

## ESTONIAN *JUMAL* ‘GOD’

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**Abstract:** The article focuses on semantics and the use of the word *jumal* ‘god’ in Estonian. At first, we give an overview of the etymology of *jumal* ‘god’ and its meanings in Standard Estonian and Estonian dialects. Then we examine *jumal* ‘god’ as a linguistic unit associated with different constructions and collocational patterns, bleaching of the meaning, and usage in fulfilling different communication goals. In our study we show how *jumal* ‘god’ can refer literally to the higher power of Christianity or some other religion but it is also used in the weakened, bleached sense, meaning ‘very, completely’ or ‘total, absolute’, and in combination with certain verbs, meaning ‘random’, ‘indefinite’.

**Keywords:** collocations, discourse analysis, Estonian, etymology, folk linguistics, semantics

### INTRODUCTION

This article is inspired by Urmas Sutrop’s long-time linguistic and ethnological interest in the concept *god* (see for example Sutrop 2003, 2004a). We endeavor to give a comprehensive overview of the etymology of the Estonian word *jumal* ‘god’ and its use in modern Estonian and Estonian dialects. We therefore examine *jumal* ‘god’ not as a theological concept but as a linguistic unit associated with different constructions and collocational patterns, bleaching of the meaning, and usage in fulfilling different communication goals.

In modern Estonian, *jumal* ‘god’ can refer literally to the higher power of Christianity or some other religion but it is also used in the weakened, bleached sense ‘very, completely’ or ‘total, absolute’. A metaphoric meaning ‘object of respect or desire’, for example, *Kunst jäi tema jumalaks* ‘Art remained his/her god’ (EKSS 2009), can also be found. Since there is no grammatical gender in Estonian it is not possible to determine based on the linguistic material whether *jumal* ‘god’ is male or female.

To show all of the variation in the use of the word *jumal* ‘god’ we have gathered data from different corpora of Estonian (etTenTen, University of Tartu Corpus of Written Estonian, University of Tartu Corpus of Spoken Estonian, University

of Tartu Corpus of Estonian Dialects). First, we will present the etymology of the word *jumal* ‘god’ and its distribution in the Finno-Ugric languages and dialects of Estonian, then we will examine the verb collocations of *jumal* ‘god’, i.e., answer the question *what does god do?* In the second part of the article we will concentrate on the uses of the word *jumal* ‘god’ where it does not literally mean a higher religious power but has acquired new functions in exclamatory sentences as an intensifier of other nouns, and in the constructions *jumala eest* and *jumala pärast* (both could be translated as ‘for God’s sake’).

## ETYMOLOGY AND DIALECTS

The word *jumal* ‘god’ is known in all Finnic languages and the word *jumo* is used actively in this sense in Mari languages (EES 2012: 100–101). In Permic, Ugric and Samoyed languages the word is not attested, showing that it does not belong to the oldest layer of vocabulary of the Finno-Ugric languages. Nevertheless, some sources have considered it a native word (SSA I 1992: 247). More likely, it is an Indo-Iranian loanword. Jorma Koivulehto has proposed an original stem *\*diyumna*, cognate of Sanskrit *dyumān-* ‘heavenly, shining, radiant’ (Koivulehto 1999: 228; see also Uibo 2014: 190–191). Recently, the origin of the word *jumal* ‘god’ has been examined in detail by Ene Vainik (2014) who also considers the (Proto)Indo-Iranian origin likely but deems the most suitable original stem to be *\*jumV*, meaning ‘twin’. In addition, referring to Karulis (1992: 361), Vainik compares the word with Sanskrit derivation *yamala* ‘in pairs, doubly’ and Prakrit *yamala-* ‘twins’, but also Latvian *jumala* ‘abnormally fat female (also when expecting twins)’ (Vainik 2014: 21–26). However, Vainik is not completely convinced whether the word was borrowed into the Finnic languages in the form *\*jumala* and additionally presents the options that the word could originally have been a derivation with a locative suffix *-l(a)* or a compound word with a locative meaning (*\*jum+ala* ‘God’s place’) (ibid.: 25). In all Finnic languages the word refers to a supernatural being, i.e., personified god, probably being borrowed as such already into the Proto-Finnic (or an earlier form of it).

In the development of the different meanings and usage connections of the word *jumal* ‘god’ the uniqueness of it as a mental category in the world-view of the language has played an important role (Sutrop 2003). It is evident that *jumal* ‘god’ has not been used in the Finnic languages as the name of a specific god (c.f. for example Taarapita, Sutrop 2001a), rather, it has been used as a generic term for a divine being, both in the abstract sense of a heavenly God as well as the concrete sense of a statue of God (for the latter, see Sutrop 2004a).

The word *jumal* 'god' is attested in all dialects of Estonian (EMS II, 6: 174–178), occurring in the forms *jumal* ~ *jummal* ~ *jummal'* ~ *d'ummal'* ~ *jomal* ~ *jommal* ~ *jõmmal'* etc. The several different dialectal developments of the word's phonetic form may be related to its expressive content, for example the gemination of the stem consonant *-m-* and the palatalization of the final consonant *-l* (*jummal'* ~ *jommal'* ~ *jõmmal'*). In Estonian dialects the word refers to the Christian God, an omnipotent supernatural being, a pagan deity, a faery, figuratively also nature, destiny, an omniscient person, also a statue of god and an icon. In addition to being used as the main word of the phrase it can be widely used in dialects as a modifier signifying something ordained by God, natural, inevitable, independent of man's actions, e.g., *Kod suri jumala surma, ega tädä es tapeta* 'died of natural causes, he/she was not killed, lit. died God's death', *Nõo üte jumala päevä kõik* 'God's days all (i.e., all days are the same)', *Rõu kiä tiid kas um tä jumala rist vai tulõ esi* 'who knows if this/he/she is God's cross (i.e., destined to be) or comes by itself (spontaneously)'. The expression *jumala ilm* 'God's weather' may refer to both good weather and bad weather, storm, thunder: *IisR ninda ilus pühäbäne jumala ilm* 'such nice Sunday-like God's weather', *Mus vali jumala ilm oli väljas* 'there was stormy God's weather outside'.

