

# みんなくりポジトリ

国立民族学博物館学術情報リポジトリ National Museum of Ethnology

## Language Proficiency and Ethnicity : The Sami Case

メタデータ	言語: eng 出版者: 公開日: 2009-04-28 キーワード (Ja): キーワード (En): 作成者: Rydving, Håkan メールアドレス: 所属:
URL	<a href="https://doi.org/10.15021/00002707">https://doi.org/10.15021/00002707</a>

## Language Proficiency and Ethnicity: The Sami Case

Håkan RYDVIK  
*University of Bergen*  
*Bergen, Norway*

### INTRODUCTION

Embracing the northernmost parts of Norway, Sweden, and Finland and the north-western corner of Russia, Sápmi, the traditional Sami settlement area, forms an arc from the central parts of the Scandinavian Peninsula, north- and eastwards to the eastern end of the Kola Peninsula. Owing to widespread immigration from the south and long assimilation with the majority population, the Sami are today a minority in nearly the whole of Sápmi. In this large area, the current situation of the Sami language varies a great deal between different regions (see Map). Among the various types of Sami language communities, Nils Jernsletten has (by means of Norwegian examples) identified three main types: (1) the monolingual, (2) the multilingual, and (3) the Norwegian dominated Sami community (Jernsletten 1982: 116; cf. Keskitalo 1981: 157 f.). This typology helps outline the main features of the linguistic ambiguity of Sami.

(1) In the few rural districts with a Sami majority in the inner part of Finnmark County, the assimilation policy, which aimed to make the Sami Norwegian, both culturally and linguistically, failed. There were very few Norwegian settlers in the area, and there was no support among the Sami population for the Norwegian school. "Culturally," Jernsletten concludes, "the school and the few Norwegian institutions were isolated islands in a homogeneous Sami community." The Sami community was isolated from the Norwegian, and Sami language and culture endured. Here, Sami is the language of communication "in all instances where the inhabitants themselves maintain control of the situation" (Jernsletten 1997: 959), since these municipalities consist of a sufficient number of individuals to create a language community (Jernsletten 1982: 101 f.; 104 ff.; 110 f.; Jernsletten 1997: 959).

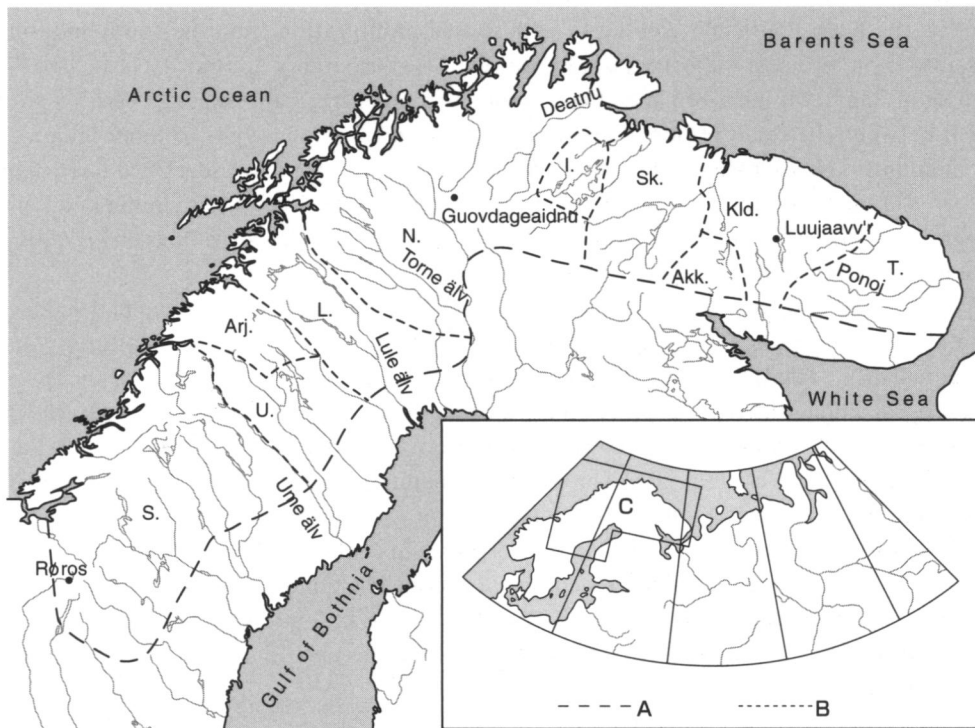
As Alf Isak Keskitalo (1981: 158) stated two decades ago, in areas where Sami is the language of the majority:

.... the language is employed in all types of daily contacts, commerce and communications, and partly in administration and education. One also encounters here tendencies to a growing "physical" Sámi language milieu in the form of geographical names in post-, tele- and other communications, road marking, street names and official and private advertising [...]. Besides having strong ethnic reference, the language is also learned by parts of the non-Sámi population.

