



2015

# Sámi Time, Space, and Place: Exploring Teachers' Metapragmatic Statements on Sámi Language Use, Teaching, and Revitalization in Sápmi

Nancy H. Hornberger

*University of Pennsylvania*, [nancyh@gse.upenn.edu](mailto:nancyh@gse.upenn.edu)

Hanna Outakoski

Follow this and additional works at: [http://repository.upenn.edu/gse\\_pubs](http://repository.upenn.edu/gse_pubs)

 Part of the [Education Commons](#)

---

## Recommended Citation

Hornberger, N. H., & Outakoski, H. (2015). Sámi Time, Space, and Place: Exploring Teachers' Metapragmatic Statements on Sámi Language Use, Teaching, and Revitalization in Sápmi. *Confero*, 3 (1), 9-54. <http://dx.doi.org/10.3384/confero.2001-4562.150618>

This paper is posted at ScholarlyCommons. [http://repository.upenn.edu/gse\\_pubs/407](http://repository.upenn.edu/gse_pubs/407)

For more information, please contact [repository@pobox.upenn.edu](mailto:repository@pobox.upenn.edu).

---

# Sámi Time, Space, and Place: Exploring Teachers' Metapragmatic Statements on Sámi Language Use, Teaching, and Revitalization in Sápmi

## **Abstract**

Late in the evening before a regular school day, the mother of a Sámi family gets a call from her husband working at the reindeer corral saying that the reindeer will be brought in for separation and round-up early in the next morning. In the morning the rest of the family will join the father and other relatives at the reindeer corral and will be working late with the reindeers that day. At school the teachers get the information about the reindeer roundup from those children that are present in the morning, or from Sámi colleagues that have also gone to the corral. That day must, for the most part, be rescheduled at very short notice. The reactions to the changes are varying amongst the staff. The time used for rescheduling and planning the rest of that school day, or the coming couple of days, is not something that any member of the staff is looking forward to, but the attitudes, frustration and values that relate to the unpredictability of everyday life and the peculiarities of this particular cultural context are experienced in many different ways.

## **Disciplines**

Education

# Sámi time, space, and place: Exploring teachers' metapragmatic statements on Sámi language use, teaching, and revitalization in Sápmi

*Nancy H. Hornberger*

*and Hanna Outakoski*

Late in the evening before a regular school day, the mother of a Sámi family gets a call from her husband working at the reindeer corral saying that the reindeer will be brought in for separation and round-up early in the next morning. In the morning the rest of the family will join the father and other relatives at the reindeer corral and will be working late with the reindeers that day. At school the teachers get the information about the reindeer roundup from those children that are present in the morning, or from Sámi colleagues that have also gone to the corral. That day must, for the most part, be rescheduled at very short notice. The reactions to the changes are varying amongst the staff. The time used for rescheduling and planning the rest of that school day, or the coming couple of days, is not something that any member of the staff is looking forward to, but the attitudes, frustration and values that relate to the unpredictability of everyday life and the peculiarities of this particular cultural context are experienced in many different ways.

This scenario from the ‘global everyday’<sup>1</sup> of Sápmi hints at some of the tensions teachers experience in their encounter with the local context of Sámi lives. Our goal in this paper is to shed light on this context, exploring Sámi language use, teaching and revitalization and the role of the school therein through the words of teachers in Sápmi. Drawing on interviews with 18 teachers—primary school teachers of Sámi language, teachers of other languages and teachers that use Sámi language as medium of instruction, carried out in the context of a larger research project on youth multilingual literacy in Sápmi<sup>2</sup>, we highlight themes of time, space, and place as indexed in teachers’ metapragmatic statements about Sámi language use, language teaching, and language revitalization. Woven through teachers’ statements are ideological threads of a Sámi sense of place as identity and meaning-making, the Sápmi region as an ideological and implementational space for Sámi identity and language, and a timescale oriented toward ensuring the continuing use, teaching, and revitalization of Sámi language into many future generations to come.

The Sámi are Indigenous people of Europe—a politically dominated people divided across nation-state boundaries and histories of Finland, Norway, Sweden, and Russia; Sápmi is their traditional (and transnational) settlement area in Northern Europe. Nine Sámi languages are still spoken; we focus here on the largest, North Sámi, with an estimated 15-30,000 speakers. We are interested in how Sámi teachers ideologically approach the use and teaching of Sámi language amidst globalizing processes

---

<sup>1</sup> Appadurai, 2000, p. 18.

<sup>2</sup> The larger cross-national research project, *Literacy in Sápmi: multilingualism, revitalization and literacy development in the global north*, is based at Umeå University. The project aims at investigating the immediate institutional and societal context for multilingual literacy development of North Sámi learning children and youth between the ages of 9 and 18 in schools across Sweden, Norway, and Finland. For methodological details of the larger study, see Outakoski, Lindgren, Westum and Sullivan, in press.

and effects of migration, mass media, global capitalism and environmental degradation in North Sámi communities. In an era when communication and linguistic inequality are increasingly structured around not only place-based languages but also globally mobile linguistic and semiotic resources (such as registers, genres, varieties, styles, accents, modes and modalities), we offer insights for recent scholarship on ‘globalization from below’, that is on ‘strategies, visions, and horizons for globalization on behalf of the poor ... that proceed independently of the actions of corporate capital and the nation-state system’<sup>3</sup>. By highlighting ideologies that affect and inform language teachers in Sápmi in their daily lives, we contribute empirically to on-the-ground understandings of the strategies, visions, and horizons of front-line Indigenous language educators in one local context. Reciprocally, with this empirical look at language ideologies of educators actively involved in Sámi education in contemporary Sápmi, we complement existing scholarship on the contents of Sámi education<sup>4</sup>, models for teaching and integrating Sámi traditional knowledge in Sámi schools<sup>5</sup>, language skills of bilingual pupils<sup>6</sup>, ethnolinguistic vitality of Sámi language communities<sup>7</sup>, Sámi language revitalization efforts<sup>8</sup>, and the principles of child upbringing in the Sámi society<sup>9</sup>.

As researchers and educators committed to supporting Indigenous language education, Indigenous language revitalization initiatives and Indigenous language activists more generally, we are oriented toward not only illuminating Sámi teachers’ language ideologies but by so doing also exploring ideological and implementational spaces for supporting Sámi language education and language revitalization into the future. Hornberger has

---

<sup>3</sup> Appadurai, 2000, p. 3.

<sup>4</sup> Keskitalo, 2010.

<sup>5</sup> Jannok Nutti, 2010.

<sup>6</sup> Svonni, 1993.

<sup>7</sup> Rasmussen, 2013.

<sup>8</sup> Todal, 2007.

<sup>9</sup> Balto, 1997.

argued that there is urgent need for language educators, language planners, and language users to open and fill ideological and implementational spaces in local sociolinguistic ecologies for as many languages as possible, and in particular endangered languages, to evolve and flourish rather than dwindle and disappear<sup>10</sup>. ‘Ideological spaces are the dominant ways of understanding language in local settings while implementational spaces are the ways that these understandings are enacted in classroom practice’<sup>11</sup>. Implementational and ideological choices can be used strategically as reinforcements for each other; for example, ideological spaces opened up by policies may carve out implementational spaces for practice, and implementational spaces carved out from bottom up classroom practice may wedge open new ideological spaces<sup>12</sup>.

Beginning from these conceptual and methodological starting points, then, our analysis of the teachers' interviews addresses two questions. How do teachers' explicit comments on Sámi language use, language teaching and revitalization index time, space and place in Sápmi? How do their statements explicitly or implicitly position globalizing processes in local language practices and ideologies? These questions point to teachers' ideological constructions of Sámi language use, teaching, and revitalization, i.e. their language ideologies or ‘sets of beliefs about language articulated by users as a rationalization or justification of perceived language structure and use’<sup>13</sup>. We uncover those ideologies through analyzing teachers' metapragmatic statements—their explicit and implicit comments—about Sámi language use. Answers to these questions can, we believe, shed light on how language teaching and revitalization efforts from the bottom up can create new ideological and implementational spaces for Indigenous language use.

---

<sup>10</sup> Hornberger, 2002.

<sup>11</sup> Flores and Schissel, 2014, p. 455.

<sup>12</sup> Hornberger, 2002, 2006; Hornberger, and Johnson, 2007.

<sup>13</sup> Silverstein 1979, p. 198.

In the sections that follow, we first provide background on the Sápmi sociolinguistic and educational context, and on our analytical framework and methodology, and then take up the teachers' language ideologies. What stands out in our analysis are three ideological threads present in the teachers' statements: a Sámi sense of place as identity and meaning-making, the Sápmi region as an ideological and implementational space for Sámi identity and language, and a timescale oriented toward ensuring the continuing use, teaching, and revitalization of Sámi language into many future generations to come.

### **Sápmi sociolinguistic and educational context: a transnational Indigenous population**

The Sámi are Indigenous people of Northern Europe. The people and their languages are referred to as Sámi, Saami or Sami in contemporary literature and research, and as Lapps (people) and Lappish (language) in older sources. Northern Sámi themselves use the term or notion of Sápmi to refer to their ancestral land, the traditional settlement area of Sámi people that runs across the Kola Peninsula in Russia to northern Finland and further to the mountain regions and coastal areas of central and northern Norway and Sweden.