In dialects the word *jumal* 'god' also occurs in many fixed expressions and exclamations, especially expressing startlement and regret: *Mar armoline jumal* 'merciful God', *Lüg jumal paraku* 'God make better', *Kaa jummal' oitka* 'God keep', *Mar tule sa jumal appi* 'God help', *Lüg kie jumal sedä tiab* 'who the God knows that', etc. The expression *jumala eest* (lit. from the front of God) means 'certainly, definitely, indeed': *Krk jumala iist sii om õigus* 'indeed this is true'; in a negative sentence its meaning is 'by no means, under no circumstances': *Jäm jumala eest ma pole teind seda* 'by God, I have not done this'; the expression *jumala pärast* 'for God's sake' occurs in confirmations, but often also in warnings: *Krk jumale pärast, ära sa mitti tetä usu* 'for God's sake, do not believe him/her'. In requests also the expression *annaks* ~ *aitaks jumal* 'God give ~ help' is used: *Pee annaks jumal vihmukest, et saaks selja sirutist* '(colloquial) God give rain so we could straighten our backs'.

Metaphoric use of the word *jumal* 'god' with different verbs is diverse. In the South Estonian dialects *jumaladõ* ~ *jumalahe* ~ *jumalilõ minema* 'go into God' refers to sunset: *Har päiv nakas jumaladõ minemä* 'the sun started to set'; *jumalan* ~ *jumalah olõma* 'be in God' means 'to have set': *Har päiv om jumalan* 'the sun has set'. This metaphor is not known in other European languages, however, it can be connected with the Estonian idiom *päike läheb looja* 'the sun is setting' (the ambiguous word *looja* means 'the Creator', too, see EES 2012: 249). However, in European languages the idiom *jumala karja* ~ *kohtu ette*

*minema* ‘go to God’s flock ~ to the front of God’s justice’ has a lot of equivalents. Such phrases refer to dying in both North and South Estonia: *Rei läks jumala karja* ‘went to God’s flock’, i.e., ‘died’, *Krk sii om jumale karja ärä lännu joh* ‘he/she has already gone to God’s flock’, i.e. ‘he/she has already died’; *jumala karjas ~ kohtu ees olema* ‘be in God’s flock ~ in front of God’s justice’ is to be dead: *Lai see ammu jumala karjas* ‘that one has been in God’s flock for a long time’, i.e. ‘that one died a long time ago’.

A widespread greeting, especially to one working in the field, was *jumal appi* ‘God to help’ to which one always replied *aita jumal* ‘help, God’: *Kod kui tuleb väljäle tüü juure, ütleb: jumal appi; tõene ütleb: aita jumal ~ jumal tarvis* ‘when (a person) comes to the field where work is being done he says: *jumal appi* ‘God to help’; the other replies *aita jumal* ‘help, God’ or *jumal tarvis* ‘God needed’.

As an adverb of emphasis, *jumala* – the genitive form of the word *jumal* – is used (EMS II, 6: 178). It usually expresses the meaning ‘completely, fairly, quite’: *Khk see oo nii jumala õige mis ma räägi* ‘it is so God’s true what I’m saying’, i.e., ‘it is completely true what I’m saying’, *Se tu oll’ jumala õnn, et ma är pässe* ‘it was God’s luck that I escaped’, i.e., ‘it was quite lucky that I escaped’. In the case of negation, it intensifies the meaning ‘not at all’: *Kse ma ei tea sest jumala põrmu* ‘I do not know God’s ashes of this’, i.e., ‘I do not know anything at all of this’. As an adverbial of time accompanied by the words *iga* ‘every’ or *kõige* ‘most’, the word *jumala* ‘God’s’ expresses the length of a period of time: *Har nuidõgõ käve kõgõ jumalõ talvõ* ‘with these I walked the whole God’s winter’, i.e., ‘I wore these the whole winter’.

Some other case forms of the word *jumal* ‘god’, its derivations and phrases containing it that have merged into compounds and shortened have also acquired independent meanings (EMS II, 6: 178, 182). For example, the comitative form *jumalaga* ‘with God’ means ‘good-bye’: *Pöi jäta vanaisa jumalaga koa* ‘leave grandfather with God, too’ i.e., ‘say good-bye to grandfather, too’; diminutive derivation *jumaluke(ne)* or its partitive form *jumalukest* is used as an interjection: *Kod küll one kua irmus surm, jumalukene* ‘it is indeed a horrible death, dear God’, *Khk jumalukest, mis sa sest ka saad, seda oo ju nii vähe* ‘dear God, what will you get from this, there’s so little of it’; the interjection *jumalime* (~ *jumala ime* ‘God’s miracle’) ~ *jumalmine* ~ *jumaline* ~ *jumalimel* (< \**jumala nimel* ‘in God’s name’) developed via coarticulative abbreviation: *Rei tere jumalimel* ‘hello, God’s miracle (surprised)’.

No clear difference can be observed between dialects in the use of the word *jumal* ‘god’ in different fixed expressions and its lexicalization in new figurative meanings. However, exceptionally numerous and varied examples originate in the Southern and Insular dialects as well as South Estonian linguistic enclaves in Latvia.

## WHAT DOES GOD DO (AND WHAT DOES HE NOT DO)?

In this section, we set out to answer the question what does *jumal* 'god' do on the Estonian Internet? In other words, we search for verbal collocates of *jumal* 'god'. The following analysis is based on the data extracted from the etTenTen corpus, the currently largest corpus of Estonian, compiled of 270,000,000 words of texts collected from Estonian web sites<sup>1</sup>. As we are interested in god's activities, we searched for clauses that include the singular nominative form of the word *jumal* 'god' as a noun and a proper noun and a verb in the 3rd person singular form. Because of reasons of time and space, the query was restricted to verbs in the indicative mood, present tense, and affirmative polarity. The verb *olema* 'be' was excluded by search parameters.

**Table 1.** Top 20 verbal collocates of *jumal* 'god' based on absolute frequency of co-occurrence. **Table 2.** Top 20 verbal collocates of *jumal* 'god' based on the log-likelihood measure.

