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SAMI LANGUAGES IN EDUCATION IN SWEDEN AND FINLAND

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The aim of this working paper is to compare the language policies of Finland and Sweden, especially in the field of education for the Sami population. The analysis is carried out on a macro level; firstly it investigates and examines how Finland and Sweden have introduced legislation to protect Sami languages, followed by a discussion of the current situations in the field of education, according to each stage of education. A comparison of the two nations highlights their different outcomes due to the different policies of their governments.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Nordic countries, including Finland and Sweden, are often represented as actively promoting diversities within their societies. Especially in terms of protection of Sami languages, Norway is often seen as a model by the other two nations. It was, in fact, “promoted” from inside and outside of the country based on the reflection of harsh assimilation history toward Sami people in the past. On the other hand, Sweden and Finland are often perceived to be following Norway as a model in their protection of Sami rights. Hence, by comparing Sweden and Finland which have similar influences from Norway, this paper aims firstly to investigate how two countries have been developing their education system, in terms of education for Sami population, and secondly to compare the situations of Sami language education in both countries.

Both Sweden and Finland have Sami parliaments, which are in charge of safeguarding, developing and coordinating all matters concerning Sami areas of interest. The Sami Parliament in each country has autonomy in the field of education to a certain extent. Since Sami languages are endangered, language revitalization requires not only the efforts from authorities at a national and supranational level, but also support from individuals who speak the minority languages. Thus, it is essential to examine them from both a macro and micro level.

II. WHO ARE THE SAMI?

The Sami, who live in the northern parts of Scandinavia and Finland and in the Kola Peninsula, are the only indigenous people in the EU to have their own languages, culture, means of livelihood and identity.¹ As indigenous people, they are now allowed to develop their languages,



and culture.² The Sami's status as indigenous people is based on their unique worldview, their own history, livelihoods and language. They are described sometimes as Saami, or Sami. However, throughout this paper, the word "Sami" is used to indicate this population.

They live in the area known as *Sápmi*, which today stretches from parts of Norway, Sweden, and Finland to the Kola Peninsula in Russia. They are known to have lived in certain areas of the Nordic countries and Russia since prehistoric times, supporting themselves by engaging in activities such as fishing, trapping and reindeer herding. Some Sami communities, defined as "sea Sami," are located along the coast, where they engage in activities such as fishing. Others, such as the "forest Sami", pursue reindeer herding in forest areas, while those who migrate with their herds between mountains and coastal areas are known as "mountain Sami."³ It is estimated that of the 70,000 to 100,000 Sami people, 40,000 to 60,000 live in Norway, about 15,000 to 20,000 in Sweden, about 10,000 in Finland, and approximately 2,000 in Russia.⁴

Since Sami people have traditionally lived in the area spanning the borders of the modern states of Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia, their histories after the establishment of modern state borders differ slightly, depending on the policies of each state. However, in all of these states, they have often been treated, in many respects, like refugees or inferior people, having been subjected to powerful assimilation policies in all of the four countries. Due to the history of assimilation, they are now being *allowed* to expand and adapt their languages and culture.⁵ In the 1600s, Sami people began to give up their traditional livelihoods and were gradually assimilated into the dominant groups

of each state. This assimilation period entailed a number of cultural shifts. For instance, their religious and traditional ceremonies were displaced by the Christian church and their languages were replaced by dominant languages of each state.⁶ In Sweden, the attitude toward the Sami was characterized by two policies; firstly, a policy of segregation which was applied to the reindeer Sami at the end of the nineteenth century, and secondly, a policy of assimilation which was applied towards sea Sami and mountain Sami communities with the particular exclusion of the Reindeer Sami. In Finland, the national romantic ideology demanded that the language of the country should be Finnish, meaning difficult situations for the minorities were often ignored.⁷

III. WHAT ARE SAMI LANGUAGES?

The Sami languages are Finno-Ugric languages (such as Finnish, Hungarian and Estonian) spoken in the Sami region in Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia. Roughly half of the Sami people speak one of the Sami languages.⁸ The Sami languages are divided into three main languages: Eastern Sami, Central Sami and Southern Sami.⁹ Among these three categories, there are ten different languages,¹⁰ namely North Sami, Lule Sami, Pite Sami, South Sami, Ume Sami, Skolt Sami, Kildin Sami, Inari Sami, Ter Sami, and Akkala Sami. Of these ten Sami languages, three are spoken in Finland: North Sami, Inari Sami and Skolt Sami; while five are spoken in Sweden: North Sami, Pite Sami, Ume Sami, Lule Sami, and South Sami¹¹.