This trend has been clearly strengthened since Keskitalo wrote his paper.

(2) From the outside it might, as Jernsletten points out, seem incomprehensible that the South Sami have kept their language, but the explanation is that they have lived isolated from the Norwegians with an economy based almost exclusively on reindeer. It has also been very rare for Norwegians to marry into the Sami groups. Here, Sami is used as a means of communication within the families. The Sami language has a high status and is a social and cultural symbol of identity. However, Norwegian is now increasingly taking over as the language of communication, even in the home (Jernsletten 1982: 101, 106 f.; Jernsletten 1997: 959; cf. Keskitalo 1981: 157; Korhonen 1996: 531).

(3) In the fjords from Divtasvuodna (Nor. Tysfjord) and further north, the assimilation process was strengthened because the Coastal Sami were economically dependent on Norwegian methods of working and on the Norwegian language. Until recently, very little



Map. Sami dialect areas.

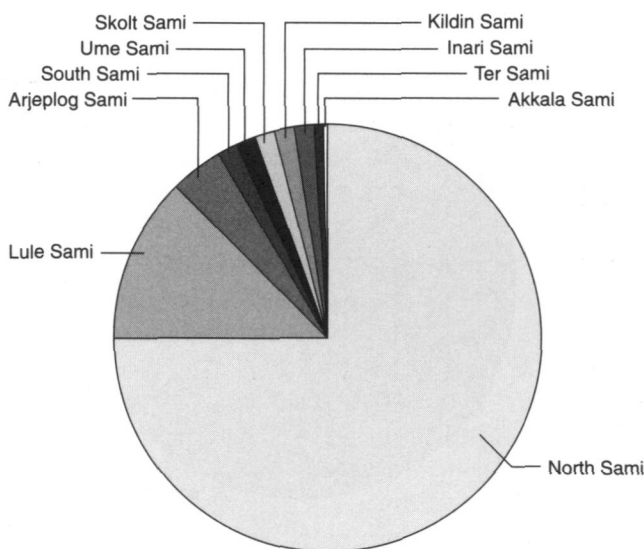
A: extent of the traditional Sami area of settlement (as depicted in most modern surveys); B = approximate borders of the main dialects of Sami; Akk: Akkala Sami, Arj=Arjeplog Sami, L. = Lule Sami, N. = North Sami, S. = South Sami, Sk. = Skolt Sami, T. = Ter Sami, U. = Ume Sami. It should be noted that the frontiers between Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia are not marked on the map.

has been done for the Sami language and culture in these areas (Jernsletten 1982: 101, 107 f., 112 ff.; Jernsletten 1997: 959). However, this situation is now changing and there is a great demand for Sami language courses from Sami who did not learn the language as children (Jernsletten 1997: 960; cf. Keskitalo 1981: 157 f.).

### The Number of Sami

No reliable information is available concerning either the current number of Sami or the number of Sami speakers. Since none of the relevant countries other than the Soviet Union has undertaken a census, the available information is—to quote Michael Krauss’s statement about statistics on northern minority peoples in general—based on “estimates, even—frankly—guesses and guesses about guesses” (Krauss 1997: 2).

According to his own estimates, there are between 31,600 and 43,000 Sami in Norway, between 17,600 and 20,000 in Sweden, about 6,000 in Finland and 1,900 in the Russian Federation (Krauss 1997: 24). Thus the total number of Sami—depending on the numbers chosen for Norway and Sweden—would be between 57,100 and 70,900. Krauss has estimated the number of Sami per main group, as well. According to him, there are (based on the lower total estimate above) about 1,200 South Sami, 1,000 Ume Sami, 2,000 Arjeplog (Krauss: Pite) Sami, 7,000–8,000 Lule Sami, 42,500 North Sami, 900 Inari Sami, 1,000 Skolt Sami, at most 100 Akkala Sami, 1,000 Kildin Sami, and 400 Ter Sami, totalling between 57,100 and 58,100, depending on the numbers of Lule Sami (Krauss 1997: 23 f.). Assuming the higher figure for Lule Sami, the percentage distribution would then be: 2% South Sami, 1.7% Ume Sami, 3.4% Arjeplog Sami, 13.8% Lule Sami, 73.1% North Sami, 1.5% Inari Sami, 1.7% Skolt Sami, 0.2% Akkala Sami, 1.7% Kildin Sami, and 0.7% Ter Sami (Fig. 1).