#	Verb lemma	Meaning	Absolute frequency
1	<i>teadma</i>	know	612
2	<i>andma</i>	give	534
3	<i>tahtma</i>	want	460
4	<i>tegema</i>	do	290
5	<i>saama</i>	get	276
6	<i>armastama</i>	love	249
7	<i>üttelema</i>	say	224
8	<i>võima</i>	can	214
9	<i>kutsuma</i>	call	181
10	<i>aitama</i>	help	147
11	<i>nägema</i>	see	144
12	<i>rääkima</i>	speak	143
13	<i>tulema</i>	come	137
14	<i>ootama</i>	wait	111
15	<i>lubama</i>	allow	109
16	<i>juhtima</i>	direct	106
17	<i>pidama</i>	have to	106
18	<i>võtma</i>	take	104
19	<i>juhatama</i>	guide	97
20	<i>soovima</i>	wish	97

#	Verb lemma	Meaning	Log-likelihood score
1	<i>armastama</i>	love	1,216
2	<i>teadma</i>	know	1,171
3	<i>tahtma</i>	want	845
4	<i>saama</i>	get	683
5	<i>andma</i>	give	654
6	<i>juhatama</i>	guide	502
7	<i>kutsuma</i>	call	472
8	<i>tegema</i>	do	376
9	<i>ilmutama</i>	reveal	354
10	<i>pidama</i>	have to	350
11	<i>tulema</i>	come	348
12	<i>õnnistama</i>	bless	340
13	<i>võima</i>	can	329
14	<i>juhtima</i>	direct	249
15	<i>päästma</i>	save	230
16	<i>võtma</i>	take	206
17	<i>karistama</i>	punish	203
18	<i>hoolitsema</i>	care (for)	200
19	<i>kõnetama</i>	bespeak	186
20	<i>vastama</i>	answer	156

The search resulted in 8277 examples, some of which included two or more clauses that contained *jumal* ‘god’ (as the subject) and a finite verb. After cleaning the data, we ended up with the final dataset of 8329 examples. Within these 8329 examples *jumal* ‘god’ co-occurred with 598 verb lemmas. In the following, we present the top verb collocates of *jumal* ‘god’ based on absolute frequency of co-occurrence (Table 1) and top collocates based on collocational strength (calculated with the log-likelihood measure) (Table 2).

The tables suggest that the two methods of determining collocates give partly overlapping results. The verbs that rendered the strongest collocates based on absolute frequency as well as collocational strength are given in shaded cells. It can be observed that on the Estonian Internet, *jumal* ‘god’ most commonly *armastab* ‘loves’, *tahab* ‘wants’, *teeb* ‘does’, *teab* ‘knows’, *annab* ‘gives’, *võib* ‘can’, *kutsub* ‘calls’, *tuleb* ‘comes’, *juhib* ‘directs’, *juhatab* ‘guides’, *peab* ‘has to’ and *võtab* ‘takes’.

The data suggests that the verbs that are frequent collocates of *jumal* ‘god’ based on the absolute frequency of co-occurrence (see Table 1), but have weaker collocational strength, tend to be more frequent in general and express neutral activities (*ütleva* ‘say’, *aitama* ‘help’, *nägema* ‘see’, *rääkima* ‘speak’, *ootama* ‘wait’, *lubama* ‘allow’, *soovima* ‘wish’). However, some of those verbs, i.e. *nägema* ‘see’ (as in example (1)) and *aitama* ‘help’ (as in example (2)), are associated with specific features of God, i.e. the omnipresence and omnipotence.

(1) *Jumal näeb kõike.*  
‘God sees everything.’

(2) “*Ma teadsin, et Jumal aitab meid sealt välja,*” kirjeldas oma läbielamisi kolmas päästetud kaevur 40-aastane Mario Sepulveda.  
“I knew that God would help us get out,” said 40-year old miner Mario Sepulveda when describing what he had been through.’

On the other hand, not all of the strong collocates are necessarily among the most frequent collocates of *jumal* ‘god’. Table 2 also includes verbs that are not that frequent based on their absolute co-occurrence with *jumal* ‘god’. These verbs have strong associational strength with *jumal* ‘god’ due to their low frequency in general. Such verbs include lemmas that are rather specific to the agent at hand, e.g. *ilmutama* ‘reveal’ (see example (3)), *õnnistama* ‘bless’ (see example (4)), *päästma* ‘save’, *karistama* ‘punish’, *hoolitsema* ‘care (for)’.

(3) *Jumal ilmutab end nõrkades, allasurututes, silmapaistmatutes.*  
‘God reveals himself in the weak, oppressed, mediocre.’

(4) *Jumal **õnnistab** meid iga päev rikkalikult.*  
 'Every day God blesses us abundantly.'

When the common activities of *jumal* 'god' are compared to that of humans we see little overlap. The list of common activities of humans is based on Veismann et al. (2002) who used the list task and cognitive salience index (Sutrop 2001b) to determine the most salient Estonian verbs. The comparison of the top 20 rankings in the two studies shows that only three verbs overlap – *tegema* 'do', *tulema* 'come', and *armastama* 'love' (Veismann et al. 2002: 320). The small amount of shared verb lemmas may be due to the fact that the results have been obtained using different methods applied to achieve different goals. The list task in Veismann et al. (2002) was employed to determine the verbs that belong to the core vocabulary of Estonian, whereas the present corpus study attempts to investigate activities of a specific (inhumane) agent. Therefore, it is not unexpected that the (human) subjects produced verbs that refer to more mundane activities, such as eating, sleeping, drinking (Veismann et al. 2002: 321) but *jumal* 'god' is mainly associated with more abstract activities (e.g. guiding, knowing, wanting). In the following sections, the main activities of *jumal* 'god' are discussed in more detail.

### God loves us ... no matter what?

*Armastama* 'love' is the most likely verb to co-occur with *jumal* 'god' according to the log-likelihood measure (see Table 2 above). Based on its absolute frequency of co-occurrence, it holds the 6th position with 249 instances (see Table 1). Most of the examples of *armastama* 'love' in our dataset pertain to the Christian context, referring to the all-loving God (as exemplified in (5)). However, there are also examples where conditions are listed, under which god would love someone or something (see example (6)).

(5) *Pidada meeles, et kõiki inimesi, sh kristlasi, **armastab** Jumal tingimusteta ning sõltumata seksuaalsest orientatsioonist ja sooidentiteedist.*

'One must keep in mind that God loves all people, including Christians, unconditionally and regardless of their sexual orientation and gender identity.'

(6) *Sõnakuulelikku **armastab** jumal, sõnakuulmatut ta vihkab.*  
 'God loves the obedient, but hates the disobedient.'