It is difficult to say how many Sámi there are today, with common estimates in the range of 50,000-100,000<sup>14</sup> people. The Sámi have greatly varying knowledge of and competence in Sámi languages as well as varying ties to Sámi culture and society. There are also other ethnic groups in Sápmi with varied competence in and ties to Sámi languages, who may for example use Sámi as the language of trade across borders (e.g. between Finland and Norway). Estimates of total numbers of Sámi speakers vary greatly due to the difficulties of defining language competence of individual speakers, and to the fact that

---

<sup>14</sup> Pettersen, 2011, p.187; Keskitalo, Määttä, and Uusiautti, 2014, p.70.

there are no shared official statistics<sup>15</sup> on language use and language practices for Sámi languages in the four countries that the Sápmi-area covers.

North Sámi is the largest of the nine Sámi languages still spoken, with an estimated 15,000-30,000 speakers in Sweden, Norway and Finland, most of them in northern Norway<sup>16</sup>. Rasmussen<sup>17</sup> finds that although rapid and acute language change and language loss threaten the future of North Sámi in some peripheral areas such as coastal areas of northern Norway, the numbers of North Sámi speakers have been rising steadily in other areas and, in fact, '*[v]eadjá leat nu ahte historjjás eai leat goassege leamaš nu ollu davvisámegiela hállit go 2000-logu álggus*' (it may well be that there have never in history been so many speakers of North Sámi as in the beginning of 21st century, our translation)<sup>18</sup>. Paradoxically, then, core areas of North Sámi speaking Sápmi are experiencing growth in numbers of speakers while peripheral areas undergo the opposite trend.

Two important historical circumstances characterize the Sápmi transnational space. First, the Sámi have since the 17<sup>th</sup> century been in the role of political and economic underdog, an unbalanced power relation that continues to exert strong influence on Sámi lives. Second, the physical and political separation of Sámi people to the geographical areas of four different national states has inevitably meant that Sámi living in different states experience different paths and future trajectories. The Sámi may therefore feel and express that they are one people today<sup>19</sup> but the desire to express cultural unity will not erase the marks in their present lives left by different state politics, language and educational policies and strategies for assimilation.

---

<sup>15</sup> Pettersen and Brustad, 2013.

<sup>16</sup> Seurujärvi-Kari, 2012; SENC (The Encyclopedia of Saami Culture), 2003.

<sup>17</sup> Rasmussen, 2013.

<sup>18</sup> Rasmussen, 2013, p. 89.

<sup>19</sup> Gáldu organization, 2006.



Not only transnationally but also within nations, there has been historically and up to the present a continuum of Sámi educational practices that can be seen as either promoting or threatening bilingualism and the building of strong Indigenous identities<sup>20</sup>. Hirvonen says of Norway that '[w]ithin the Sámi area, teaching in and of Sámi varies not only from one municipality to another, but also within individual municipalities'<sup>21</sup>. The same holds for Finland and Sweden<sup>22</sup>, where Sámi learners, depending on where they live, go to schools where Sámi language may be a) used as language of instruction in more than one subject, b) taught merely as a (foreign) language subject among all other subjects, or c) taught as an extracurricular mother tongue subject.

A recent proposal by Keskitalo, Määttä and Uusiautti that could target all Sámi language and culture education in the whole of Sápmi is a 'language immersion tepee' model based on the idea that language learning and the acquisition of cultural content should be accompanied by considerations of local community context, status of the language, and Indigenous epistemology<sup>23</sup>. Their stance is consistent with goals expressed by Pasanen<sup>24</sup> who sees revitalization as both necessary and desirable, and full-fledged immersion programs with the goal of strengthening Sámi language as target language as appropriate ideological and implementational spaces for revitalization in Sámi contexts. Heritage language pre-school immersion programs modeled on the *kohanga reo* pre-school language nests originally developed in Māori communities of New Zealand in the 1980s have spread to Indigenous language revitalization contexts around the world<sup>25</sup>, but have been difficult to imple-

---

<sup>20</sup> Skutnabb-Kangas, 1981.

<sup>21</sup> Hirvonen, 2008, p. 24.

<sup>22</sup> Puoskari-Aikio, 2006.

<sup>23</sup> Keskitalo et al., 2014.

<sup>24</sup> Pasanen, 2003.

<sup>25</sup> May, 2014.

ment in many parts of Sápmi due to the widely dispersed settlement patterns of Sámi speaking communities. The above proposed approaches to Sámi education are also in line with proactive and radical language ideological approaches to Native American education<sup>26</sup>. Many Sámi communities both in and outside Sápmi are actively engaged in culture and language reclamation and revitalization efforts and processes<sup>27</sup>, pressing schools to provide teaching in Sámi languages.

### **Analytical approach: Language ideology and globalization from below in Indigenous language education**

Grounding ourselves in the ‘sociolinguistics of speech’<sup>28</sup>, we understand language use, language structure, and political economy as integrally related<sup>29</sup>; language ideologies as mediating links in those relationships<sup>30</sup>; and discourse analysis as a useful tool in uncovering those relationships and links<sup>31</sup>. Language fulfills not only denotational but also indexical and constitutive roles with respect to social relations, such that even minute linguistic differences may project onto stratified patterns of social structure and indeed social inequality. From the perspective of the contemporary era of globalization and the ‘sociolinguistics of mobility’<sup>32</sup>, we further understand linguistic resources to move and function across layered and polycentric scales in time and space (hereafter used interchangeably with *timespace*)—local to intermediate to global, each scale with particular norms, patterns, and meanings of language use. From this perspective, teachers’ metapragmatic statements about Sámi language can be analyzed as reflecting and projecting values attached to lan-

---

<sup>26</sup> Kroskrity and Field, 2009.

<sup>27</sup> See e.g. Rasmussen, 2013, on the case of neighboring municipalities of Utsjoki (Finland) and Tana (Norway).

<sup>28</sup> Hymes, 1996.

<sup>29</sup> Gal, 1989.

<sup>30</sup> Woolard and Schieffelin, 1994.

<sup>31</sup> Pennycook, 1994.

<sup>32</sup> Blommaert, 2010.

guage and identity in layered and polycentric scales of time, space, and, as we suggest below, place.

We are interested not just in globalizing and scaling processes at work, but also in how they are taken up and (re)configured in local language ideologies in the sociolinguistic ecologies of Sámi schools. Pursuing the notion of ‘globalization from below’ in Indigenous language education contexts<sup>33</sup>, we explore tensions and possibilities manifest in the global everyday of Sámi linguistic ecologies, with particular attention to ideologies of time, space, and place. We join with recent work of Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars who seek to bring to light new possibilities at the ‘interface of local epistemologies ... with global time and spatial scales’ and to consider how Indigenous globalization from below can be a ‘force for dismantling local and global linguistic hierarchies’<sup>34</sup>. Key to this reconfiguring in Indigenous contexts, we suggest, is the sense of place.

In the geography literature, a distinction is made between space and place, with space theorized as comprised of relational places and places being geographically bounded portions of space<sup>35</sup>. Importantly, while place may be geographic and bounded, it is also ideological: ‘place is where the physical substratum merges with the people that act upon it, that think about it, that give it a name – to the place and to its contents; that recognize it and recognize themselves in it’<sup>36</sup>. Places have a central and enduring role in Indigenous language ideologies<sup>37</sup>, as geographies of social meaning and identity that naturalize ‘worlds of sense’<sup>38</sup>. This sense of place as tied to social meaning and identity be-

---

<sup>33</sup> Hornberger 1996; Hornberger & McCarty 2012

<sup>34</sup> Hornberger and McCarty, 2012, p. 6.

<sup>35</sup> Hawkins, 2014.

<sup>36</sup> Pascual-de-Sans 2004, p. 349, cited by Hawkins 2014, p. 94.

<sup>37</sup> Feld and Basso, 1996; Groff, 2010; Hornberger, 1988; Kroskrity and Field, 2009; McCarty, 2002; McCarty and Zepeda, 2010; Nicholas, 2009; Wyman, 2011.

<sup>38</sup> McCarty, Nicholas, and Wyman, 2012, p. 51, citing Feld and Basso 1996, p. 8.

longs, in Kuokkanen's<sup>39</sup> words, to the core of Indigenous philosophies that '*váldet vuhtii dieđu ja dulkomiid sorjevašvuoda dihto báikái - ahte olmmoš gii diehtá lea álo čadnon iežas lagašbirrasii ja diehtu ovdana álo dihto konteavsttas*' [take into account the connection of knowledge and interpretations to a certain place - that a person who carries the knowledge is always bound to her immediate environment and that knowledge always develops in a certain context (our translation)]. It is this sense of place, as a place of identity and of meaning-making, that is recurrently highlighted in the teachers' statements we analyzed.

