesti vanu rehve seal kasutada, **kuna** elektrijaamal ei ole oma kummipurustusseadet. (AJA1990)  
 ‘Unfortunately Estonia cannot use old tyres there, **because** the power station does not have a device for destroying tyres.’
- (21) Kaarel tõstis Anu sinise “Belarussi” rooli taha, **kuna** Mikk, kes oli oma istumise juba traktoril ära istunud, jooksis põlluserva pidi tagasi suvila juurde, mahaunustatud mängautot tooma. (ILU1990)  
 ‘Kaarel lifted Anu to the driver’s seat of the blue Belarus tractor **while** Mikk, who had already enjoyed his moments in the tractor ran along the edge of the field back to the cottage to bring his toy-car he had forgotten there.’

An overview of the usage and change of conjunction *kuna* during the twentieth century is presented in the Figures 1 and 2. The frequency of causal *kuna* increases significantly both in the fiction and the newspaper corpora until the 1930s, and then continuously decreases until the 1970s. After the 1970’s, the causal *kuna* increases again and the increase is dramatic in the 1990s. Both in the beginning as well and during the first decades of the period under consideration, the causal *kuna* was noticeably more frequent in the newspaper corpus than in the fiction corpus. Therefore, it can be concluded that the causal *kuna* first developed in newspaper texts, and thereafter spread into fiction texts.

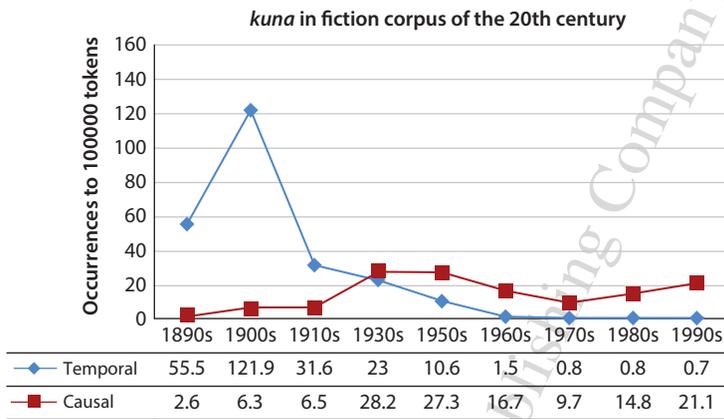


Figure 1. The conjunction *kuna* in the fiction texts of the twentieth century

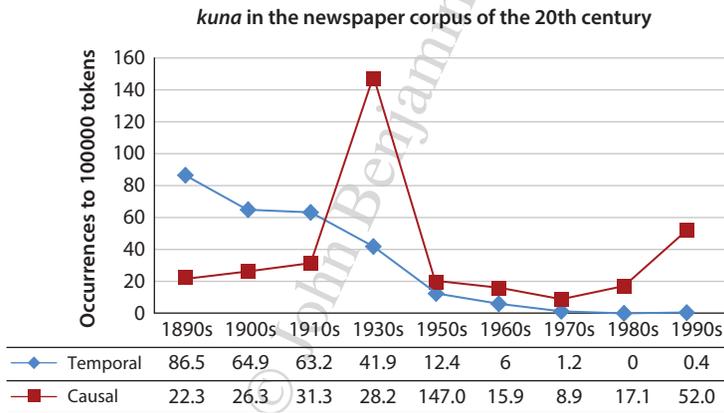


Figure 2. The conjunction *kuna* in the newspaper texts of the twentieth century

## 2.2 The attitude of the Estonian language planners towards the change of *kuna*

The standardized Estonian language and Estonian language planning are both relatively new. To summarize, it can be claimed that during the second half of the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth century there was an enforced development of the standard Estonian language (Erelt 2002: 31, 33). The beginning of Estonian language planning also dates back to the same period. In 1872, Eesti Kirjameeste Selts (EKmS, *Society of the Estonian Literati*) was founded and it made its first decisions on the use of Estonian in the same year,

which marked the beginning of language planning in Estonia (Erelt 2002:47). Initially, the planners adopted a prescriptive approach, but this began to change at the end of the 1960s and especially in the 1970s, and consequently, by the 1980s, they had adopted positions that had become guidelines rather than norms (Erelt 2002:251–256).