## God knows and guides

*Teadma* 'know' is the most frequent verb (612 occurrences) and one of the strongest collocates of *jumal* 'god'. The data includes cases where *teadma* 'know' is used in its literal meaning (as in (7)) where the combination of the verb and *jumal* is used to express the ability of God to know what somebody is doing. However, in addition, the string *jumal teab* 'god knows' is also used as a lexicalized whole and it expresses indefiniteness. For instance, in (8) *jumal teab* 'god knows' means that nobody knows what the social workers are up to. The semantic shift of the expression assumedly takes place in contexts observable in (9). The shift is based on the assumption that god (only) knows [something] and that we, i.e. humans do not. Therefore, nobody knows.<sup>2</sup> However, this type of change is not confined to *jumal* 'god' but can be found in case of other 'taboo agents' (e.g. *kurat* 'devil') as well (see Kehayov 2009).

(7) *Tõesti, Jumal **teab** täpselt, mida te teete.*  
'Really, god knows exactly what do you do.'

(8) *Sotsiaaltöötajad tegelevad jumal **teab** millega.*  
'Social workers are up to god knows what.'

(9) *Palju selle lammutatud süsteemi taasloomine jälle maksma läheb, Jumal **teab**, Pille Saar mitte.*  
'How much does it cost to rebuild the demolished system? God knows, Pille Saar doesn't.'

A similar semantic shift has taken place with the verb *juhatama* 'guide'. Most commonly, it appears in the examples such as (10) where the string (*nagu*) *jumal juhatab* 'as god guides' has developed a holistic meaning 'randomly'. Thus, in this case too, the semantic shift is based on the interpretation that the manner in which god guides things is unbeknownst to us, humans. However, in some rare cases, the verb *juhatama* 'guide' also appears in its concrete meaning (as in (11)). Such cases resemble examples with another verb stemming from the same root – *juhtima* 'direct' (as in (12)).

(10) *Tõsi, ühe kaupluse juures küll vahetati pudelid raha vastu, kuid seda nii nagu jumal **juhatab** ehk täiesti ettearvamatutel aegadel.*  
'True, at one of the stores, we managed to exchange the empty bottles for money; but this happens at totally random times.'



(11) *Katolikus ühiskonnas puudub üksikisiku vastutus, sest Jumal **juhatab** nagu peab.*

‘In catholic society, an individual has no responsibility because God guides [people] in their actions.’

(12) *Inimene mõtleb, jumal **juhhib**.*

‘Man thinks, God directs.’

### God often gives, but less often takes

*Andma* ‘give’ is the second most frequent verb in our dataset. The combination of *jumal* ‘god’ and *annab* (give-3SG) has 534 occurrences in our data, and the verb holds the 5th position as for the collocational strength. The entities given by god include various types, e.g. God gives people peace (as in (13)) or an overview (as in (14)). Majority of the instances of the phrase *jumal annab* ‘god gives’ are related to religious contexts (as in (13)).

(13) *Jumal **annab** rahu südamesse ja hinge.*

‘God gives [us] piece of mind.’

(14) *Jumal **annab** siin ülevaate universumi elanike geneoloogilisest päritolust.*

‘Here god gives an overview of the genealogical heritage of the habitants of the universe.’

The opposite action, taking, is however more infrequent in god’s actions: the instances of the phrase *jumal võtab* ‘god takes’ are about 5 times less frequent, altogether 104 instances. Despite of this, *võtma* ‘take’ is still considered to belong to the group of top collocates of *jumal* ‘god’. However, it should be noted that the verb is mostly not used in the literal meaning but occurs as a part of the phrasal verb *võtab vastu* ‘welcomes, accepts’, as in (15) or *võtma* ‘take’ + V<sub>INF1</sub> construction *võtab kuulda* ‘take heed’, as in (16) (cf. also Tragel et al. 2015).

(15) *Jumal **võtab KÕIK vastu**, lollid kaasaarvatud!*

‘God acceptst everybody, even fools.’

(16) *Et isegi kui üks inimene palvetab, **võtab** Jumal seda **kuulda**.*

‘Even if one individual prays, God will hear them.’

## God wants

*Tahtma* ‘want’ is the third most frequent verb in our dataset (460 occurrences) and holds the 3rd position in the ranking based on collocational strength. In Estonian, the verb *tahtma* ‘want’ has many meanings and is grammaticalized as far as to the postmodal avertive function (see Habicht et al. 2010). Wanting in general is an intrasubjective concept expressing a desire and/or volition. According to our data, the desires of god resemble that of humans (see examples (17) and (18)).

(17) *Jumal tahab teha selliseid asju, mis haaravad inimeste tähelepanu.*  
‘God wants to do the kind of things that attract people’s attention.’

(18) ... *Jumal tahab, et minust saaks president.*  
‘God wants me to become a president.’

## God comes, but does not go

The Estonian core verbs (see Tragel 2001) are rather well presented among the top collocates of *jumal* ‘god’. For instance, the top collocates include the following core verbs – *tegema* ‘do’, *tulema* ‘come’, *saama* ‘get’, *andma* ‘give’, *võtma* ‘take’, *pidama* ‘have to’, *võima* ‘can’. It is quite expected that the verbs that are very general, grammatical, and frequent in Estonian are also present in the context of god’s activities. After all, god made man after his own image, or rather, the other way around. In each case, it is not surprising that their core activities overlap. Nevertheless, some core verbs, especially verbs of movement do not express activities common to *jumal* ‘god’. The data suggest that the combinations of *jumal* ‘god’ and *läheb* (go-3SG) and *jumal* ‘god’ and *käib* (go-3SG) only appear 17 and 11 times respectively (see example (19)). Thus, it seems that *jumal* ‘god’ is fonder of actions than motion. However, *tulema* ‘come’, which occurs on 137 occasions and also belongs to the strongest collocates is an exception. *Tulema* ‘come’ typically appears in the examples where *jumal* ‘god’ moves (in a physical or abstract sense) towards humans (see (20) and (21)).

(19) *Tean nimelt, et Jumal käib mu ees ja kõrval.*  
‘In fact, I know that God walks in front of me and beside me.’

(20) *Jumal tuleb maa peale!*  
‘God comes to Earth.’

(21) *Jumal ise tuleb Jeesuses Kristuses meie juurde ning seda mitte vaid kord, möödanikus, vaid pidevalt.*

'God himself comes to us in the body of Christ; and not only once in the past, but constantly.'