The Number of Estimated Native Speakers¹²

Sweden	Finland
North Sami (16,500 in total of all nations, 7,000 in Sweden)	<i>North Sami</i> (16,500 in total of all nations, 2,000 in Finland)
<i>Pite Sami</i> (less than 40)	<i>Inari Sami</i> (less than 300)
<i>Ume Sami</i> (less than 20)	<i>Skolt Sami</i> (less than 300)
<i>Lule Sami</i> (1,000- 2,000)	
<i>South Sami</i> (600)	

During the assimilation period from the nineteenth century onward, Sami children were educated often only in the dominant state language and were not allowed to speak Sami to each other in school. This was the result of an earlier language policy which had the purpose of “unifying” minorities. As a result, both in Sweden and Finland, Sami languages have been influenced by the majority languages, Swedish and Finnish. According to the UNESCO Atlas of the World’s Languages in Danger, all of the Sami languages are considered endangered.¹³ All the Sami languages are primarily important for the speakers of Sami languages. Linguists also consider these languages to be important sources of linguistic data, which should not be allowed to simply vanish.¹⁴

Currently, language plays an important role in “Saminess” both in Sweden and Finland.¹⁵ In Finland, for instance, the definition of a Sami is

based largely on the knowledge of Sami languages. According to this definition, a Sami is someone who considers themselves to be Sami, provided that they have learnt Sami as their first language or have at least one parent or grandparent whose first language is Sami.^{16 17} If a person matches these criteria, he or she can register as a “Sami” at the Sami Parliament, which allows this person to vote in elections. In Finland there is a debate regarding “status-Sami” and those “non status Sami” who do not have an official status as Sami.¹⁸ Although official statistics shows that there are approximately 1800 Sami language speakers in Finland, the voluntary nature in which Sami report their mother tongue has led to the argument that there are in fact more speakers of Sami in Finland than these statistics suggest. Similar situations can be observed in Sweden as well. According to the Swedish governmental report on the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, “Sami is defined as a person who considers themselves to be Sami and who speaks or has spoken Sami at home, or whose parents or grandparents speak or have spoken Sami at home, or has a parent who is or has been on the Sami parliament electoral register.”¹⁹ Only the “registered” Sami, based on this definition, have the right to vote for the election of members of the Sami Parliament. In both Finland and Sweden, Sami is defined as a person who considers themselves as a Sami in addition to the criteria of possessing any of the Sami languages as a mother tongue or having one of the parents or grandparents who speaks Sami as a native language. Sami languages in the family, in this sense, can be seen as a way of forming an identity for Sami people both in Finland and Sweden.



IV. INTERNATIONAL INSTRUMENTS REGULATING THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK IN FINLAND AND SWEDEN

Finland and Sweden are both signatories to the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM; from now on mentioned as the Convention) and to the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ECRML; from now on mentioned as the Charter). Although both countries signed the FCNM in 1995, Finland ratified the Convention in 1997, while Sweden ratified it in 2000. The Charter was also first signed and ratified by Finland (in 1992 and 1994 respectively). Sweden, on the other hand, adhered to the Charter (ratified in 2000) only after the FCNM ratification. In compliance with the international regulatory mechanisms, the two countries amended their national legislation. Ratification of these two international instruments have influenced each nation's legislation.

V. LEGISLATION

Linguistic Varieties within Sami Languages

Sweden

In Sweden, after the ratification of the Convention and the Charter in 2000, the Language Act (2009) and the Swedish Act on National Minorities and National Minority Languages (2009) were entered into force. Sami people have their rights protected by the Language Act (2010) and the Swedish Act on National Minorities and National Minority Languages (2010). In both Acts, Sami languages are treated as one, due to the fact that they are always referred to in ambigu-

ous form. Within the state reports and official documents, smaller Sami languages are often invisible. Considering the fact that there are not only North Sami, but also smaller Sami languages, such as Ume Sami and Lule Sami and South Sami, this raises a lot of problematic issues related to the field. It is a surprising fact that the 2012 Recommendation of the Council of Europe does not specify the numerically smaller languages of Sweden²⁰ despite the fact that it **does** mention smaller Sami languages of Finland which are to be included in its education in its Recommendation toward Finland in 2015.²¹ Smaller Sami languages spoken in Sweden have only been pointed out recently (for instance, in 2015, when referring to the situation of Ume Sami (5th Report on Sweden on the Charter)).²²