The use of the causal *kuna* was already a topic of dispute in the 1930s. Johannes Voldemar Veski (1933:456), whose key principles of language planning included a system based on logical clarity, functionality and monosemy (Erelt 2002:74–81), commented on another linguist's language use, noting that it was regrettable that the linguist did not make a distinction between the conjunctions *kuna* and *et*.<sup>7</sup> In his opinion, the conjunction *et* (not *kuna*) should mark a causal clause, whereas the conjunction *kuna* should mark a temporal clause. Johannes Aavik (1936:193), in contrast, states that the conjunctions *kuna* and *et* are both used for the same meaning. Aavik argues that even if Veski would not accept the causal *kuna* under any circumstances, sometimes it simply cannot be avoided; these are specific cases where the two instances of the conjunction *et* would otherwise be adjacent. Being a polysemous word, *et* can also start a complement clause and in these cases, the causal *et* should be replaced with *kuna* (*Koolijuhataja teatas, et kuna aeg on hiline, tuleb koosolek lõpetada*, 'The head of school notified that as it was late, the meeting had to end' *prõ \*Koolijuhataja teatas, et et aeg on hiline, tuleb koosolek lõpetada*) (Aavik 1936:194).

The change of *kuna* caused further disputes in the press in the 1960s. Veski (1967:333) still objected to the changes that the conjunction *kuna* was undergoing. More specifically, Veski deplored the polysemy in the entire language system and considered it to be a vice that caused an overloading of certain words and underutilization of others. He disliked about polysemy because it makes it impossible to differentiate meanings. Veski (1967:336) argued that the conjunction *kuna* should under no circumstances be used as a causal conjunction and it could only be used as a temporal conjunction.

Kindlam (1967) admitted that even the literary language had not been able to preserve the separate functions of the conjunction *kuna* and other distinctly causal conjunctions. Hence, in her opinion, the causal *kuna* could be used in certain cases – but only when the meaning of the sentence remains unambiguous. This use in example (22) was not recommended because it could be interpreted in two ways.

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7. The conjunction *et* can start a causal clause if it precedes the main clause, *Et oli pime, ei näinud ma Tiina pilku [---]*, 'I didn't see Tiina's look, because it was dark.'

- (22) **Kuna** naine oli kodus, läks mees välja.  
 'Husband went out, **because** wife was at home'  
 'While wife was at home, husband went out'

Kindlam further highlights some cases where *kuna* has always the same meaning as the conjunction *et*: those where the polysemous conjunction *et* would be next to another *et* or the conjunction *ent*, which sounds similar to *et*.

According to Kindlam, one should, nevertheless, avoid the excessive use of the causal *kuna*, because it has become a fashionable word and, consequently, it could easily become overused.

Although the Department of Language Planning in the Institute of the Estonian Language accepted the causal use of *kuna* as early as in the 1970s (according to Tiiu Erelt<sup>8</sup>), and the Dictionary of Standard Estonian (ÕS 1999) also acknowledges the causal meaning of *kuna* to this day, a few radical language protectors did not accept this change. In his (2002) article, Eduard Vääri (2002:30) calls the causal use of *kuna* a serious mistake, explaining that *kuna* can only combine clauses in which the events occur simultaneously.

### 3. The influence of the development of *kuna* on the use of other causal conjunctions

#### 3.1 Classification of causal clauses

Causal relations have usually been divided into either two or three categories. Van Dijk (1981:166), for example, discusses the semantic and pragmatic connectives: the semantic connectives express relations between denoted facts, while the pragmatic connectives mark the relationships between speech acts. Lowe (1988) likewise divides causal relations into two categories, but he draws the line between causes and reasons. When there is a cause, it is followed by its effect. A reason, by contrast, is delivered by a subordinate clause that presents the speaker's justification for his action in terms of his beliefs and values. Lowe further divides reasons into three categories: reasons for speech acts, reasons for actions, and reasons for statements.

Perhaps the most well-known threefold division of causal relationships is the one suggested by Sweetser (1990). Sweetser argues that causal conjunctions can be used in the content, epistemic, and speech act domains, and offers the following examples:

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8. From e-mail correspondence between Tiiu Erelt and the author.