In approaching our analysis, we used an inductive and iterative process of close reading of the interview transcripts and notes, developing and refining categories of analysis, grouping and re-grouping finally into the three broad categories of language use, language teaching, language revitalization, with cross-cutting themes of time, space, and place. We then went back to the transcripts to select specific quotes indexing these themes, in order to highlight teachers' ideologies of time, space, and place in Sámi language use, teaching, and revitalization in their own words. We looked closely at the deictics of individual speakers and identified time and space scales manifested either as words, terms, phrases, propositions, or presuppositions that enlighten us as to how the language teachers in Sápmi position themselves and Sámi language. Both authors participated in the analysis, but it should be acknowledged that Outakoski carried the major burden in sifting through and translating the transcripts from their original language to English.

Teachers' metapragmatic statements about how language use and language teaching *were*, *are* and *should be* in time, space and place offer a window into their language ideologies<sup>40</sup>. In analyzing their statements about Sámi language use, language

---

<sup>39</sup> Kuokkanen, 2009, p. 95.

<sup>40</sup> Silverstein, 1979; Schieffelin, Woolard, and Kroskrity, 1998; Dorian, 1998; Irvine and Gal 2000; Kroskrity, 2006, 2010.

teaching, and language revitalization, we at times drew on notions of *iconicization*, *fractal recursivity* and *erasure*, semiotic processes ‘by which people construct ideological representations of the linguistic differences they notice’<sup>41</sup>. Gal and Irvine describe iconicization as the semiotic process whereby ‘linguistic features that index social groups or activities come to appear to be iconic representations of them’<sup>42</sup>; fractal recursivity as the process by which oppositions and boundaries created and identified to distinguish between groups in one context recur elsewhere in another context and on another level of (social, linguistic, political) relationship<sup>43</sup>; and erasure as the process that ‘renders some persons or activities (or sociolinguistic phenomena) invisible’ by conscious or undeliberate acts of ignorance, avoidance and leaving out of information, descriptions or other facts<sup>44</sup>. Identifying these processes at work in teachers’ statements illuminated ideological threads of a Sámi sense of place as identity and meaning-making, Sápmi as an ideological and implementational space for Sámi language and identity, and a timescale oriented toward ensuring Sámi language use, teaching, and revitalization into future generations.

A note on researcher positionality: We have mentioned above our position as educators committed to Indigenous language education and revitalization in general and Sámi language education and revitalization in particular. Hornberger brings decades of research and scholarship in Indigenous contexts around the world, a trajectory of experience and perspective that undoubtedly shapes her understanding and interpretation of the Sámi teachers’ statements. Outakoski brings a lifetime trajectory as Sámi speaker, former Sámi school pupil, present teacher and researcher of North Sámi, and perpetual scholar of Sámi language, all of this affording her crucial insights and language proficiencies in all phases of the research—data collection, tran-

---

<sup>41</sup> Gal, 1997, pp. 7-8.

<sup>42</sup> Gal, 1997, p. 7; Gal and Irvine 1995; Razfar, 2012, p. 66.

<sup>43</sup> Irvine and Gal, 2000, p. 38.

<sup>44</sup> Irvine and Gal, 2000, p. 38.

scription and translation of interviews to English from Sámi, Swedish/Norwegian, and Finnish, and the ongoing process of analysis and interpretation of the data. It is important to acknowledge that our analysis is inevitably informed and transformed by our own language ideologies. Although our purpose is to examine the metapragmatic statements of 18 language teachers in Sápmi and the language ideologies and values reflected by such statements, we are aware of and unapologetic for our potential role in Sámi language ideology emergence through our roles as researchers of Indigenous education, and our personal and professional connections to the Sámi community.

### **Teachers' metapragmatic statements on Sámi language use, teaching, and revitalization across time, space, and place**

Although full-fledged immersion programs are still rare in Sápmi, all five schools that participated in the study in Finland have Sámi classes where the language of instruction is primarily Sámi (North Sámi or some other Sámi variety). The two schools from Norway represent the bilingual educational model identified by Hirvonen<sup>45</sup>, offering Sámi medium instruction either to all pupils at the school or to the pupils that choose to study in Sámi class. In Sweden the five participating schools are either Sámi primary schools with limited Sámi medium instruction, or secondary and upper secondary schools where Sámi language is taught as a language subject a few hours each week.

The 18 teachers whose interviews are analyzed here are primary school teachers of Sámi language, teachers of other languages (English, Swedish, Finnish and Norwegian), and teachers that use Sámi language as medium of instruction<sup>46</sup>. The interviews

---

<sup>45</sup> Hirvonen, 2008.

<sup>46</sup> Of the eighteen teachers, 9 are from Finland, 4 come from Norway, and 5 are from Sweden. Whereas in Sweden and Norway, one teacher might teach

lasted 30-90 minutes and were semi-structured around a basic set of questions, while also allowing space for the teachers to tell their own stories in their own words. We asked teachers to comment on typical teaching situations, available resources and materials, language attitudes of the pupils and their parents, external and internal influences on everyday life at the school, and potential changes they had experienced during their working lives. We also asked the teachers to reflect on the situation of different languages in their community, and to freely share their thoughts concerning revitalization of Sámi language(s). The interviews were conducted in the language of the teacher's choice and later translated into English.

We have kept both the teachers' identities and their countries of residence anonymous since they have shared personal and sensitive information about their everyday teacher practice and life with us, and because the Sámi communities, although covering large geographical areas, are demographically small (and potentially judgmental) when it comes to knowing the people active in those communities. Our main interest lies in unfolding general, rather than country and school specific, ideologies about Sámi language use, language teaching and language revitalization in Sápmi.

As we turn to analysis of language ideologies about time, space, and place in teachers' metapragmatic statements about Sámi language use, teaching and revitalization, we offer the caveat that neither language use, teaching, and revitalization nor time, space, and place are wholly separable categories. Language use cannot be completely disconnected from language practices such as teaching of the language nor from changing language use ensuing from language revitalization efforts. Time and space are defining axes of specific contexts and cannot easily be detached from each other, while space and place are intertwined in the

---

all language subjects in the school, in Finland there were more often separate teachers for each language; hence, the greater number of teachers interviewed in Finland.

ways discussed above. We acknowledge, then, that the following analysis is inevitably overlapping and complex.

*On language use in local and far north Sámi contexts of the globalizing world*

Language teachers who are rooted, re-rooted, or just beginning to feel rooted in a Sámi sense of place index their understanding of Sámi language use in time and space in different ways. Their sense of place—cultural sensitivity, background, and knowledge—is of central importance in rooting them as teachers, members of the community and in some cases members of the Sámi ethnic group. Teachers' comments and timespace comparisons may also be made based on observations over a long timescale or on more or less intensive and conscious observations over a short and clearly defined timespan.

An understanding of language use in the school and community limited to 'where the language is heard' constitutes a fragmented understanding of language use, linked to the role of external observer rather than speaker of the language. In the following comment made by a teacher who moved to Sápmi to work as language teacher, what the teacher refers to as language use comprises only a fraction of overall language practice in the community:

Extract 1: I believe that—well, not believe but feel—now that I've been here a couple of years—that people are not ashamed of Sámi language. One can hear parents speak Sámi to their children in the grocery shops, and people get their service in Sámi. And I think that is good and right— people should be able to use their language. But I don't think that it threatens the position of [majority language], nor does [majority language] threaten the position of Sámi. And English and other foreign languages, they are



present here—this is quite a busy town. One can hear other languages too. (TI 123) <sup>47</sup>

In this teacher's comment, language use is limited to conversations between family members, or between a customer and service personnel. All other modes of language use (e.g. media, public signs, literature, political speeches, and ceremonial language) are ignored or left out, *erased and rendered invisible*<sup>48</sup>. The teacher underlines that this is a personal interpretation based on a feeling and casual observations made in contact with other members of the local community, positioning himself/herself outside the group of Sámi speakers and locating language use in public spaces such as the grocery shop or customer service. The stance taken in the statement that 'people are not ashamed of Sámi language' refers to other people, presumably Sámi speakers, from whom the teacher excludes himself/herself, and further presupposes that some people might be or might have been ashamed of Sámi language. The fragmented language use view has an impact also on how the teacher indexes the ecology of languages in the local context of the town or village—as long as Sámi is heard in some context it is not threatened nor does it threaten the position of another language. Globalizing processes observed by the teacher in the multilingual mix of local language repertoire are foregrounded, and the question of the actual state of Sámi language use is placed aside, or erased.

An alternative view of the sociolinguistic ecology comes from another teacher who has been observing pupils' language skills and use over time in her/his school:

Extract 2: When I said that the pupils' language skills in Sámi are getting poorer then this is also true about their skills in [majority language]. If we compare to the situation 10 years ago, the spe-

---

<sup>47</sup> To ensure anonymity, we identify teacher quotes only by the number of their interview, e.g. TI 123 is Teacher Interview nr. 123.

