Language Contacts -- Proposed Term Paper Questions

1. How does the knowledge of dialects contribute to the knowledge of past and present relationships among languages? What are the theoretical and methodological implications of this knowledge?

2. Why should languages of the world be preserved? Provide at least three arguments.

3. Explain the debate on contact-induced vs. genetic phenomena in language change. Use examples from the Baltic/Fennic/Germanic/Slavic languages.

4. Explain the debate on internal vs. external factors in language change. Use examples from the Baltic/Fennic/Germanic/Slavic languages.

5. Identify some types of phonetic-phonological, syntactic, semantic, and discourse contact induced phenomena in a Baltic/Fennic/Germanic/Slavic language. What internal and/or external evidence do you have for the phenomena? What are the linguistic and cultural implications?

6. Describe a specific language contact situation in the Baltic countries in historic times. Develop a theoretical and methodological discussion.

7. Oral traditions and language contact. Can documentation of traditional narratives enlighten the history of contact between languages and peoples? Can mythical narratives shed light on migrations?

8. Describe one or several of the following contact relationships among the Baltic/Fennic/Germanic/Slavic languages and their consequence: language attrition, loss of secret languages, layered languages, mixed languages, borrowing/calquing.

9. Describe a situation of language contact by geographic proximity within the Baltic/Fennic/Germanic/Slavic languages. What are the consequences? Do dialects reflect geographic proximity?

10. Describe a situation of language contact (among the Baltic/Fennic/Germanic/Slavic languages) through colonial intervention and/or political occupation. What are the changes in language structure, use, and writing?

11. Describe a specific linguistic area within the Baltics: name types, borders, overlapping of linguistic features. Do the identified features apply elsewhere in the Baltic region?

12. Digital resources and their role in language maintenance and linguistic research: describe a digital resource (or several digital resources) in current day Estonia, Latvia or Lithuania. What are the possibilities, experiences, challenges involved? Give specific examples. Do digital resources contribute to the preservation and revitalization of endangered languages?
13. Explain the terms *sprachbund* and *linguistic area* (their history, usage today). How are they related? Are there additional terms within this concept that are used? Describe how and where these concepts can be applied in the Baltic region. Give examples.

14. Give examples of language death in the Baltic region. Describe, on a theoretical basis, one or more specific example.

15. What is language endangerment? Why and how does it happen? What can be done about it?

16. What are some methods of language revitalization?