- (23) John came back because he loved her.  
 (24) John loved her, because he came back.  
 (25) What are you doing tonight, because there's a good movie on.

In example (23), the conjunction is used in the content domain. Here the real-world causality can be observed between the clauses – John's love is the cause that brings about the effect of John coming back. Example (24) illustrates the epistemic domain. In this case, the speaker's knowledge of John's return leads to the conclusion or belief that is expressed in the main clause. In the speech act domain, illustrated by example (25), the subordinate clause provides the causal explanation of the speech act that is embodied by the main clause.

The differentiation between the content and epistemic clauses is also supported by Noordman and de Blijzer (2000). Their study clearly demonstrates that processing epistemic relations is more complex than processing content relations, which is why epistemic relations also require longer processing time than content relations.

Furthermore, Sweetser (1990) also expresses reservations concerning the threefold classification of clauses belonging to the same level. Sweetser (1990:82) claims that there are languages that maintain a distinction between the epistemic and speech act domains on the one hand, and the content domain on the other. In these languages, one conjunction is used to mark epistemic and speech act clauses, while another is used for content clauses. In addition, Herlin (1997:25–26), who has investigated the use of the Finnish conjunction *koska*, 'because', also questions the universal distinction between epistemic and speech act clauses. Herlin discusses *koska*-clauses that are connected to the main clause and express a rhetorical question or an evaluation and presents these clauses as borderline cases between epistemic and speech act clauses. Thus, the distinction between the content domain and the other two domains appears to be greater than the distinction between the epistemic and the speech act domain.

The position of metalinguistic clauses has been treated differently. Such clauses are most commonly referred to with regard to conditional clauses, but they are relevant for causal relations, too. Metalinguistic clauses comment on the appropriateness of the assertion (26) or give reason for the choice of words of the main clause (27). For example, by the subordinate clause in the sentence (27) the speaker explains why (s)he use the word *tassitakse* 'being carried', why exactly this word is the most appropriate.

- (26) Grandma is feeling lousy, if that's an appropriate expression.  
 (Dancygier 2006: 104)

- (27) Just nimelt tassitakse, sest teen end alati hästi raskeks ja lõdvaks, kui nad mind “hospitaliseerivad” või miilitsasse veavad. (ILU1990)  
 ‘Exactly: when I’m being carried, **because** I make myself always really heavy and slack when they hospitalize me or drag to the militia’

For Sweetser (1990), these clauses are among speech act clauses, but Dancygier (1990: 361–365) demonstrates that speech act clauses and metalinguistic clauses have both similar and dissimilar traits. This, according to Dancygier, is the reason why the aforementioned clauses form two subclasses of conversational clauses. However, sometimes, metalinguistic clauses have been presented as a distinct type of adverbial clause (see, for example, Dancygier 1990; Sweetser 2000, 2006; and Dancygier 2006).

Based on the discussion on the classification of causal clauses and their usage in Estonian, Plado (2008) presents the following classification of the causal clauses:

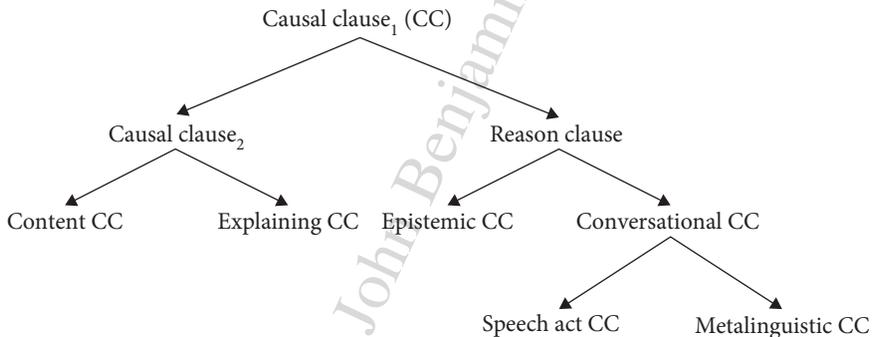


Figure 3. Classification of causal clauses (Plado 2008)