**In sum**, the data suggests that in addition to the more common, neutral verbs, the collocates of *jumal* 'god' also include verbs that are more agent (god) specific (e.g. *päästma* 'save', *ilmutama* 'reveal', *õnnistama* 'bless', *armastama* 'love', and *karistama* 'punish'). These verbs reflect the dominantly Christian nature of *jumal* 'god' on the Estonian Internet. The data also suggests that *jumal* 'god' is more fond of action than motion and that the top verb collocates are quite abstract as for the actions they refer to. As god walks in mysterious ways, the combinations of *jumal* 'god' and certain verbs (*teadma* 'know', *juhatama* 'guide') have acquired holistic interpretations, meaning 'indefinite' or 'random'.

### **JUMAL IS NOT ALWAYS 'GOD'**

Although in modern language use when using the word *jumal* 'god' the speaker is not always referring to god as a higher power Estonians' language use is nevertheless based on a Christian background (see also Riistan 2006). However, as in other European languages the use of God's name differs from that of earlier times when even naming the higher power could have great consequences. One of the speech acts associated with *god* is swearing. People "swear by some higher force or somebody; we swear that something is so; we swear to do something; we swear at something or somebody; and we swear simply out of anger, disappointment, or frustration" (Hughes 2006). Swearing, originally having ritual meaning, has developed into emotional exclamatory sentences and intensifiers of scalar qualities.

### ***Jumal* 'god' as an interjection**

The noun *jumal* 'god' can occur as an emotional interjection comprising an independent utterance (mainly in the form *oi jumal!* 'oh God!'; *issand jumal!* 'Lord God!', *jumal küll!* 'God indeed!' or *jumaluke!* 'dear God!') or belonging to a larger utterance as a syntactically free adjunct. In this case the noun *jumal* 'god' is desemanticized, the utterance lacks internal structure (c.f. *Taevake!* 'Heavens!', *Oh sa tuline tuhat!* lit. 'Oh you fiery thousand!', *Kurat!* 'Devil!', *Sa armas aeg küll!* lit. 'You dear time!' etc, see EKG II 1993: 182). Similar constructions in dialects were discussed above.

The exclamative utterances containing *jumal* ‘god’ mostly express some type of emotion and are placed within the syntactic unit that specifies the object of that emotion. These exclamatory sentences originate from an appeal to some higher power who should then help the speaker with his/her predicament related to the emotion. Sometimes the construction also explicitly contains a term of address *sa* ‘you’ (*oh sa jumal!* ‘oh you God!’, *oh sa püha jumal!* ‘oh you holy God!’ etc.). Historically, such address has been deontic (the speaker tried to influence the higher power to do something), in the modern secularized world it is rather the expression of the speaker’s subjective emotion (Arnovick 2000: 4).

While it is probably impossible to list all the emotions that the phrases containing *jumal* ‘god’ represent, a few types can be observed in the data. For example, one distinct group is comprised by situations of opposition where the speaker utters a sentence beginning with an exclamatory phrase containing *jumal* ‘god’ that opposes the partner’s previous statement (22–24). The phrase containing *jumal* ‘god’ can also precede a reproach (25).

(22) *R: mul akkab juba alb kui ma seda suurt söömist \$ vaatan \$.*  
‘I get sick already when I look at all this eating.’

*E: oi jumal (.) mul läheb aina paremaks. (1.0) [S]*  
‘Oh God, I feel better and better.’

(23) *jumal küll ega ma sis nüüd ei ole (-) mingi siuke hehe \$ röövitädi [S]*  
‘For God’s sake, I’m not some such robber-auntie.’

(24) *ah jumalukene ega ma tervet lugu soa meelde jätta sis. [S]*  
‘Ah dear God, I can’t remember the whole story, can I.’

(25) *Issand jumal! Sa ikka alles minemata!*  
‘God! You still haven’t gone!’

An exclamatory phrase containing *jumal* ‘god’ can also occur at the end of the sentence. In example (26) it seems to express mainly irritation and occurs after the partner has initiated self-repair and conveys displeasure that the repair was needed at all.

(26) *M: \$ ma enam ei tee. \$ (laughter in the background)*  
‘I won’t do it again.’

*T: \$ autor krooksub. \$ hehe*  
‘The author belches.’

*M: \$ mis autor ma olen. \$*  
 'I'm no kind of author.'

*T: nojah, [see kes LITEREERIB, jumal küll.] [S]*  
 'Alright, the one who transcribes, for God's sake.'

Since exclamatory phrases containing *jumal* 'god' are widespread and stylistically fairly neutral in everyday speech they are often used for marking the occasions when somebody else's words or thoughts are being reported. In example (27) the speaker repeats Riho's words which, according to the speaker, Riho had said in a surprised manner. Characteristically to spoken language the reported speech starts with the conjunction *et* 'that' but since the intonation changes and the pronoun *teil* 'you' probably refers to Riho's conversation partner the illusion of direct speech is created for the listener. *issand jumal* lit. 'Lord God' helps to support this interpretation.

(27) *T: .jajah? (.) siis lähed öösel [uut otsima.]*  
 'Yes, then you go at night to look for a new one.'

*L: [ei saa peksa.] (.) Riho imestas=et (1.0) @*  
*issand jumal teil need veel alles. @ hehe \$ ei ole ikka katki läind. \$ (1.2)*  
 [S]  
 'Won't get beaten up. Riho wondered that God you still have these, they still haven't broken.'

Sometimes, thoughts that may never have been uttered can be presented as reported speech. The speaker conveys the event as if it took place at the time of speech and the phrase containing *jumal* 'god' adds emotional authenticity. In example (28) the parts *oh jumal* 'oh God' and *mis nüüd saab siis* 'what will happen now then', starting with the conjunction *et* 'that', specify the content of the phobia that is mentioned earlier, *oh jumal* 'oh God' indicates that the phobia is emotionally loaded. Example (29) does not contain a conjunction and the strongest device creating the appearance of direct speech is the phrase *issand jumal* 'lit. Lord God'. In examples (27), (28) and (29) it can be seen that the phrase containing *jumal* 'god' combines with deictics (*teil* 'you' and *need* 'these', *nüüd* 'now', *see* 'it' and *mina* 'me', accordingly) and the verbs in the sentences are also in present tense (although the rest of the context, characteristically to a narrative, is in past tense) which also supports the impression of direct speech.