<sup>48</sup> Irvine and Gal 2000.

cial teacher did reading tests here, and the pupils in the Sámi class were the ones to manage best in the tests. This although they had [majority language] as their second language... So the fact is that one language does support the other. (TI 121)

The teacher's comments from this 10-year school-based timespace perspective index a language ideology of interconnectedness across Sámi pupils' languages, such that strong skills in one language may mutually support the other and, by a similar token, weak skills in one language may in turn weaken the other language as well.

One teacher's story indexing wider globalizing processes affecting local sociolinguistic ecologies of Sámi communities caught our attention. This teacher of North Sámi and of other subjects in which Sámi themes were prominent reported that in one of the arts and crafts classes, a group of Sámi learners was working on writing instructions for traditional crafts work in Sámi, when one of the pupils asked if (s)he could write the instructions in English. This pupil then went on to say that (s)he felt that (s)he could express himself/herself better in English than in his/her native language, Sámi. Other teachers report from different regions in Sápmi that e.g. 'English has become interesting. You just have to know it' (TI 312), and 'I think that English is the language of the world, and therefore it is important' (TI 142). Teachers also report on generally improved language skills in English over time in the whole of Sápmi, and relate this development to the popularity of English as a subject among most Sámi pupils and as the 'posh' or 'trendy' language of great importance globally.

The pressures on Sámi language use and the advantages of knowing many languages are often contrasted or juxtaposed in teachers' comments. Knowing many languages offers different future opportunities than not knowing many languages, and the threats and pressures can be at the same time conceived of as a threat in some general level or as an asset on another level, as

witnessed by the opinions expressed by an English language teacher:

Extract 3: English is not a threat to Sami language at the school. But maybe English in general is a threat to Sámi. But at the school it is no more threat than is [majority language]. It is only something positive if you, or anyone, knows many languages. Think about the opportunities, the jobs you have ahead of you. But of course these colonizer languages, they add pressure toward Indigenous languages. (TI 215)

Here, the teacher is indexing across several scales in considering the role and position of English language in the multilingual mix of the Sámi schools. This teacher feels that there is an inherent inequality among languages, with Indigenous languages positioned as inferior to languages of power. Therefore English could, according to this teacher, be considered a general threat to Sámi language use, or to any other Indigenous language under similar pressure.

For many teachers, the equipoise to the global situation is the local school situation, where languages are seen as assets and pupils are encouraged to learn many languages. The same teacher as in Extract 3 emphasizes in Extract 4 how important it is that the school be confident of its mission and purpose as one of the most eminent language arenas for Sámi language, when not only language pressure is put on the school, but also external attitudes toward and against the school are negative:

Extract 4: Of course the outside world, [those] who think negatively, they have an impact. They might, I don't know, maybe not shut down the school, but they might add a pressure. But this school is so confident on what they do and how positive its effects are, so I think the school will be here for a while. (TI 215)

Looking at the world map, Sápmi and the schools in this study are located far north on the northern hemisphere, and far north

from the capital cities of their respective countries. The western understanding of the world having far north as opposed to far south has for a long time formed the conception of where Sámi places are and, iconically, where Sámi language is or is supposed to be used. In Extract 5, a language teacher who has been working a long time at a small school in Sápmi having moved there from the south still maintains his/her footing in the south, thereby indexing the north/south ideology even while making an important point about local language use in the north:

Extract 5: I have been thinking about [the benefits of bilingualism] because our school is located so far north. So I am not trying to motivate movement toward the South, but instead, I tell them, that you will benefit so much from Swedish when you are in contact with Norway, that you will be able to communicate with Norwegians. (TI 113)

Although this teacher does not explicitly mention Sámi language use, he/she iconically indexes ideologies about (language use in) the far north as different and removed from (the languages of) the south. While motivating local pupils to think of the neighboring country as a potential place of future employment, the teacher simultaneously situates Sápmi wholly in the far north. This particular school is actually located quite far south in Sápmi, yet even after having lived in the community for a long time, the teacher still views the school from outside (from the southern angle) and not from his/her current timespace.

Contrasting with the outsider idea of Sápmi as located elsewhere far away is a place-based ideology of Sámi people living and being in neighboring countries but at the same time also 'here' in Sápmi. Even the smallest movements in timespace (here, crossing a bridge) can be of great importance for actual language use and language choice, as exemplified in the following teacher's statement discussing the importance of sharing and planning educational and free time activities with Sámi speakers

in the neighboring country, and in so doing highlighting a sense of Sámi place as a place of identity and of meaning-making.

Extract 6: Then [during visits] the only mutual language is Sámi language. That is also something that the children have noticed themselves, when they [used to] ask ‘what is the language good for,’ now they have noticed it themselves. You only need to cross the bridge and your language skills will become an asset. I have also noticed that they are starting to make friends there now. And the only possibility [to communicate] is to speak Sámi language. (TI 141)

Teachers’ metapragmatic statements locate language use mainly at local (e.g. school or local grocery shop), national and global (e.g. neighboring countries or outside world) scales. What is erased is the immediate timespace—the actual language use of teachers themselves, in the classroom or elsewhere. The teachers seem to distance themselves from Sámi language use (and hence a Sámi sense of place as identity and meaning-making), viewing Sámi language use as something perhaps in other timespaces, that can be "performed" and observed by others (e.g. overheard parent-child conversations), affect the use of other languages (e.g. language tests of the bilingual learners), be planned (e.g. mutual language group activities) and be placed in certain contexts (e.g. use of Swedish in Norway). The next section will complement this picture with a closer look at statements about language teaching practices in Sámi schools where the present and the immediate timespace combine with experiences from the past.

### *On language teaching: re-emplacing Sámi perspectives in materials and curriculum*

In reflecting about their teaching, whether they are teaching Sámi language, using Sámi as medium of instruction, or teaching majority language or English to Sámi-speaking pupils, teachers tend to place themselves on more limited timespace

scales than when reflecting about Sámi language use and revitalization. The focus is the everyday and current time; and they place themselves, their pupils, and their teaching mainly within classroom, curricular, Sámi program, or school spaces. When they index wider timespaces, it is to reflect on what they see as the positioning or especially absence of Sámi language and content in teacher training, curriculum, and teaching materials.

The challenges of teaching simultaneously ‘here and over there’ i.e. teaching a lesson to distance learners via video along with pupils at several grade levels in a local multigrade class make salient to teachers what they see as the ‘totally inadequate’ (TI 113, 121) teacher education some teachers receive. One teacher (TI 121) implicitly expresses the idea that Sámi perspective should be part of teacher training for teachers who will teach in the Sámi schools, by telling of the opposite case—a newly graduated teacher colleague in whose training program the multigrade model in which they currently both teach ‘was not mentioned even with one word’ and ‘[e]ven less was said about the Sámi perspective’. Similarly, according to another teacher (TI 312), Sámi children experience two separate worlds when a visiting special resource teacher comes to the school with no Sámi skills or understanding of the Sámi situation. Woven through both teachers’ statements are ideological threads of a Sámi sense of place as identity and meaning-making, and of Sápmi as an ideological and implementational space for Sámi language and identity.

The ‘two separate worlds’ metaphor in the second teacher’s statement points to ideological erasure of the bilingual and multicultural reality of Sámi children’s lives; indeed, teachers’ comments sometimes index assumptions about the Sámi language or about Sámi children’s language fluency that reflects a missing Sámi perspective in their training. For example, a teacher’s comments may assume that because Sámi children have bilingual proficiencies in Sámi and the majority language, they necessarily have academic literacy at a level adequate for text-

books, exercises, and tests in the majority language (TI 123), or that Sámi language structure is more difficult for pupils who therefore choose to use the majority language because they can manage it and find it functional in the classroom space (TI 312). These comments index emerging language ideologies, such as the presumption of a direct connection between language skills in one language and another or simplified models of complex language choice dynamics, that could work against the continuing use, teaching and revitalization of Sámi language into the future.

Many teachers comment on the missing or misleading Sámi perspective in books, course plans, and the national curriculum, affirming that there is no continuity in materials for teaching Sámi (TI 311); that extra exercises and worksheets available for the majority language are almost completely missing in Sámi (TI 121); and that there are books in which the Sámi are characterized as a ‘foreign group’ from somewhere and local history is completely missing (TI 141). Teaching materials translated from the majority language to Sámi are, in the eyes of the teachers, often not only awkward and incomprehensible (TI 112), but are seen as conveying misleading content, as explained in this comment in which the teacher indexes multiple, polycentric centers of authority (the school, books, writers of the books and the teacher’s own father) in identifying what he/she sees as a serious potential for misinformation:

Extract 7: I remember the time when I myself went to school. It was the same then, but it was not so dangerous/serious because it was in [the majority language]. It was not my mother tongue that was used to describe those things [history and origins of the Sámi]. But now those books have been translated and it is all in Sámi, historical facts, facts that do not even mention the Sámi people. I think that is very dangerous. Because now it is all written in their mother tongue, and they might think that it must be the truth then. I remember myself, it was in [the majority language] and I had to ask someone to explain it to me, so I went to

my father to ask if it was true. And he could confirm that the things that were written about the Sámi were not true, ‘they only believe so,’ and I learned to doubt that information. But I am not sure that the children of today critically assess the information. It is all in Sámi, in one's own mother tongue, so it must be true. (TI 142)

Consistent with many Native American language ideologies that view language and speech performatively—as a ‘powerful and creative force that “makes” the natural and social world they habit’<sup>49</sup>, this teacher’s comment implies that language, through its very essence, is able to affect and change world views, and to alter people's critical thinking capacities, an ideological stance rooted in the sense of Sámi place as a place of identity and of meaning-making.