The basis for the distinction between causal clauses<sub>2</sub> and reason clauses is similar to that of proposed by Sweetser (1990) but it differs from the suggestion by Lowe (1987). Moreover, the scope of causal clauses<sub>2</sub> is broader than suggested by Lowe (1987). The clauses that Lowe regards as reasons for actions are considered to be causal clauses<sub>2</sub> in this analysis. Of course, the borderline between causal<sub>2</sub> and reason clauses is not clear-cut, and there are clauses that can be understood as both causal<sub>2</sub> and reason clauses. For instance, example (28) can be interpreted in two ways. From the situation described in the causal clause, the speaker infers that the situation is not good; alternatively, the speaker claims that the situation is not good precisely for the reason that the patient is not interested in getting well.

- (28) Asjad on räbalasti, **sest** haige südametunnistus ei ole nüüd tervistumisest huvitatud. (ILU1990)  
 ‘The situation isn’t good now, **because** the patient’s conscience isn’t now interested in getting well.’

In this classification, the position of explaining causal clauses is problematic. These clauses explain the content of the main clause as illustrated in example (29).

- (29) See vargsi vaatamine aga lõppes mulle saatuslikult, **sest** sealsamas järjekorras seistes ma äkki armusin temasse. (ILU1990)  
 ‘Stealing glances with her determined my destiny, **because** right there in the queue I suddenly fell in love with her.’

Explanatory causal clauses should actually be somewhere between causal<sub>2</sub> and reason clauses, but Plado (2008) regards them as causal clauses<sub>2</sub> because they are more similar to the content causal clauses than to the epistemic and conversational clauses.

### 3.2 The conjunction *kuna* among other Estonian causal conjunctions

In Estonian, there are three causal conjunctions: *et*, *sest*, and *kuna*. A causal clause that is marked by the conjunction *sest* can only follow the main clause, but in the case of *kuna* and *et*, the causal clause can either follow or precede the main clause. The conjunction *et* is joined either by the word *siis*, ‘then’, or by one of the following: *sellepärast* ~ *seepärast*, ‘because of this’, *seetõttu*, ‘because of this’, *seeläbi* ‘thereby’. In the case of *sellepärast* ~ *seepärast*, *seetõttu*, and *seeläbi*, these words carry the causal meaning and are therefore obligatory in the conjunction. These causal parts of the conjunction can be either in the main or in the subordinate clause. If they are focused, these belong to the main clause (30), but if they are unfocused, they remain in the subordinate clause (31). Usually in these cases the causal clause follows the main clause.

- (30) Kahtlemata on neil endil suur huvi selle festivali vastu, **sellepärast** et säärast tüüpi [--] oreleid [--] välismaal enam ei ole. (AJA1990)  
 ‘They undoubtedly take interest in the festival, **because** such organs are not found abroad anymore.’
- (31) Küsis küll ainult **sellepärast**, **et** tahtis kuulda naise häält. (ILU1990)  
 ‘(S)he only asked it, **because** (s)he wanted to hear the woman’s voice.’

The correlate *siis* is not obligatory, and when it is used, the causal clause always precedes the main clause (EKG II: 307).

Table 2. The occurrence of the Estonian causal conjunction in the 1890's and the 1990's

	ILU1890		ILU1990	
	To 100,000 token		To 100,000 token	
<i>sest</i>	279	180.0	1,060	176.1
<i>kuna</i>	4	2.6	127	21.1
<i>et</i> :	42:	27.1:	123:	20.4:
<i>Et...</i> , ( <i>siis</i> )	36	23.2	41	6.8
<i>sellepärast/seejärel/seejärel/seejärel/seejärel</i> , <i>et</i>	6	3.9	82	13.6
Total	345		1,319	

Table 2 presents the occurrence of the Estonian causal conjunctions both in the 1890s and the 1990s.

As can be observed from the data, the most frequently used conjunction is *sest*, and its usage frequency has remained relatively unchanged throughout the century. The development of *kuna* into a causal conjunction during the period discussed in this study is also reflected in the increased frequency of use in the 1990s. During the hundred years there have also been changes in the usage of *et* as a causal conjunction. Furthermore, major changes have occurred in the cases where an *et*-clause precedes the main clause. While the corpus of the 1890s contains as many as 23.2 *et*-causal clauses that precede the main clause for every 100,000 tokens, the corresponding figure for the 1990s corpus is only 6.9. As 59.8% of all causal *kuna*-clauses precede the main clause, it can be argued that the new causal *kuna* has at least partially replaced the causal *et*. There are two possible explanations for this. The most likely explanation is that *kuna* helps to alleviate the overload of the polysemous conjunction *et*; on the other hand, the extensive use of *kuna* in this position may also be attributed to the fact that language planners have been less critical of this usage of *kuna*.