(28) *nojaa aga aga asi on selles, et kui nüüd ekssole sattuda niuksesse ee foobiasse, ekssole=et oh jumal et mis nüüd saab sis*  
 'Yes, but the thing is that if you get into such a fobia, right, that, oh God, what will happen now then'

(29) A: [jajaa] (.) aa, mina vaatasin enne ülikooli ees=et, kellele (.) kellele=se=**Jaak** nii viipab onju, nii sõbralikult=et ma olin (.) ma olin ka nii kaugel, [s=lähedal] vaatsin **issand jumal** mis [see on, 'Yes, yes, but I was looking earlier in front of the university that who does that Jaak wave to, right, in such a friendly way that, I was, I was also so far, near, I looked that, God, what is it,']

M: [(-)] [**issand** kas see tõesti olen mina (-)]  
'Lord, is it really me'

Such phrases containing *jumal* 'god' that intensify the emotion being described also occur in written text that attempts to convey the emotionality of spoken language. Example (30) refers to the speaker's feelings which are in fact only characterized by the phrase *issand jumal* lit. 'Lord God'.

(30) *Kui ma fentanüüli proovisin, siis ma tundsin, et **issand jumal**, kas on tõesti võimalik, et kõik halvad emotsioonid on kadunud.*  
'When I tried fentanyl I felt that, God, is it really possible that all the bad emotions have disappeared.'

### ***Jumal* 'god' as an intensifier**

The genitive form of the word *jumal* 'god' has grammaticalized into an intensifying adverb meaning 'very' and modifying an adjective (see also EKSS 2009). It was mentioned above that this use is also present in dialects. *Jumala* 'god's' can probably intensify any adjective but it is primarily found with scalar<sup>3</sup> adjectives (31–34).

(31) *Siis nägin Markot ja ajasime juttu ja **jumala** kihvti juttu võib see tüüp ikka ajada. [I]*  
'Then I met Marko and we talked and that guy can really talk.' Lit. 'can talk God's amazing talk'

(32) *tal on **jumala** sirged siuksed panni juuksed on muidu onju [S]*  
'He/she has totally straight hair like a pan otherwise, right.' Lit. 'God's straight hair'

(33) *ja=ja siis Summing seal noh minuga **jumala** suur < sõber > onju [S]*  
'And-and then Summing there, well, really great friend with me, right.'  
Lit. 'God's great friend'

(34) *Anni juurde seal on jumala ilus onju [S]*

'To Ann's place it is really beautiful there right.' Lit. 'God's beautiful'

*Jumala* 'god's' can also intensify scalar adverbs (35).

(35) *Aga pooled neist või vähemalt paljud neist olid kuidagi tiidakil ja Klaara maja "paraad" -uks oli märgatavalt tiidakil, kaks paekivist trepiastet servast murenenud ja ülemine jumala lõhki, ...*

'But half of them or at least many of them were somehow askew and the front door of Klaara's house was noticeably askew, two limestone steps crumbled at the edges and the upper one completely split, ...' Lit. 'God's split'

*Jumala* 'god's' can occasionally also occur as a modifier preceding a noun, thus functioning as an adjective meaning approximately 'true, real, great'. However, this use is considerably less frequent than its use as an adverb. Pajusalu (2006) only found one noun – *õnn* 'luck' – with *jumala* 'god's' as its modifier (36) in the spoken language data whereas *kuradi*, the genitive form of the word *kurat* 'devil' which has similar functions at first glance typically occurred as a modifier (*kuradi paarike* 'damn couple', lit. 'devil's couple', etc.)

(36) *aga jumala õnn=et Kadaka Tiia see (.) mees mehel tulid brigaad tuli 'krohvimäe ga'raazhi minu kõrval=ja [S]*

'But it's God's luck that Kadaka Tiia's that husband had a team come to plaster the garage next to me and'

*Jumala* 'god's' as a modifier is more frequent in written language but mostly preceding abstract nouns that can be interpreted as scalar and that could also be preceded by adjectives *suur* 'big' or *täielik* 'total'. For example, there are occurrences of the noun phrase *jumala tõsi* 'God's truth' (37).

(37) *Hoolimata spontaansest teietusest oli see jumala tõsi ning ei johtunud kindlasti mitte joodud pudelist õllest, see oli isegi minu jaoks tühine kogus.*

'Despite the spontaneous use of *teie* [polite form of address] it was God's truth and was definitely not caused by the bottle of beer I had drunk, that was a paltry amount even for me.'

There are also some sentences in the corpus where *jumala* 'god's' modifies a verb (38) although these are probably not acceptable as grammatical for all speakers of Estonian. Here as well the meaning is primarily intensifying.

(38) *Vaatasin enda kätt ja siis üks hetk jumala kangestusin.*

'I looked at my hand and then one moment I totally froze.' Lit. 'God's froze'

Phrases containing *jumala* ‘god’s’ can also function as intensifiers. All the exclamatory phrases described above intensify the emotions being expressed. Sometimes such exclamatory phrases can also be used as modifiers following a noun (*sihuke naistemees et jumal hoia* ‘such a ladies’ man that God keep’, 39).

(39) *Vahest on säherdune vennike, kui koduse lõa otsast pääseb, sihuke naistemees et **jumal** hoia!* [I]

‘Sometimes such a guy, when he escapes from the leash at home, is such a ladies’ man that God keep!’

As in dialects, in written language there is also such use where the meaning of *jumala* ‘god’s’ is rather ‘natural, all-encompassing’. Accompanied by time units *jumala* ‘god’s’ occurs in the construction *iga jumala päev / nädal / ?* ‘every God’s day/week/?’ (40, 41) where the function of *jumala* ‘god’s’ is to intensify the meaning of the quantor *iga* ‘every’.

(40) *Ma ju tunnen seda nagu oma kodu, iga **jumala** päeva veedan ma seal, olgu külm või sadagu vihma.*

‘I know it like my own home, every God’s day I spend there, be it cold or raining.’

(41) *Iga **jumala** nädal viis ta mind, isa tähendab, ratsutama.*

‘Every God’s week he took me, father, that is, riding.’