Sámi teachers index this same sense of Sámi place as identity and meaning-making in metapragmatic statements on the vulnerable situation for Sámi language, Sámi children, and the Sámi program in relation to the rest of the school. In the following comment, we see a Sámi subject teacher express how (s)he feels alone and disconnected from other teachers teaching this subject, and her belief that the pupils are afraid to do traditional Sámi activities at her school because of their heritage, for fear of insult:

Extract 8: They do not want to, I mean, they don’t want to cook [traditional] food, or have traditional Sámi celebrations, or to wear their *gákti* [traditional Sámi clothing]. They are afraid of something. Maybe that they might hear something, I mean things like ‘terrible, what awful food this was,’ or ‘yack, what *gákti*.’ (TI 351)

It is through these kinds of statements that we get valuable glimpses of what teachers interpret as hurtful insults, and what

---

<sup>49</sup> Kroskrity and Field, 2000, p. 10.



they interpret are the reasons for why the younger generations do not want to engage in certain kinds of curricular activities. It is also clear that this teacher regards traditional ways of being, dressing, cooking as authentic vehicles for teaching language and culture, a view that is supported by Sámi scholars Balto and Østmo<sup>50</sup> who highlight the importance of traditional storytelling in academic studies as a resource and tool for learning.

Pervasive in teachers' comments on language teaching are concerns around re-emplacing Sámi perspectives and ways of being in teacher preparation, materials, curriculum, and teaching activities, concerns ideologically underpinned by an understanding of the performative and organic nature of language, of place-based Sámi identity and meaning-making, and of schools as potential spaces for Sámi language teaching and revitalization in Sápmi. We turn now to a closer look at teachers' metapragmatic statements about Sámi language revitalization.

*On language revitalization: Sámi language use and teaching in Sápmi past, present and future*

In commenting on Sámi language revitalization, teachers not surprisingly focus on the role of the school and teachers themselves in Sámi language use and teaching in the past and present, and into future generations. They also reflect on changes in the language itself as spoken and used by pupils, their families, and communities. We will first take up the latter, as background to consideration of schools in Sápmi as ideological and implementational spaces for Sámi language use, teaching, and revitalization into future generations.

Many of the Sámi language teachers comment on what they call *giela geaffun* 'language attrition,' further described as 'lack of words,' which they perceive as having an effect on the freedom

---

<sup>50</sup> Balto and Østmo, 2012.

of expression and richness of the language, as expressed by this teacher:

Extract 9: My first reflection is that the language skills of the pupils have become worse if one compares just with the situation 10 years ago. When they come to school and in general. In writing it shows best in that they can't... or when they are writing stories, they can't describe feelings, or e.g. movement. They lack words. They may say that a person walked, but there are so many other words that could be used to describe that. Their language is not so rich. (TI 121)

Another teacher iconically connects the perceived language attrition to changes in the social context of Sámi communities, observing that attrition affects even the most fundamental structures of language knowledge, as the words that are missing are not only newer and less familiar words, but 'can be just ordinary words from everyday life' (TI 211).

Extract 10: The Sámi have always used their words in a certain context, and now that everything is changing then the words are lost. Language is changing. It is scary, and it is also something that makes me grieve. [...]What I am going through is a personal sorrow for me. (TI 211)

The focus on loss of particular words and what these changes do to the language (and in the long run to the culture) reflect an understanding of language as rather static stores of words that are in a way the property or essence of the culture. Through a process of iconicization, particular words are linked to particular images of Sámi lifestyle and social context, such that the loss of these words becomes linked to a loss of identity or culture.

While from our perspective as researchers and educators, there are evidences in Sápmi as elsewhere of Sámi language and its speakers acquiring new and added language resources such as better literacy skills in Sámi, knowledge of new words and sub-

ject areas that have entered the Sámi language, and novel ways of using Sámi language in e.g. blogs, songs, social media forums and SMS, the teachers in our interviews construct the changes overwhelmingly as loss. The semiotic process of erasure in the teachers' statements renders invisible or problematic the ways that Sámi language practices take on new linguistic features, modes and modalities.

In this vein, teachers speak about language that is 'muddied' (TI 351) or 'poor' (TI 142) or 'mixed' (TI 141), i.e. morphologically, syntactically and idiomatically changed and simplified language that either, in the words of the teachers, structurally resembles majority language or is just a skeleton form of Sámi language. Teachers describe two categories of pupils affected most directly by this kind of changed language, who they see as struggling to learn Sámi at school: pupils that do not hear any Sámi elsewhere than in school and pupils that hear 'muddied' language at home from parents that are not fluent or only partially fluent (TI 112, 121, 141, 211, 313 and 351). Many of the teachers express their concern about the future that awaits these pupils and families, in which language is not a living language of the home, and the consequences that this has on Sámi language in general, or as one of the teachers puts it:

Extract 11: There are two sides to it [future bilingualism]. If I look at the children that are in the lower grades at the moment, they have Sámi as their mother tongue, because it really is their first language. But those that have Sámi as second language [non-dominant L1 or L2], they don't hear Sámi anywhere else than at the school. And they don't speak Sámi to their friends. It may be that they will remember some words, but they don't use the language. So if it isn't a living language for them now then how could it become alive later? (TI 313)

Here, the semiotic process of recursivity underlying teachers' ideologies about the language skills of Sámi speaking children projects a distinction between non-Sámi speakers and Sámi

speakers onto groups of weaker and stronger Sámi speakers, constructing and reinforcing differences that are then recursively linked also to differences in Sámi language skills from parents to school. One teacher indexes this construction of difference in offering an example of potential conflict when pupils with weaker and stronger Sámi language skills are in the same class together: '[a] pupil comes from another area of Sápmi and has stronger language skills, knows appropriate words and terms and is eager to correct other pupils that do not have so strong language skills. This adds up to a conflict' (TI 215). Another teacher indexes the same difference, in this case offering a solution to the potential conflict, one very much in the vein of Keskitalo et al.'s language immersion tepee approach cited above<sup>51</sup>.

Extract 12: [W]e should not have the kind of groups that we have today. There should be a group for those that speak well and another language shower<sup>52</sup> group. There is no need for other groups. One clear group for Sámi [L1] speakers and another group for language shower purpose. And I think that all children here want to learn Sámi even if they are not Sámi. (TI 142)

The recursively constructed difference in Sámi language skills from parents to school is characterized by some teachers as a 'divide', expressed here in Extract 13.

Extract 13: The situation is that parents expect very much from us teachers and the school. We are expected to pass on the language to the next generation. Whereas they don't feel the obligation themselves and we can hear the children speaking the majority language in their free time with their parents. I always speak and try to speak Sámi. So the homes and school are not working together on this. [...] I feel that the school and the homes are sep-

---

<sup>51</sup> Keskitalo et al., 2014

<sup>52</sup> Here, by language shower, the teacher refers to immersion classes where non-Sámi speaking children would be immersed in Sámi-medium education geared to their language proficiency level.

arate worlds, that the parents have so many prejudices against the school, and that there is a divide between the school and the world outside. Of course one reason might be that their [parents'] experiences from school are not so positive. And this has an effect on it all-- that is what I think. (TI 121)

Teachers index this same 'divide' and the parents' expectations for the school to bear responsibility of passing on the language, in commenting on the motivation for parents to choose Sámi education for their child even if they (the parents) do not speak Sámi:

Extract 14: There are parents who did not get Sámi [were not spoken to in Sámi] when they were little, and now these parents choose Sámi education so that their children will get the language. And it is the same thing with daycare. (TI 141)

Another teacher muses empathetically on how it must feel for a child that has very poor language skills in Sámi to be placed in a Sámi class only because 'it is the parent's choice' (TI 112) and continues on to say that 'the child will be put in a vulnerable position when the child is not able to communicate.' Here, too, the teacher's comments recursively index difference between non-Sámi speaking and Sámi speaking groups of children, even while implicitly advocating for the child's right to Sámi-medium education geared to his language proficiency level.

In another process of recursivity, some teachers compare the current situation with the situation of the past, when Sámi children were sent to boarding schools where they were not allowed to speak Sámi, and who therefore missed out on the contents of the education and did not become literate in their heritage language. They recursively connect the past and present language education choices made by others for Sámi children – the choices made by "others" (national states and their representatives) in the past and the choices made by the childrens' parents in the present. Significant for the teachers, though, is that today the

choice of language is made by the parents and the motivation of that choice is the desire to revitalize or in some cases bring back a language that has been silent in the family for a generation or two. In this endeavor, as we have seen, teachers perceive parents as looking to the schools as ideological and implementational spaces for Sámi language revitalization, and we turn to that possibility in our implications discussion below, after a brief analysis of how teachers situate Sámi language use, teaching, and revitalization in timespace through their use of deictic markers.