Plado (2008: 140–141) has analysed a possible tendency to use a particular causal conjunction in particular types of causal clauses<sub>1</sub>. The only conjunction that tends to be used in certain types of causal clauses<sub>1</sub> (see Figure 3) is *et*, which mainly occurs in the content causal clauses both in the 1890s (97.6%) and 1990s (85.4%). Also the conjunction *kuna* that precedes the main clause predominantly marks the content causal clauses (98.7%).

In the 1890s corpus, of the causal clauses<sub>1</sub> marked by the conjunction *sest*, 54.8% are content causal, a further 35.5% are explanatory clauses, and the remaining 9.7% are reason clauses. A century later, the percentages are 71.2%, 13.9% and 14.4%, respectively (and the remaining 0.5% are ambiguous cases). The conjunction *kuna*, which follows the main clause, marks almost equally often the content causal clauses (43.1%) and explaining clauses (41.2%). The final 15.7%

start reason clauses. Therefore, one can conclude that the development of *kuna* has to some degree influenced the changes in the usage of the conjunction *sest*. In the 1990s, *sest* is used in over two-thirds of the instances in content causal clauses, whereas a century earlier, it was used in 54.8% of all instances in the same position. In addition, compared to the 1890s, the relative frequency of *sest* in explaining clauses has decreased. Of course, this is still an ongoing process, and the next few decades will decide whether the conjunction *sest* will develop and will mark more content causal clauses and whether the conjunction *kuna* will become frequent explaining clauses.

#### 4. Conclusions

The Estonian conjunction *kuna* gradually changed from a temporal to a causal conjunction mainly during the twentieth century. This shift occurred through a stage where it was used as an adversative temporal conjunction. The frequency of causative *kuna* increases significantly in both fiction and newspaper corpora until the 1930s, and then continuously decreases until the 1970s. Thereafter, it increases again and rises rapidly in the 1990s. By the beginning of the twentieth century, the changes of *kuna* in newspaper texts had already developed further and more rapidly than in the language of fiction. One can therefore conclude that the causal *kuna* first developed in newspaper texts and thereafter spread to fiction texts. One reason for the change in the usage of *kuna* can first be observed in newspaper texts and then in fiction is that these two genres are inherently different. Newspaper texts are written in a short period of time, it takes a considerably longer time to write and publish fiction. On the other hand, the tradition of Estonian language editing affected it, as well. Although the language used in newspapers might appear to be more standardized than in fiction, all the books in Estonia were thoroughly edited, whereas there was often insufficient time to edit the newspaper texts as comprehensively.

It should be noted that the change took place in spite the resistance from the Estonian language planners. Initially, the language planners adopted a strict stance towards the change of *kuna*. Language planning could not, however, prevent the change, even though editors kept rejecting the causal usage of *kuna*. Despite their efforts, they could not increase the temporal usage of *kuna*, and consequently, this conjunction rarely appears in the written texts of the 1970s. Eventually, the change was accepted and thereafter, in the corpora of the 1990s, the frequency of the conjunction *kuna* increases dramatically.

The development of *kuna* into a causal conjunction has changed the system of the Estonian causal conjunctions in two ways. First, the conjunction *kuna* in its new causal meaning has at least partially replaced the causal *et*, which starts a causal clause<sub>1</sub> preceding the main clause. More than half of the causal clauses<sub>1</sub> that precede a main clause now start with *kuna*. In this position, *kuna* primarily has a content causal meaning. Second, the change of *kuna* has also slightly influenced the usage of *sest*. A *kuna* conjunction that marks a causal clause<sub>1</sub> following the main clause is used predominantly as a content causal conjunction or as an explaining conjunction, whereas *sest* is currently used less in explaining causal clauses and more in content causal clauses.

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