### Idiomatic phrases *jumala eest* and *jumala pärast*

As already mentioned above the word *jumal* ‘god’ occurs in many fixed phrases, two very frequent of which are *jumala eest* and *jumala pärast* that could both be translated as ‘for God’s sake’.

It is a relatively rare phenomenon that words that are considered to be semantic antonyms can occur as synonyms in certain contexts. However, some examples can be found among highly polysemous words (e.g. *great* and *fine*). Estonian temporal adpositions *eest* ‘ago, since’ and *pärast* ‘after’ can be considered a semantically opposite pair (for example in sentences 42 and 43).

(42) *Kahe aasta eest* ‘two years ago’

(43) *Kahe aasta pärast* ‘after two years’

Both *eest* and *pärast* have grammaticalized through the concept of space. Both have become adpositions in the relative form of a noun (*ee-st* ‘front-ELA’; *pära-st* ‘back-ELA’). The etymological origin of the adposition *eest* is the noun \**eðe*



(> *esi*, gen. *ee*) which means 'location in front, e.g. the strip or section of work ahead'. The word has cognates in several Finno-Ugric languages (for example Finnish, Veps, Ostyak, Vogul, Hungarian), also in the meaning of 'front part' or 'the area in front of the mover' (EES 2012). The etymological origin of the adposition *pärast* is the noun *\*perä* (> *pära*, gen. *pära*) meaning 'location in back, rear part or end' (also with cognates in several Finno-Ugric languages, e.g. Livonian, Finnish, Komi etc.) (EES 2012).

The adposition *eest* has the (separative) meaning of spacial location (example 44, 45), the adposition *pärast* only expresses temporal and abstract relations.

(44) *Kohe maja eest läheb suur tee mööda.*

'A big road passes right in front of the house.'

(45) *Keegi ei tule mu maja eest lund ära koristama.*

'Nobody will come to clean up the snow from the front of my house.'

Both adpositions have numerous meanings/uses in the abstract domain, some of them being either similar (*eest* 'reward' and *pärast* 'cause, reason, because of') or (less frequently) the same (*võitlema millegi eest-pärast* 'fight for sth'). In addition, both adpositions *eest* and *pärast* can be accompanied by the noun *jumal* 'god' as a complement, thus forming synonymous fixed phrases *jumala eest* and *jumala pärast*, lit. 'for God's sake', an exclamation to emphasize a request. We will now go on to examine the use of these two phrases in written Estonian. The data was gathered from the Balanced Corpus of Written Estonian and the Estonian internet corpus etTenTen via *keeleveeb.ee*.

The query *jumala eest* yielded 95 sentences from the Balanced Corpus and 1060 sentences from etTenTen. Of these, 449 were analyzed (after randomizing the sequence of the sentences). The query *jumala pärast* yielded 38 and 390 sentences, accordingly, from the two corpora, leaving 351 sentences for analysis after the unsuitable sentences were removed. The sentences considered unsuitable were those where *jumala eest* or *jumala pärast* was either used in its literal sense (religious texts) or were exclamatory sentences containing only the one phrase. The religious sentences left out of the analysis were nevertheless briefly examined in order to get information about how the meaning of the phrase had developed. While the Spelling Dictionary of Estonian (ÕS 2013) also suggests that it is possible to spell *jumalapärast* as a single word, this was not included in the analysis since it would have only yielded six additional sentences, out of which only three would have been suitable for analysis. Grammatical polarity (negative, affirmative) and mood (indicative, conditional, imperative) of the verb in the clause associated with the phrase *jumala eest* or *jumala pärast* were analysed in the sentences.

As the data show, the phrase *jumala eest* is considerably more frequent in written Estonian than *jumala pärast*. Both *jumala eest* and *jumala pärast* are used to express various desires, commands and prohibitions.

The phrase *jumala eest* was most frequently used in combination with the negative of conditional mood (example 46), 117 times. Negative of imperative mood was used 96 times (example 47) and affirmative of indicative mood 100 times (example 48). *Jumala eest* was least frequent in combination with the affirmative of conditional mood (19 times, example 49).

(46) *Nägin, kuidas maja kõikus, ja mõtlesin: et ta **jumala eest** siia poole ei kukuks.*

‘I saw the building sway and thought: that it wouldn’t fall this way for God’s sake.’

(47) *Arva vähem ja **jumala eest**, ära rohkem kirjuta.*

‘Have fewer opinions and for God’s sake, don’t write anything else.’

(48) ***Jumala eest** õige jutt ja mitu kuud tagasi oleks juba tehtud pidanud olema.*

‘By God, that is true and it should have been done several months ago.’

(49) *Kui ma tohiksin nutta, **jumala eest**, ma nutaksin.*

‘If I were allowed to cry, by God, I would cry.’

The phrase *jumala pärast* is most frequently accompanied by negation in imperative mood (example 50), 108 times, and negation in conditional mood (example 51), 87 times. *Jumala pärast* was least frequently accompanied by affirmative in conditional mood, 6 times.

(50) ***Jumala pärast** ära looda, et nad sind aitavad...*

‘Don’t, under any circumstances, hope that they will help you...’

(51) *Kõik valvavad kõiki, et keegi **jumala pärast** rohkem ei maksaks kui siin on heaks tavaks.*

‘Everybody is watching everybody, so that no-one, under any circumstances, would pay more than is best practice here.’

Both phrases occur more frequently in negative sentences but *jumala pärast* favors negation more often (*jumala eest* 62% in the context of negation, *jumala pärast* 73% in the context of negation). *Jumala pärast* is frequent in the context of clearly verbalized prohibitions (*ärge jumala pärast tehke* ‘do not, under any circumstances, do sth’), the use of *jumala eest* is characterized by prohibitions in conditional mood (*et nad jumala eest ei teeks* ‘hope to God, that they wouldn’t

do sth'). It is notable that *jumala eest* occurs relatively frequently also in the affirmative of indicative mood, where it occurs in the meaning of 'indeed' (example 48), whereas *jumala pärast* is rather rare in such context.

To sum up (see Figure 1), *jumala eest* occurs both in requests that something not be done (in conditional or imperative) and as a disjunct in the sense of 'indeed'.

*Jumala pärast* mainly occurs in imperative or conditional mood with requests that something would not be done/not happen. *Jumala eest* is more frequent and has semantically wider use than *jumala pärast*.