*Timespace deictic markers in teachers' metapragmatic statements*

Deictics of time and space in individuals' discourse offer clues about how they position themselves and the topic of their discourse in time and space, offering the discourse analyst 'possibilities to connect microscopic instances of communicative practice to larger-scale political and sociological patterns and structures'<sup>53</sup>. The following two diagrams give an overview of the distribution of timespace deictic markers in teachers' statements about Sámi language use, language teaching, and language revitalization discussed in the earlier sections. The diagrams represent not instances of each use but the composite set of markers used; for example, the deictic space marker *here* may be used many times in the interviews, but is only counted once for our purposes here.

---

<sup>53</sup> Blommaert, 2007, p. 127.

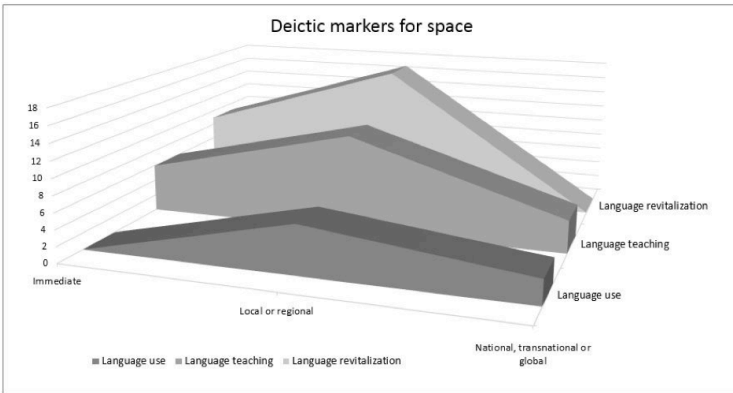


Diagram 1: Deictic markers for space in teachers' metapragmatic statements.

Diagram 1 shows the distribution of deictic markers for space across immediate and local to national and global scales. Deictic markers used for the immediate space included reference to *classroom* and *home*, *curricula* and specific *teaching programs*, as well as pro-forms such as *here* and *this particular*. Markers that indexed local or regional space included *school*, *daycare*, *shops*, *town*, *community*, *this region*, *outside the village*, *Sápmi*, *far north*, *another area of Sápmi*, and adverbs such as *somewhere*, *over there*. National, transnational and global deictics included *country (of residence)*, *neighboring countries* and *outside world*.

A few observations stand out in Diagram 1. It is local and regional space that is foregrounded by teachers in talking about all three themes—language use, teaching, and revitalization. They do not index the immediate space in their statements about language use, and conversely, they do not index national, transnational or global space in their statements about language revitalization. That the national, transnational and global level is missing from the revitalization comments is, in our opinion, an important indication of the missing shared transnational view on revitalization among the teachers in Sápmi, and offers

clues to understanding why teachers are keen on giving examples of how revitalization can be achieved in their local contexts, and at the same time are unable to define what is meant by revitalization in a wider Sápmi context.

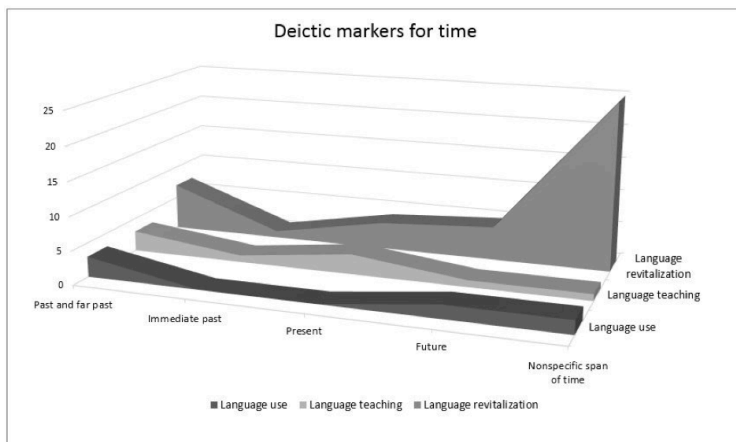


Diagram 2: Deictic markers for time in teachers' metapragmatic statements.

Diagram 2 shows the distribution of deictic markers for time scaled across far past and immediate past to present, future, and nonspecific timespans. There are only a few indexical markers of the immediate past (e.g. *a moment ago*, *at the beginning of the week*) across all themes. Indeed, indexing to immediate past and present (e.g. *now*, *today*, *at the moment*, *current situation*) is missing altogether in the language use comments, which are instead indexed to the past, the future (e.g. *after 30 years*, *next generation*, *future*, *ahead*), or to a nonspecific span of time (e.g. *every day*). Language teaching on the other hand is very much tied to the present and firmly rooted in the past, but seldom indexed toward the future. Deictic markers indexing teachers' statements to the past (e.g. *last couple of years*, *the last ones 4 years ago*, *only 3-4 year ago*) and far past (e.g. *old days*, *many years ago*, *ten years ago*, *a long time ago*) are present in all the themes, but are most prominent in statements about language



revitalization. Notably, statements on language revitalization index a wide range of nonspecific timespans whether past, present, or future, such as *very early in their lives, over time, still, on their free time, once in a while, next generation, and very seldom*.

A few observations stand out in Diagram 2. Whereas local and regional space was foregrounded across all themes in Diagram 1, here with respect to time deictics we find that each theme has its unique pattern. Only past and far past are indexed similarly in all themes indicating that the teachers often consult their understanding or interpretation of the past when making sense of the present or predictions about the future. Language use is not anchored in present (as it was not anchored in the immediate space), while teaching is discussed mainly in the present time span. Language revitalization stands out from use and teaching in that the deictic markers for time are more vague (*then*), general (*new times*), or nonspecific (*when the children are little*).

### **Implications for schools in Sápmi as ideological and implementational spaces for Sámi language use, teaching, and revitalization into future generations**

Striking in teachers' use of deictic markers in talking about language revitalization, discussed above, was that they strongly indexed immediate, local and regional spaces while referring to national, transnational or global space barely at all; similarly striking was that deictics of time were heavily weighted to future and nonspecific timespans such as *next generation, future, when they grow older, new times, no longer, very seldom, once in a while*. Indeed, as we have already seen, many of the teachers' metapragmatic statements focus on the school's responsibility for Sámi language use, teaching, and revitalization. This responsibility looms ever more important to teachers as they reflect on changing Sámi language practices in families and the community and what that means for the future.

The school space is quite literally seen by teachers as a ‘language island’ for Sámi language use and language revitalization among children and youth in an otherwise rather inhospitable or inactive language environment. Mutual language projects, visits, co-work, ‘penpal’ classes to and with other areas of Sápmi or with Sámi in a neighboring country are constructed as implementational spaces for Sámi language use, teaching and revitalization, in comments like this one:

Extract 15: Not much happens here, nothing happens *in Sámi* in this village, or maybe the service at the church... very little. Well, at the grocery shop they of course speak Sámi, when you go there, but in the village itself... there are very few [activities]. But the relations to the neighboring country, to [a town in the neighboring country], I think that is the best solution. We must do it—we will not succeed otherwise. (TI 142)

The school space is also understood as a Sámi place of identity and meaning-making—the heart and the center of the community and even region, particularly when many other services have fled to larger urban centers in the area, as implicit in this teacher’s comment:

Extract 16: There is already so much other activity going on. This is kind of like... well, like a community center, this school of ours. There are many activities arranged by different organizations. (TI 111)

The school as ideological and implementational space for Sámi language use and revitalization stands in contrast for teachers to changing language practices in families and the community, as in the following two comments:

Extract 17: In this little community I do know most of the families, and I can see the parallels with the home language environment and the language in the children’s language knowledge and

skills. There are homes where language is still a living language of the home and where one does read a lot of books. But the tradition of storytelling is left behind, parents don't tell many stories to their children. (TI 121)

Implicit in this teacher's use of the deictic 'still' and the mention of reading and storytelling are perspectives on strong language practices the teacher regards as disappearing from many homes, even while there are still some homes where one can find them.

Extract 18: So it is this way, how should I put it, well... when the community is like this, this village, language [Sámi language] is deeply embedded, so that you won't hear it. When people step outside the Sámi class then they will not hear Sámi anymore, when you go to the shops then it will be only the elders that still might speak. [...] The elders here, well, their language is rather clumsy/ponderous, they must stop to think and their language comes in waves. I have noticed this. It is noticeable that it does not come fluently. (TI 112)

This teacher metapragmatically links loss of fluency among elders with the disappearance of spoken Sámi in the village, and goes on to say that 'when the elders are gone, then... At the moment they can be used as resource persons, but later... the situation is bad' (TI 112). Ideological threads of Sámi time, space, and place come together in this teacher's insight that with the disappearance of fluent elders comes the loss not only of spoken Sámi in the village, but also of a valuable resource for Sámi language use, teaching, and revitalization into future generations.