**Figure 1** The Sami population: Distribution according to dialect area

### The Number of Sami Speakers

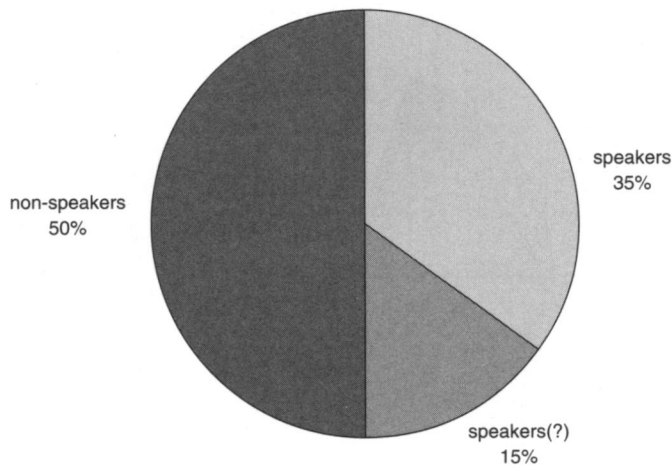
If the size of the Sami population is difficult to estimate, so too is the number of Sami speakers. There are no reliable figures on how many Sami can speak their language, partly because it is no easy matter to decide how a Sami “speaker” should be defined (cf. Magga 1997: 137; Svonni 1998: 27).

Nonetheless, a few scholars have tried to estimate the number. According to Krauss, one of the few authors who has presented a clear definition of an “active fluent speaker”—namely, a person:

.... not necessarily commanding a full range of the traditional vocabulary or even of the grammar, but able to converse with ease on a variety of topics and, above all, able—even if not likely—to raise their children speaking the language, and able to provide information for basic documentation of the language (Krauss 1997: 2).....

—the number of Sami speakers in Norway is between 15,800 and 19,000, in Sweden between 5,900 and 6,000, in Finland 2,700 and in Russia 700, i.e., between 25,100 and 28,400 in all (Krauss 1997: 24). Related to his numbers for the total Sami population (between 57,100 and 70,900), this would mean that between 35% and 50% of the Sami speak some form of Sami (Fig. 2).

However, the number of Sami speakers varies greatly from one estimate to another. For example, in 1990 Pekka Sammallahti reckoned there were a total of 35,000 Sami speakers, of whom 20,000 lived in Norway, 10,000 in Sweden, 3,000 in Finland, and 1,500 in the Soviet Union (Sammallahti 1990: 439). The numbers he presented in 1998 were considerably lower. He then estimated the total number to be 20,000, of whom 12,000 were in Norway, 7,000 in Sweden, less than 3,000 in Finland and 1,000 in the Russian Federation (Sammallahti 1998b: 1 f.).



**Figure 2** Sami: The share of speakers according to different estimates

The following highest and lowest numbers for Sami speakers distributed according to main dialect were obtained by Tapani Salminen (1994–98), Michael Krauss (1997: 23 f.), and Pekka Sammallahti (1998a: 43): South Sami has between 300 and 600 speakers, Ume and Arjeplog Sami between 20 and 50 speakers each, Lule Sami between 2,000 and 3,000, North Sami between 17,000 and 30,000, Inari and Skolt Sami between 300 and 500 speakers each, Akkala Sami 7 or 8, Kildin Sami between 650 and 1,000, and Ter Sami, finally, 6 speakers. Thus, the relative number of speakers differs considerably between the different main dialects (and—as we have already noted—between the different estimates). Taking Michael Krauss's numbers as a starting-point, 50% of the South Sami (a number that is probably much too high), 5% of the Ume Sami, 3% of the Arjeplog Sami, 29% of the Lule Sami, 51% of the North Sami, 33% of the Inari Sami, 43% of the Skolt Sami, 7% of the Akkala Sami, 65% of the Kildin Sami and 2% of the Ter Sami would speak their respective variety of Sami. These numbers imply that the dominant Sami group, the North Sami, forms an even larger percentage of the speakers than of the population. According to Krauss, about 73% of the Sami population, but about 84% of the Sami speakers are North Sami (Krauss 1997: 25) (Fig. 3). Salminen's (1994–98) estimates give an even higher figure for the share of North Sami speakers, 88%. However, again it should be noted that all these numbers are very uncertain, even if certain trends seem obvious. For example, the percentage of North Sami speakers has probably increased during recent decades, but as Ole Henrik Magga (1997: 142) has noted, this is above all due to a dramatic decline in the other main dialects, not to an increase in absolute numbers of North Sami speakers.