Looking at the sentences that were not included in the analysis and where the phrase occurred in a religious context it can be observed that *jumala eest* is collocationally most frequently associated with concealing and hiding (example 52) and escaping (example 53).

(52) *Aga sa ei saa **Jumala eest** midagi peita, mis mõte on siis isegi püüda seda teha?*  
 'But you cannot hide anything from God, then what is the point of even trying to do that?'

(53) *Ma põgenesin palju aastaid **Jumala eest**.*  
 'For many years I was escaping from God.'

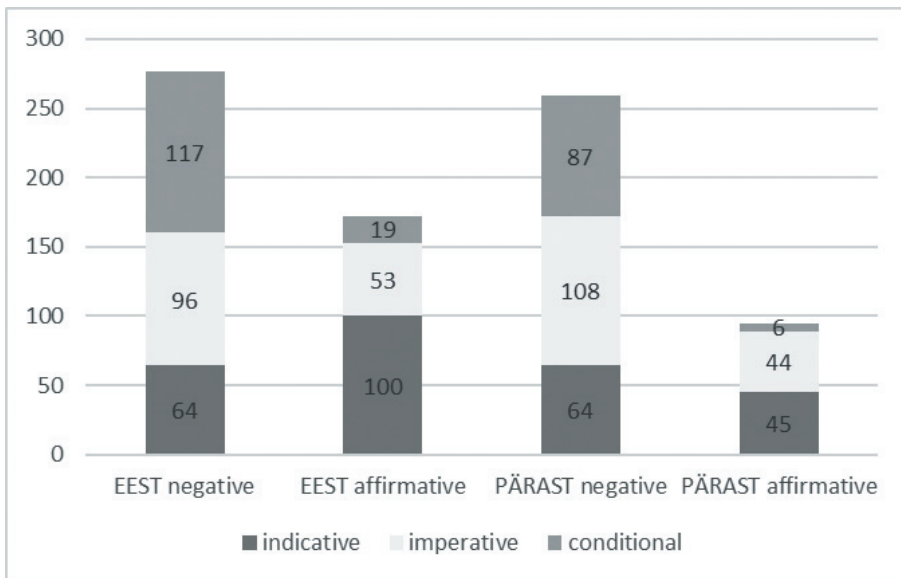


Figure 1. *Jumala eest* and *jumala pärast* in Estonian Balanced Corpus and etTenTen.

*Jumala pärast* mainly occurs in a context where something is being done because of God, God is the motive for doing something (for giving something up, fighting, loving etc.). It could be said that in the religious context the adpositional phrases *jumala eest* and *jumala pärast* have retained a certain connection with the original, spatial meaning: when escaping or hiding, the escaper moves in front of the one from whom he/she is trying to escape; while *pära* ‘rear end’ is the part of a vehicle that, when one applies force to it, can be used to make the vehicle move and give it speed. Prohibition, which is especially characteristic to the idiomized expression *jumala pärast*, is also compatible with the corresponding meaning ‘because of God’ in a religious context. *Jumala eest*, on the other hand, has moved farther from the original meanings, which is also attested by the more frequent use in more varied contexts<sup>4</sup>.

## CONCLUSIONS

In this article we examined the meanings of the Estonian word *jumal* ‘god’. First, we presented an overview of the origin of the word *jumal* ‘god’ and its use in the dialects of Estonian. We then examined the verbs associated with the word *jumal* ‘god’ based on the data from the corpora of written Estonian. The comparison of frequency data and collocational strength revealed the verbs most frequently used in combination with the word *jumal* ‘god’. These verbs can be neutral, having a very general meaning (*tegema* ‘do, make’, *pidama* ‘have to’, *võtma* ‘take’) or specific to God as an agent (e.g., *armastama* ‘love’, *õnnistama* ‘bless’). In combination with some verbs the phrase has acquired holistic interpretations, meaning ‘indefinite’ or ‘random’ (e.g., *jumal teab* ‘god knows’). *Jumal* ‘God’ as an interjection is frequently desemantized, exclamatory utterances containing the word *jumal* ‘god’ express some emotion. These emotional units can be used in different conversational contexts, e.g. for marking direct speech. However, the connection between these phrases and applying to a higher power for assistance is transparent to some extent. The genitive form of the word *jumal* ‘god’ has grammaticalized into an intensifying adverb in the meaning of ‘very’ and primarily modifies scalar adjectives (e.g., *jumala ilus* ‘very beautiful’, lit. ‘God’s beautiful’). In the final part of the article we examined two synonymous idiomatic adpositional phrases containing the word *jumal* ‘god’ – *jumala eest* and *jumala pärast* ‘for God’s sake’. The corpus study showed that *jumala eest* is more frequent in Estonian and the meaning of the phrase may have desemantized into the meaning ‘indeed’ (occurring also in combination with a verb in the affirmative of indicative mood). The phrase *jumala pärast*

is less frequent and its usage is restricted mainly to the negative of imperative and conditional moods. It can be observed that while these adpositional phrases have retained a certain semantic connection to the meaning of the same phrases in religious context, both have developed into phraseological units.

In conclusion, it can be said that while speakers are often not referring to a higher power when using the word *jumal* 'god' in modern Estonian, the language use of Estonians is nevertheless based on a Christian background (see also Riistan 2006).

## ABBREVIATIONS FOR PARISHES

Har	Hargla
IisR	Coastal Iisaku
Jäm	Jämaja
Kaa	Kaarma
Khk	Kihelkonna
Kod	Kodavere
Krk	Karksi
Kse	Karuse
Lai	Laiuse
Lüg	Lüganuse
Mar	Martna
Mus	Mustjala
Pöi	Pöide
Rei	Reigi
Rõu	Rõuge
Se	Setu

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> <http://www2.keeleveeb.ee/dict/corpus/ettenten/about.html>.

<sup>2</sup> As such, the expression is somewhat close to the phrase *mine tea* (go.IMPER + know.IMPER), meaning 'do not know' (see Tragel 2003).

<sup>3</sup> For scales see, for example, Sutrop 2004b.

<sup>4</sup> Cf., for example, Geoffrey C. Williams who has shown how the collocations of the word *God* vary in the New Testament, the works of Shakespeare and BNC depending on whether the word *God* refers to an actor who is present (most frequent in NT), an external force (most frequent in the works of Shakespeare), or whether the resonance with the divide meaning has been lost (frequent in BNC) (Williams 2008).

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