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## Sámi languages: from language shift to language revitalization

The Sámi are an indigenous people living in Sápmi, the Sámiland, which includes the northernmost parts of Norway, Sweden, and Finland, and the Kola Peninsula of the Russian Federation. They speak altogether nine Sámi languages, which are separate languages with different linguistic characteristics and sociolinguistic backgrounds. However, all of them are endangered languages struggling with their vitality. In Finland, there are approximately 10 000 Sámi and three Sámi languages spoken. Inari Sámi has approximately 450 speakers, about 300 people speak Skolt Sámi and about 1500 speak North Sámi.

Sámi communities have suffered from assimilationist state politics and faced widespread language shift from Sámi to the majority languages. In many regions, intergenerational language transmission has interrupted, and several generations have grown up without Sámi language. Nowadays the Sámi are living in the complex reality of assimilation and its counter force – language revitalization. Active revitalization politics and measures have led to increasing prestige and reversing language shift in many Sámi communities in the Nordic countries. Unfortunately, similar development hasn't occurred on the Russian side of the Sámiland.

Cornerstones of the revitalization process include e.g., mother-tongue-medium basic education, language immersion for small children, intensive language training programs for adults, and actively developing Sámi media. In my paper, I will enlighten methods and goals of the revitalization of the Sámi languages, as well as ideologies behind the process. Special attention is paid to the case of Inari Sámi which is an example of an exceptionally successful revitalization at global scale.

### Recommended readings:

Aikio-Puoskari, Ulla 2018: Revitalization of Sámi Languages in Three Nordic Countries. – Hinton & Huss & Roché (eds.): *The Routledge Handbook of Language Revitalization*. New York & London: Routledge.

Pasanen, Annika 2018: "This Work is Not for Pessimists!". Revitalization of the Inari Sámi Language. – Hinton & Huss & Roché (eds.): *The Routledge Handbook of Language Revitalization*. New York & London: Routledge.