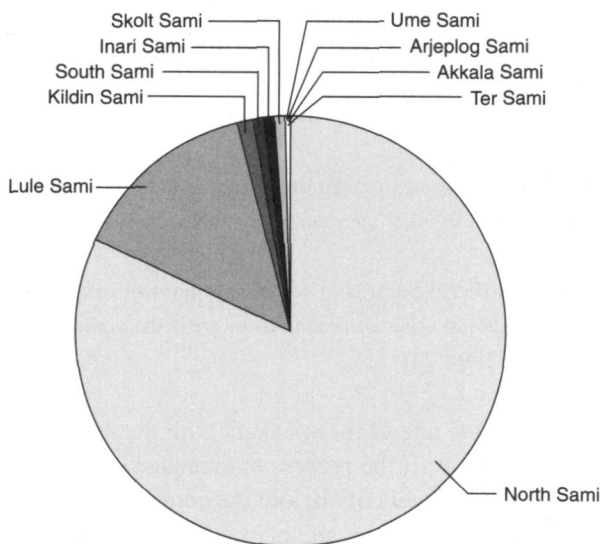


Figure 3 Sami speakers: Distribution according to dialect area

## LANGUAGE SHIFT

Based on Tapani Salminen's judgement in the "Unesco Red Book on Endangered Languages: Europe" (Salminen 1993–99), and excluding Kemi Sami which became extinct in the 19th century, the main varieties of Sami still spoken can be classified into six groups: (1) there are no children who speak Ume and Arjeplog (Salminen: Pite) Sami, and the youngest speakers are about 60 years old; (2) Akkala and Ter Sami do not have any child speakers either, but the youngest speakers are around 50 years old; (3) Kildin Sami probably has no child speakers, but the youngest speakers are about 20 years old; (4) regarding South, Inari and Skolt Sami, Salminen writes that "very few children learn the language, and probably none of them become active users"; (5) Lule Sami is slightly better off, since "a small number of children learn the language" and at least a few of them will "become active users"; (6) the situation for North Sami is different: "in the core area in central Finnmark Province most children learn the language, and are likely to become active users; in the adjacent areas of Sweden and Finland, many children also learn the language; in other areas, the chances (of children learning the language) are much worse" (Salminen 1993–99). To sum up, Salminen classifies the main dialects into three groups, according to how endangered the variety is. North Sami is "endangered," South, Lule, Inari, Skolt and Kildin Sami are "seriously endangered," and Ume, Arjeplog, Akkala and Ter Sami are "nearly extinct."

This grouping could be compared to the one made by Michael Krauss. On the basis of the age distribution of the youngest speakers he has tried to predict the future of the various principal dialects:

- (1) according to him, Ume, Arjeplog (Krauss: Pite), Akkala, and Ter Sami are only spoken by persons who are in their seventies and older;
- (2) South (Krauss: Southern) and Inari Sami are in some places spoken by persons in their thirties and older, in others, by middle-aged adults in their forties and older;
- (3) Skolt Sami is spoken by some in their thirties, or by middle-aged adults in their forties and older in Finland, but only by persons in their seventies and older in the Russian Federation;
- (4) Lule and Kildin Sami are in some communities or areas probably learned by the children generally, but in other communities or areas the youngest speakers are of middle age;
- (5) North (Krauss: Northern) Sami is in some communities or areas learned by the children generally, but in other communities or areas the youngest speakers are of middle age (Krauss 1997: 34).

After having compared the age of the speakers with the number of speakers of each main dialect, Krauss predicts that (if the process of language shift continues) Ter Sami and Akkala Sami will probably have died out "before the coming of the 21st century or during its first decade," then Pite and Ume Sami, and before 2055 also Skolt Sami, Inari Sami and South Sami will be extinct. Kildin Sami and Lule Sami may, he writes, "have some chance of survival into the indefinite future," whereas North Sami very probably, in Krauss's words, is

among the northern languages which “will still be spoken in the year 2100, but for how much longer, and by children?” (Krauss 1997: 27 ff.)

One observation to be made on the basis of the calculations by Tapani Salminen and Michael Krauss, is that the four main dialects with the lowest number of speakers and written without a standard language (Ume, Arjeplog, Akkala, and Ter Sami) are in the worst position. South, Lule, Inare, Skolt, and Kildin Sami form a middle group with an uncertain future, whereas North Sami, even if endangered, is estimated to be able to survive in the core area in the inner part of the county of Finnmark in Norway and the municipality of Ohcejohka in Finland, at least for a few more generations. This picture is negative, but corresponds with warnings that several other scholars have articulated.

The scholar who has most strenuously pointed out the critical situation of Sami is the Finnish linguist Marjut Aikio, who in several studies has dealt with the current position of the language. Her longitudinal investigations from Vuotso in northern Finland show what she calls “the dramatic collapse of the use of Sami” (Aikio 1984: 283). However, this is a sensitive theme. In Marjut Aikio’s words, both “the majority and the minority have partly false images of the present situation: the majority does not know and the minority does not want to believe that the present measures will inevitably lead to the death of the Sami language” (Aikio 1984: 290).