## **Conclusion: Sámi time, space and place in teachers' metapragmatic statements**

Our goal in this paper has been to understand Sámi language use, teaching and revitalization and the role of the school therein, through the words of teachers in Sápmi. We concur with

Huss<sup>54</sup> that schools have a crucial, albeit endlessly hard won, role to play in language revitalization and we take as premise, with Sámi researchers Määttä, Keskitalo, and Uusiautti, that ‘in order to develop the Sámi School, it is necessary to listen to the active realizers of Sámi education, namely Sámi teachers’<sup>55</sup>. To that end, we have drawn on teachers’ metapragmatic statements about Sámi language use, teaching, and revitalization, seeking to answer two questions: How do teachers’ explicit comments on Sámi language use, language teaching and revitalization index time, space and place in Sápmi? How do their statements explicitly or implicitly position globalizing processes in local language practices and ideologies? From analysis of their statements, we have sought to illuminate how Sámi language teaching and revitalization efforts from the bottom up might create new ideological and implementational spaces for Sámi language use, teaching and revitalization into future generations.

Indexing a timescale comparing past to present, teachers comment that from pupils’ individual writing, to their language use in class and in breaks, to language use by parents and elders in shops and community, spaces for Sámi language use are changing. Similarly, they speak of changes in language use itself: some pupils lack basic everyday words; some parents speak morphologically, syntactically, or idiomatically changed and simplified Sámi; and some elders lack Sámi fluency. Indexing metaphors of difference across immediate, local, and transnational spaces, teachers speak of the separate worlds of children’s languages and identities, a home-to-school divide in Sámi language use, and the north/south geographical opposition. In the face of these time and space markers of loss, teachers see Sámi language teaching as closely tied to Sámi identity and traditional ways of being, and Sámi language revitalization as strongly located in schools. Indexing an underlying ideology of a Sámi sense of place as identity and meaning-making, teachers talk about missing or misleading Sámi perspectives in teacher training, materi-

---

<sup>54</sup> Huss, 2008.

<sup>55</sup> Määttä, Keskitalo and Uusiautti, 2013, p. 451.

als, and curriculum, juxtaposing these with the need for resourcefulness in motivating pupils to use Sámi language in their classes and in contact with pupils from other regions of Sápmi.

In terms of explicitly or implicitly positioning globalizing processes in local language practices and ideologies, teachers acknowledge that while global English is inevitably an interesting, popular, and trendy subject in school and a possible threat to Sámi at a general level, it can also be (re)emplaced at school within a multilingual mix of the north and neighboring countries rather than oriented solely toward a national or global scale. Similarly, while teachers are critical of a national curriculum that is mainly reflective of the south in content and perspective, they also readily recognize the potential for curricular content to be (re)emplaced in the Sápmi and northern context. And even while teachers see parents' Sámi fluency weakening in some cases, they also noted the trend of those same parents' choosing Sámi for their children out of the desire to revitalize the language—and teachers see a role for the school to actively support those choices in programming and language use.

Teachers' metapragmatic statements identify and advocate for implementational and ideological spaces for Sámi language use, teaching, and revitalization, thereby inverting globalization processes to Indigenous language revitalization 'from below'. They see the school as an ideological space with the knowledge to adapt to new times and as an implementational space that can be an island of language revitalization while families and communities are facing pressures on Sámi language use. They highlight the crucial need for teacher training that addresses the Sámi school context, including not only ideological space for the multilingual mix of (changing) languages, but also implementational space for structural aspects such as alternative language teaching programme models, multigrade classes, and distance learning. Teachers' statements identify the potential for curriculum and materials to incorporate Sámi perspective and content, providing ideological space for teachers' and pupils' co-

construction of Sámi ways of knowing; and equally the importance of continuity of curriculum and materials across grades, providing implementational space for more effective Sámi language use and teaching.

The reindeer round-up story with which we began this paper captures much of the complexity of time, space and place that teachers in Sápmi grapple with in using and teaching Sámi language and reflecting about Sámi language revitalization. The reindeer corral is a place partly anchored in the present moment and partly in knowledge and actions reaching far back in time and into the future; it is a site of overlapping, polycentric social and societal spaces such as family needs, community practices, regional Sápmi identities, and national educational policies, but also of school spaces such as classroom lessons, school policies, and curricular demands. There are teachers who recognize the reindeer corral as an important place for Sámi language use, perhaps one of few remaining authentic community places that can contribute to Sámi language revitalization into future generations; some teachers also recognize the corral and round-up as a place with great potential for teaching Sámi language and Sápmi perspectives, in contrast to the existing overrepresentation of knowledge and perspectives from the south in curriculum and materials. We chose this story to represent both the challenges and opportunities Sámi teachers see ahead of them in the increasingly pressing task of opening and filling up ideological and implementational spaces for Sámi language use, teaching, and revitalization in Sápmi into many future generations to come.

## Acknowledgements

We would like to express our thanks to Dr. Görel Sandström, who in her role as Head of the Department of Language Studies at Umeå University invited and sponsored Nancy Hornberger as visiting professor beginning in 2012 and whose vision and leadership have been key in building Sámi language teaching and

Sámi language teacher education at Umeå University. We also thank Eva Lindgren, Kirk Sullivan, and Asbjørg Westum for their collaboration with Outakoski in developing and carrying out the Literacy in Sápmi research project and for inviting Hornberger to consult and work with the research team. We are grateful to two anonymous reviewers for their constructive and insightful comments that have been valuable in writing this paper.

## Bibliography

### I. Cited works

- Aikio-Puoskari, Ulla. *Rapport om den samiska undervisningen i grundskolorna i Norden: en nordisk jämförelse med utgångspunkt i undervisningens grundförutsättningar* [Report about Sámi education in primary schools in the Nordic countries: a nordic comparison targeting the premises of education]. Inari, Finland: Samiska parlamentariska rådet [Sámi Parliamentary Council], 2006.
- Appadurai, Arjun. "Grassroots globalization and the research imagination". *Public Culture*, 12.1 (2000): 1-19.
- Balto, Asta, and Liv Østmo. "Multicultural studies from a Sámi perspective: Bridging traditions and challenges in an indigenous setting". *Issues in Educational Research*, 22.1 (2012): 1-17.
- Balto, Asta. *Samisk barneoppdragelse i endring* [Changing child upbringing among the Sámi]. Oslo, Norway: Ad Notam, 1997.
- Blommaert, Jan. "Sociolinguistics and Discourse Analysis: Orders of Indexicality and Polycentricity". *Journal of Multicultural Discourses* 2.2 (2007): 115-130.
- Blommaert, Jan. *The Sociolinguistics of Globalization*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010.
- Dorian, Nancy C. "Western language ideologies and small-language prospects". *Endangered Languages*. Eds. Lenore A. Grenoble and Lindsay J. Whaley. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- Feld, Steven, and Keith Basso, eds. *Senses of place*. Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research Press, 1996.



- Flores, Nelson, & Jamie L. Schissel. "Dynamic bilingualism as the norm: Envisioning a heteroglossic approach to standards-based reform". *TESOL Quarterly*, 48.3 (2014): 454-479.
- Gal, Susan. "Language and political economy". *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 18 (1989): 345-367.
- Gal, Susan. "Making boundaries: How language ideologies construct difference". *Unpublished manuscript*. 1997.
- Gal, Susan, and Judith T. Irvine. "The boundaries of languages and disciplines: How ideologies construct difference". *Social Research*, 62.4 (1995): 967-1001.
- Groff, Cynthia. *Language, education, and empowerment: Voices of Kumauni young women in multilingual India*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, Graduate School of Education, Philadelphia, PA, 2010.
- Hawkins, Margaret. "Ontologies of Place, Creative Meaning Making and Critical Cosmopolitan Education". *Curriculum Inquiry* 44.1 (2014): 90-112.
- Hirvonen, Vuokko. 'Out on the fells, I feel like a Sámi': Is there linguistic and cultural equality in the Sámi school? *Can Schools Save Indigenous Languages? Policy and Practice on Four Continents* (1. ed.). Ed. Nancy H. Hornberger. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.
- Hornberger, Nancy H. *Bilingual Education and Language Maintenance: A Southern Peruvian Quechua Case*. Berlin: Mouton, 1988.
- Hornberger, Nancy H., ed. *Indigenous Literacies in the Americas: Language Planning from the Bottom up*. Berlin: Mouton, 1996.