In the 1970s, it had already become clear that the situation was critical. The field survey of the Sami in Sweden revealed large differences between the different dialect areas. Very few of the children of non-reindeer herders knew the language: 31% among the North Sami, but only 4% among the Arjeplog/Lule Sami and 0% among the South Sami (Johansson 1975: 351). The minority position of the Sami and the earlier insufficient education in the language has led to a situation where many Sami do not speak Sami. The reasons for this process of language shift have been different in different periods. Marjut Aikio (1994a: 59) has identified a number of phases. Earlier efforts to destroy the language were followed by neglect. When Sami was first allowed to coexist with the languages of the majorities, it was not given any support, and later when there was support, it grew slowly. In other words, language policies towards Sami exemplify all the four main types of Fishman’s (1999: 158) well-known typology: prohibitive, restrictive, permissive, and supportive.

Today, all the varieties of Sami—except North Sami in the area where it is the language of the majority—are mainly used in informal domains such as within the family, among friends and during reindeer herding, hunting and fishing. In the relevant areas, “the work place and mass media, all types of service in society, and public activities and administration” (Svonni 1998: 29) are all dominated by Norwegian, Swedish, Finnish or Russian.

The situation is similar in other areas. Among the group that speaks Ume Sami—consisting of perhaps 20 persons—the dramatic decrease in the use of Sami is clearly due to the very negative attitudes towards Sami among the Swedish population, attitudes that resulted in depreciation of the linguistic heritage and low linguistic activity in Sami (Korhonen 1996: 553). Naturally—and unfortunately—these negative attitudes are found, not only among the majority populations but among several Sami as well. I will never forget the old man who at a Lule Sami language festival a few years ago came to me after my talk in Lule Sami and said that even though he appreciated that I had learned the language he



thought it was a waste of time since the language was going to die because it had no place in the modern world. It was nice, he continued, for old people to meet and talk about old times in their mother tongue, but young people should not devote themselves to Lule Sami but learn other languages instead.

Taking these negative attitudes into account, it is no surprise that Sami ethnicity has long been under-communicated. Earlier state regulations as well as the attitudes of the majority populations towards the Sami language are clear examples of what the sociolinguist Tove Skutnab-Kangas (1999: 57) has called "linguicism" (linguistically argued racism).

## REVITALISATION

What I have presented so far are facts and interpretations of facts that have been repeated many times. Together they give the impression that the current situation is primarily characterized by language shift and that most of the Sami dialects will probably be extinct in the near future. However, this unambiguously negative picture of the current situation and of the future of Sami is *not* the whole truth. Even if the processes of language shift I have mentioned have to be taken seriously, there is also another trend, a trend that might neutralise and even reverse the language shift. For a long time now, people have been making comprehensive efforts to preserve and develop the language. Dictionaries, grammars and textbooks have been published in all the six regional standard orthographies. During the past decade, the Sami language has achieved improved status, for one thing because Sami has been an official language in some municipalities in northern Norway and Finland since 1992 (in Sweden this status was not given to the language until 2000). Sami place-names are in official use on maps as well as on road signs, and old personal names, which were forbidden by the religious authorities in the 16th and 17th centuries, are once again in use. North Sami has developed into an unofficial Sami standard language that can be used in all domains. In areas where only a decade ago not a single child spoke the language, several children are today fluent speakers. Young persons are eager to learn Sami and feel a legitimate pride in their Sami heritage. Whereas in the past Sami ethnicity was in many regions under-communicated in public (cf. Eriksen 1993: 29), the situation is now changing. Processes of linguistic revitalisation are under way in many areas, not least among the dialects that are labelled "seriously endangered": South, Lule, Inari and Skolt Sami. North Sami is no longer the only Sami variety that new generations learn.

Among the many examples of intense work devoted to reversing of the processes of language shift, which at present are taking place in various parts of Sápmi, one of the first to be focussed upon was the one in Lisma, a small village in the Finnish part of Sápmi. In 1975, only older people in the twelve families living in Lisma spoke Sami to each other. When some women in 1980 decided to speak only Sami to one little child, it was—in Marjut Aikio's words—"a start of a language revolution." The parents succeeded in getting the children into a school where Sami was the sole language of instruction during the first four years, and, in 1994, most of the children under school age spoke only Sami. The parents had shown that it was possible to reverse the language shift process. This did not happen without hard work. As Aikio concludes, "this kind of language saving operation demands an

enormous effort by parents and villagers, they have to try to progress case by case, child by child" (Aikio 1994b: 66 f). This conclusion corresponds with the results of Mikael Svonni's investigation of language proficiency. It indicates that the language choice of the parents is decisive: "If the parents choose to use the minority language the children will also speak that language" (Svonni 1993: 181). His study clearly shows that only an intense use of the language will promote the children's linguistic mastery (cf. Svonni 1993: 180).

The decisive role parents play is exemplified by the revitalisation of Lule Sami in Divtasvuodna/Tysfjord in Norway. Here, interest in the Lule Sami language has been raised among the younger generation. In contrast to only a little more than a decade ago, when not one single child in the area spoke Lule Sami, there are today about 50 children who have Lule Sami as their first language after a group of parents in 1989 decided to start talking Sami in the family and founded a Sami kindergarten (Tydal 2000). The eight parents who started the process were awarded a well-merited language prize by the Sami Language Committee in September 2000 (Anti 2000). The Lule Sami language course on radio and the Internet that started during the spring of 2000 and the new translation of the New Testament into Lule Sami that was published in October 2000, are other indications of the strong local mobilization for the sake of the language.

Leena Huss, who has studied the linguistic revitalisation among the Sami and two other minority groups in Northern Scandinavia and Finland (the Tornedalians in Sweden and the Kven minority in Norway), gives several examples of successful attempts to reverse language shift processes. Among "efforts to promote adult mother tongue acquisition and literacy" (Huss 1999: 117) described in her study, she treats several important projects: the South and Lule Sami summer-camps where a couple of elders help young Sami relearn the language, and where only Sami (and if necessary, an international language), but no Norwegian or Swedish is allowed; the courses within the framework of the North, Inare and Skolt Sami literacy campaign in Finland; the language festivals organized by the Swedish Sami Parliament; the writing seminars, bus trips and other language promoting activities of the Society for the Inari Sami Language; the consciousness-raising work and elementary language courses of the South Sami project "To live in Saepmie" (Huss 1999: 117 ff.); the successful work done in Divtasvuodna/Tysfjord (mentioned above); the Inari and Skolt Sami "language nests" where elderly people participate in different kindergarten activities in order to immerse children in the language; and, the (regional) North Sami instruction given in two schools in Skánit/Skånland in cooperation with local informants (Huss 1999: 142 ff.). All these projects are powerful counter-points against the pessimistic predictions presented earlier. An important common feature is that even if research, international initiatives and money are needed, "none of this can make the children speak their mother tongue" (Tydal 2000). The Sami examples show that the mediation, to use Jon Tydal's wording, can only take place in the family and among friends and it can be elaborated and strengthened in the school.

The most successful case is the development of North Sami. It has, in Pekka Sammallahti's (1990: 437 f.) words, made North Sami into "an all-round language with all the words, phrases and expressions needed in modern technological society." This development is an inspiring model for the other main dialects. Huss writes:

The case of the North Sami in the Sami core area has proved that it is indeed possible to reverse language shift and develop a former heavily stigmatized language into a modern language used successfully in most spheres of life. [...] [North Sami] has shown the way and demonstrated, both for the majorities and the minorities, that what seems impossible may actually be possible. For those that follow, the path is smoother (Huss 1999: 191).

However, the strength of North Sami has at the same time become a problem for the other main dialects. North Sami is now, according to Huss (1999: 191), strong enough “to threaten the existence of the smaller Sami languages”—a real problem for the advocates of South, Lule, Inari, Skolt, and Kildin Sami, who fear that the idea of making North Sami an official Sami standard language (an idea that is presented once in a while) would weaken the other dialects. This fear of being absorbed by North Sami is reflected in the terminology. Whereas in the North Sami context it is common to talk about one Sami language with a number of main dialects (the terminology I use in this paper), many advocates of the lesser varieties prefer to talk about Sami languages in the plural (the South Sami language, the Lule Sami language, etc.) in order to lay stress upon the independence of their own variety of Sami.

Another problem is what Marjut Aikio has called the “reification” of language. She uses this term for the “process in which part of a language, particularly the written language, is dehumanized and becomes unavailable to its users” (Aikio 1994a: 61 f.). This is one of the causes of the linguistic gap between the generations: the children who learn Sami in school have difficulties in communicating with their grandparents who use a traditional vocabulary (cf. Aikio 1994a: 67 f.), and the older generation find it problematic to understand the Sami radio programs (especially newscasts) because of all the new words. The literacy campaign that Harald Gaski has proposed (cf. *Samefolket* 1998/12: 3) seems to become increasingly necessary.

### SAMI LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY AND ETHNICITY

Since Fredrik Barth published the Introduction to *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* in 1969 it has been common to define an ethnic group by its relations to other groups, i.e. by its boundary, “not the cultural stuff that it encloses” (Barth (1969) 1982: 15). Furthermore, it is usually emphasised that the boundary is a social product “which may have variable importance and which may change through time” (Eriksen 1993: 38). Ethnicity is processual and as a socio-psychological variable it is not always conscious, “but one of which minorities are more often conscious than are majorities” (Fishman 1999: 155). Thus, the role of language as a marker of ethnicity varies. It can be the most important marker as well as relatively unimportant, since language is only one among several indicators of ethnicity.

Andrea Amft, who has studied the living conditions of Swedish Sami during the 20th century, lists the following markers of ethnicity that her informants have mentioned (in addition to markers related to reindeer breeding): “to speak Sami (preferably as mother

tongue), to have a Sami family name, to be able to chant (*juoigat*) in the traditional Sami way, to wear Sami dress, to master parts of the Sami handicrafts (*duodji*), to eat Sami food [...], to have the Sami flag visible [...] and to have Sami objects visible in the apartment/house [...]" (Amft 2000: 181 f.). She also mentions participation in Sami social activities and thinks furthermore (Amft 2000: 182) that to be registered in the electoral register of the Sami parliament is now becoming a powerful marker of Sami ethnicity (cf. Svonni 1996: 108 ff.).