- Hornberger, Nancy H. "Multilingual language policies and the continua of biliteracy: An ecological approach". *Language Policy*, 1:1 (2002): 27-51.
- Hornberger, Nancy H. Nichols to NCLB: Local and global perspectives on U.S. language education policy. *Imagining Multilingual Schools: Languages in Education and Globalization*. Eds. Ofelia García, Tove Skutnabb-Kangas, and María Torres-Guzmán. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters, 2006. 223-237.
- Hornberger, Nancy H., and David Cassels Johnson. "Slicing the onion ethnographically: Layers and spaces in multilingual language education policy and practice". *TESOL Quarterly*, 41.3 (2007): 509-532.
- Hornberger, Nancy H., and Teresa L. McCarty. "Globalization from the bottom up: Indigenous language planning and policy across time, space, and place". *International Multilingual Research Journal*, 6.1 (2012): 1-7.
- Hymes, Dell. *Ethnography, Linguistics, Narrative Inequality: Toward An Understanding of Voice* (1. ed.). London: Taylor & Francis, 1996.
- Huss, Leena. Revitalization through Indigenous education: a forlorn hope? *Can Schools Save Indigenous Languages? Policy and Practice on Four Continents*. Ed. Nancy H. Hornberger. Basingstoke UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008. 125-135.
- Irvine, Judith T., and Susan Gal. Language Ideology and Linguistic Differentiation. *Regimes of language: Ideologies, politics, and identities*. Ed. Paul Kroskrity. Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 2000.
- Jannok Nutti, Ylva. *Ripsteg mot spetskunskap i samisk matematik: lärares perspektiv på transformeringsaktiviteter i samisk förskola och sameskola* [Taking ptarmigan steps

- towards excellence in Sámi mathematics: teachers' perspectives on the transformational activities in Sámi pre-school and Sámi school*]. Diss. Luleå, Sweden : Luleå University of Technology, 2010.
- Keskitalo, Pigga. *Saamelaiskoulun kulttuurisensitiivisyyttä etsimässä kasvatustieteen keinoin*. [Cultural sensitivity in the Sámi school through educational anthropology]. Diss. Rovaniemi, Finland: Lapin yliopisto, 2010.
- Keskitalo, Pigga, Kaarina Määttä, and Satu Uusiantti. “Language Immersion Tepee” as a Facilitator of Sámi Language Learning. *Journal of Language, Identity & Education*, 13:1 (2014): 70-79. DOI: 10.1080/15348458.2014.864215.
- Kroskrity, Paul V. Language ideologies. *A Companion to Linguistic Anthropology*. Ed. Alessandro Duranti. Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2006. 496-517.
- Kroskrity, Paul V. Language Ideologies: Evolving Perspectives. *Handbook of Pragmatics Highlights: Society and Language Use*. Eds. Jan-Ola Östman, Jef Verschueren, and Jürgen Jaspers. Herndon, VA: John Benjamins, 2010. 192-211.
- Kroskrity, Paul V. Regimenting Languages: Language Ideological Perspectives. *Regimes of Language: Ideologies, Politics, and Identities*. Ed. Paul Kroskrity. Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 2000. 1-34.
- Kroskrity, Paul V., and Margaret Field, eds. *Native American language ideologies: beliefs, practices, and struggles in Indian country*. Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press, 2009.
- Kuokkanen, Rauna. *Boaris dego eana: eamiálbmogiid diehtu, filosofijjat ja dutkan*. [Old as the earth: Indigenous peo-

- ples' knowledge, philosophies and research]. Kárásjohka [Karasjok], Norway: ČálliidLágádus, 2009.
- May, Stephen. Maori-medium education in Aotearoa/New Zealand. *Medium of Instruction Policies: Which Agenda? Whose Agenda?* Eds. James W. Tollefson and Amy B. M. Tsui. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum. 2004. 21-41.
- McCarty, Teresa L. *A Place To Be Navajo--Rough Rock and the Struggle for Self-Determination in Indigenous Schooling*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2002.
- McCarty, Teresa L., Sheilah E. Nicholas, and Leisy T. Wyman. "Re-emplacing place in the "global here and now" -- Critical ethnographic case studies of Native American language planning and policy". *International Multilingual Research Journal*, 6.1 (2012): 50-63.
- McCarty, Teresa L., and Ofelia Zepeda. Native Americans. *Handbook of language and ethnic identity* (2. ed.). Eds. Joshua A. Fishman and Ofelia García. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2010. 323-339.
- Määttä, Kaarina, Pigga Keskitalo, and Satu Uusiautti. "Making the dream of a Sámi School come true: Voices from the field". *Journal of Language Teaching Research*, 4.3 (2013): 443-453.
- Nicholas, Sheilah. "I live Hopi, I just don't speak it:" The critical intersection of language, culture, and identity in the lives of contemporary Hopi youth". *Journal of Language, Identity, and Education* 8.5 (2009): 321-334.
- Outakoski, Hanna, Eva Lindgren, Asbjørg Westum, and Kirk P. H. Sullivan. "Researching writing development to support language maintenance and revitalization: methodological challenges". *Indigenous Writing and Education*. Eds. Kirk P. H. Sullivan and Coppélie Cocq. Leiden, Netherlands: Brill Publishing, In press.

- Pasanen, Annika. *Kielipesä ja revitalisaatio: Karjalaisten ja inarinsaamelaisten kielipesätoiminta* [A language nest and revitalization: Language nest activity among the Karelians and the Inari Sámi]. Helsinki, Finland: University of Helsinki, 2003.
- Pascual-de-Sans, A. “Sense of place and migration histories: Idiotype and diotope”. *Area*, 36.4 (2004): 348–357.
- Pennycook, Alastair. “Incommensurable discourses?” *Applied Linguistics*, 15.2 (1994): 115-138.
- Pettersen, Torunn. Out of the Backwater? Prospects for contemporary Sami Demography in Norway. *Indigenous peoples and demography: the complex relation between identity and statistics*. Eds. Per Axelsson and Peter Sköld. New York: Berghahn, 2011. 185-196.
- Pettersen, Torunn, and Magritt Brustad.” Which Sámi? Sámi inclusion criteria in population-based studies of Sámi health and living conditions in Norway - an exploratory study exemplified with data from the SAMINOR study”. *International Journal of Circumpolar Health*, Vol 72 (2013): 1-11.
- Schieffelin Bambi, Kathryn Woolard, and Paul Kroskrity, eds. *Language Ideologies: Practice and Theory*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.
- Rasmussen, Torkel. “Go ealáska, de lea váttis dápmat”: *davvisámegiela etnolingvisttalaš ceavzinnávccaid guorahallan guovtti gránnjágielddas Deanus ja Ohcejogas 2000-logu álggus*. [When it gains strength it will be difficult to hold down: examination of the ethno-linguistic vitality of North Sámi in the two neighboring municipalities of Deatnu/Tana in Norway and Ohcejohka/Utsjoki in Finland in the beginning of 2000]. Diss. Tromsø, Norway:

- Universitetet i Tromsø, 2013. URI:  
<http://hdl.handle.net/10037/5593>
- Razfar, Aria. Narrating Beliefs: “A Language Ideologies Approach to Teacher Beliefs”. *Anthropology and Education Quarterly*, 43.1, (2012): 61-81.
- Seurujärvi-Kari, Irja. *Ale jaskkot eatnigiella: Alkuperäiskansanliikkeen ja saamen kielen merkitys saamelaisten identiteetille*. [Don't get silent mother tongue: the significance of Indigenous movement and Sámi language for Sámi identity]. Diss. Helsinki, Finland: Helsinki University, 2012.
- Silverstein, Michael. Language structure and linguistic ideology. *The elements: A Parasession on Linguistic Units and Levels*. Eds. P. R. Clyne et al. Chicago: Chicago Linguistic Society, 1979. 193-247.
- Skutnabb-Kangas, Tove. *Bilingualism or Not: The Education of Minorities*. Clevedon, England: Multilingual Matters, 1981.
- Svonni, Mikael. *Samiska skolbarns samiska: en undersökning av minoritetsspråksbehärskning i en språkbyteskontext [The Saami of Saami school children : a study of minority language proficiency in a context of language change]*. Diss. Umeå, Sweden: Umeå University, 1993.
- Todal, Jon. *Samisk språk i Svahken Sijte. Sørsamisk vitalisering gjennom barnehage og skule* [Sámi language in Svahken Sijte. Revitalization of South Sámi through daycare and school]. Dieđut nr. 1/2007. Guovdageaidnu, Norge/Norway: Sámi Instituhtta, 2007.
- Wyman, Leisy T. *Youth Culture, Language Endangerment, and Linguistic Survivance*. Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters, 2011.

2. *Internet sources*

- Gáldu organization. The Sámi - One people in four countries. The Sámi - a Handbook. Karasjok, 2006.  
[http://www.galdu.org/govat/doc/eng\\_sami.pdf](http://www.galdu.org/govat/doc/eng_sami.pdf) [Retrieved 26<sup>th</sup> January 2015]
- SENC. The Encyclopedia of Saami Culture – English version. Helsinki, Finland: University of Helsinki, 2003.  
[http://www.helsinki.fi/~sugl\\_smi/senc/en/index.htm](http://www.helsinki.fi/~sugl_smi/senc/en/index.htm) [Retrieved 11th August 2014].

**Professor Nancy H. Hornberger, University of Pennsylvania, USA**

**Professor Nancy Hornberger is internationally known for her work in bilingualism and biliteracy, ethnography and language policy, and indigenous language revitalization. She researches, lectures, teaches, and consults on multilingual education policy and practice in the US and worldwide.**

**Hanna Outakoski, Umeå University, Sweden**

**Outakoski teaches North Sámi at Umeå University in Northern Sweden and is currently doing research on literacy among multilingual Sámi learners in North Sámi speaking areas of Sápmi.**