Even if language is only one of the markers of the ethnic boundary between Sami and non-Sami, it is an important one, not least because "language" in the legislation in Norway, Sweden and Finland is chosen as the main criterion for identifying someone as Sami. However, since the majority of the Sami do not speak the language "the boundary-marking function of language" (Tabouret-Keller 1997: 321) is weakened. This fact calls the official definition in question, even if the processes of revitalisation and the increased use of other aspects of language, such as place names and personal names, has made Sami more visible today than at any time before.

The world of today is characterised by "globalisation," a concept which in the social sciences is often used to indicate two forces that counteract each other: processes of homogenisation and processes of heterogenisation. Even if "globalisation" in popular parlance is most frequently used to designate the former type of processes, it is the relation between and the relative strength of the two types of processes that is usually focused upon in research. It was in order to underline this double content that Roland Robertson (1995) suggested "glocalisation" as an alternative term. If "globalisation" (or "glocalisation") is understood in this way, it could be used to characterise the linguistic situation of the world today. Even if it is to a large extent characterised by homogenisation, there are sufficient examples of resistance to and even successful reversal of language shift processes to make us at least a little bit more optimistic today about the future of the multiplicity of the world's languages than just a decade ago. Heterogenisation is in progress.

During the coming years, scholars are likely to focus increasingly on these processes of revitalisation. In doing so it will be important to remember that those who have succeeded in slowing (if not reversing) language shift, are not government officials (who might have given economic support), nor linguists and other scholars (who analysed the situation), nor specialists in education (who suggested solutions), but individual parents, teachers and elders. In spite of all the difficulties, they have decided to use their mother tongue in order to help new generations learn the language. Whatever the outcome of the various ongoing linguistic processes, it is not too much to assume that the current situation holds promise for the coming years. They will probably be extremely interesting for anyone who studies Sami and other indigenous languages. It really seems as if nothing less than a "language revolution" has begun.

## CONCLUSION

As many examples from indigenous peoples show (among them the Sami case I have presented), linguistically the world of today can be said to be characterised by two mutually

counteractive processes, not only processes that imply that a few global languages (and especially English) are becoming more and more dominant (i.e., homogenisation), but also processes that manifest themselves in various efforts to revitalise and even recreate minority languages (i.e., heterogenisation). The first type of process has led the most pessimistic scholars discussing the future of the world's languages to predict that between two thirds and 90–95 % of the languages in use today will be dead before the turn of the next century (Krauss 1992; Fishman 1999: 158). The other type of process gives hope for the future of linguistic diversity: during the last decade several indigenous languages that were once looked upon as hopelessly doomed have acquired fresh life. Children have begun to use the languages and older generations have found them anew. Another fact is that never before in history have so many indigenous languages been codified, written and read.

As a consequence of the fact that the current state of the world's languages is modified by these two opposing processes I have mentioned, the role of language as a marker of ethnic boundaries varies. For some ethnic groups and some individuals, who have shifted to the language of the majority and no longer speak the indigenous language, it will lose its role as marker. For other groups and those individuals who succeed in preserving the indigenous language or even reversing a language shift process, it will during the 21st century become an increasingly important marker of ethnicity. This will probably be the case for the Sami, too.

## REFERENCES

AIKIO, M.

1984 The position and use of the Same language: historical, contemporary and future perspectives. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* 5: 277–291.

1994a The Sámi language in Finland: problems and progress. In F. Horn (ed.), *Linguistic Rights of Minorities / Droits linguistiques des minorités* (Juridica Lapponica 9), pp. 54–76. Rovaniemi: The Northern Institute for Environmental and Minority Law, University of Lapland.

1994b The Sami language—a living language: the Sami language act and the case of Lisma village as examples of Sami language revitalization in Finland. In R. Erke (ed.), *Majority-Minority Relations: In The Case of the Sami in Scandinavia* (Diedut 1994:1), pp. 63–69. Guavdageaidnu: The Nordic Sami Institute.

AMFT, A.

2000 *Sápmi i förändringens tid* (Kulturens frontlinjer 20). Umeå: Samiska studier.

ANTI, A. B.

2000 Gádjo sámegeiela Divttasvuonas. *Min Áigi* 13. 9. 2000.

BARTH, F.

(1969) 1982 Introduction. In F. Barth (ed.), *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Cultural Differences*, pp. 9–38. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.

ERIKSEN, T. H.

1993 *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Anthropological Perspectives* (Anthropology, Culture and Society). London: Pluto Press.

FISHMAN, J. A.

- 1999 Sociolinguistics. In J. A. Fishman (ed.), *Handbook of Language and Ethnic Identity*, pp. 152–163. New York: Oxford University Press.

HUSS, L.

- 1999 *Reversing Language Shift in the Far North: Linguistic Revitalization in Northern Scandinavia and Finland* (Studia Uralica Upsaliensia 31). Uppsala: Uppsala University Library.

JERNSLETTEN, N.

- 1982 Språket i sámiske samfunn. In T. Bull and K. Jetne (eds.), *Nordnorsk: språkarv og språkforhold i Nord-Noreg*, pp. 101–107. Oslo: Samlaget.
- 1997 Norwegian—Sami. In H. Goebel et al. (eds.), *Kontaktlinguistik / Contact Linguistics / Linguistique de contact: ein internationales Handbuch zeitgenössischer Forschung 2* (Handbücher zur Sprach- und Kommunikationswissenschaft 12, 2), pp. 957–961. Berlin: de Gruyter.

JOHANSSON, H.

- 1975 Samernas språk och kultur: en intervjuundersökning rörande kulturella, sociala och psykologiska frågor. *Samerna i Sverige: stöd åt språk och kultur*. Betänkande av sameutredningen. Bilagor (SOU 1975, 100), pp. 271–373. Stockholm: LiberFörlag.

KESKITALO, A. I.

- 1981 The status of the Sámi language. In E. Haugen, J. D. McClure and D. Thomson (eds.), *Minority Languages Today*, pp. 152–162. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

KORHONEN, O.

- 1996 Språk och identitet bland samerna i Sverige. In K. Julku (ed.), *Congressus primus historiae fenno-ugricae* (Historia fenno-ugrica 1, 1), pp. 529–540. Oulu: Societas Historiae Fenno-Ugricae.

KRAUSS, M.

- 1992 The world's languages in crisis. *Language* 68: 6–10.
- 1997 The indigenous languages of the north: a report on their present state. In H. Shoji and J. Janhunen (eds.), *Northern Minority Languages: Problems of Survival* (Senri Ethnological Studies 44), pp. 1–34. Osaka: National Museum of Ethnology.

MAGGA, O. H.

- 1997 Samisk språk. In A. Karkar, B. Lindgren and S. Löland (eds.), *Nordens språk*, pp. 137–160. Oslo: Novus.

ROBERTSON, R.

- 1995 Glocalization: time-space and homogeneity-heterogeneity. In M. Faetherstone, S. Lash and R. Robertson (eds.), *Global Modernities*, pp. 25–44. London: Sage.

SALMINEN, T.

- 1993–99. Unesco Red Book on Endangered Languages: Europe. Available: [http://www.helsinki.fi/~tasalmin/europe\\_report.html](http://www.helsinki.fi/~tasalmin/europe_report.html) [Oct. 5, 2000].
- 1994–98. Finno-Ugrian Languages: Classification of the Finno-Ugrian (Uralic) languages, with present numbers of speakers and areas of distribution (last updated 26 October 1998). Available: <http://www.helsinki.fi/~tasalmin/fu.html> [Oct. 5, 2000].

## SAMMALLAHTI, P.

- 1990 The Sámi language: past and present. In D. R. F. Collins (ed.), *Arctic languages: An Awakening*, pp. 437–458. Paris: Unesco.
- 1998a Saamic. In D. Abondolo (ed.), *The Uralic Languages* (Routledge Language Family Descriptions), pp. 43–95. London: Routledge.
- 1998b *The Saami Languages: An Introduction*. Kárášjohka: Davvi Girji.

## Skutnab-KANGAS, T.

- 1999 Education of minorities. In J. A. Fishman (ed.), *Handbook of Language and Ethnic Identity*, pp. 42–59. New York: Oxford University Press.

## SVONNI, M.

- 1993 *Samiska skolbarns samiska: en undersökning av minoritetsspråksbehärskning i en språkbyteskontext* (Umeå Studies in the Humanities 113). Umeå.
- 1996 Saami language as a marker of ethnic identity among the Saami. In I. Seurajärvi-Kari and U.-M. Kulonen (eds.), *Essays on Indigenous Identity and Rights*, pp. 105–125. Helsinki: Helsinki University Press.
- 1998 Sami. In A. Ó. Corráin and S. M. Mathúna (eds.), *Minority Languages in Scandinavia, Britain and Ireland* (AUU. Studia Celtica Upsaliensia 3), pp. 21–49. Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell International.

## Tabouret-KELLER, A.

- 1997 Language and identity. In F. Coulmas (ed.), *The Handbook of Sociolinguistics* (Blackwell Handbooks in Linguistics 4), pp. 315–326. Oxford: Blackwell.

## TYDAL, J.

- 2000 Kriget for språket. *Samefolket* 2000: 3. 23.