Finland

In Finland, the Sami Language Act (2003) was enacted after the ratification of the Convention in 1997 and the Charter in 1994. Sami languages are protected by the Sami Language Act (2003) which influences domains including education, media, and signs in Sami languages. In this Act, Sami languages are treated as if they are one language, in an ambiguous form. However, the government mentions three Sami languages (North Sami, Skolt Sami and Inari Sami) in their official reports submitted to Council of Europe,²³ stating the precise degree of implementation of Provisions of the Charter each Sami language. This fact reveals the efforts of the government to include all three Sami languages within the policy.

Comparison

Sami language is referred to in an ambiguous form both in Sweden and Finland in their re-



spective domestic laws (the Language Act and the Sami Language Act). In order to facilitate and enhance “multilingual” society, it is preferable to use the plural form to indicate the linguistic varieties within Sami languages. All Sami languages are endangered, despite the efforts from authorities and the European Union to maintain them. The power relations and the status of languages, in many cases, have emerged through the modernization of society: therefore, language endangerment can be considered the product of the modern world.²⁴ Even though policies toward minority languages exist with a “good” purpose in both countries, many smaller Sami languages, including Ume Sami or Pite Sami spoken in Sweden, are often ignored and excluded from the reports of the governments. Within the Sami languages, there is also a power relations between languages.

Ironically, even though the Framework Convention and the European Charter aim at promoting diversity, numerically smaller languages are outside the protection of this framework. If the Framework Convention and the European Charter are to protect national minorities, then numerically smaller Sami languages should also be provided with equal opportunities to be visible. The current policies toward Sami languages both in Sweden and Finland should reflect upon the fact that “ideally” all of the Sami languages should be protected on an equal basis, which could result in the situation where children of each Sami language should be provided with education, regardless of their residence.

Legal Framework on Education

Sweden

The school system is regulated through the Education Act (2010), which mandates nine years of school attendance for all children from the year when they turn seven.²⁵ Compulsory schooling is designed for children from age 6 to 13. There are Ordinances on the compulsory school system, Ordinances on the upper secondary school, and Ordinances on adult education as supplements to the Act.²⁶ Upper secondary school is optional and designed for children aged 14-16. Five government authorities which regulate education are; 1) the Swedish School Inspectorate, which examines the quality of schools across the country, 2) the National Agency for Education, which provides information about education, promotes understanding, and administers public funding and grants, 3) the National Agency for Special Needs Education and Schools, which provides people with disabilities the same opportunities for development and education, 4) the Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education, which analyzes labor market demands for workforce education, and finally, 5) the Sami School Board as an administrative agency for public Sami schools and their affiliated activities, which are governed by the Sami School Ordinance.²⁷ Education is a highly decentralized field, provided that municipalities have considerable freedom to decide how educational activities will be carried out, and are also held accountable for the activities undertaken.²⁸ Sweden established the first Sami school as early as 1617, with the initial purpose of spreading Christianity.²⁹ The Sami School Law (revised in 1983) regulates that Sami children are entitled to



attend Sami school instead of the conventional school.³⁰

Finland

The laws which regulate the school system are applied according to the level of education. Pre-school education for children under 6 years old is regulated by the Act on Children's Day Care and the Act on Children's Care at Home and Private Day-care. Comprehensive school is regulated by the Basic Education Act, which covers all children of compulsory school age (from age seven to fifteen) as well as 6-year-old children enrolled in the one year preschool education, whereas upper secondary education is regulated by the General Upper Secondary School Act and the Government Decree. Upper secondary school consists of three years in which students can choose either academic or vocational education. There are also the Vocational Education and Training Act, and the University Act to regulate vocational and university level education.³¹ The Finnish National Board of Education is the responsible body for both general education and vocational education and training. The Ministry of Education is the responsible body for higher education.³² Educational administration was previously characterized by the State's precise steering and control, however since the 1980s, school legislation has been reformed to a continuous increase in the decision making powers of local authorities.³³ In terms of the Sami languages in education, it is noteworthy that even before the ratification of the Charter and the Convention, the change was made to the law regulating the school system in 1983: "Students living in the Sami Home Region may be taught in their mother tongue. Sami and Finnish may be the language of instruc-

tion."³⁴

VI. SAMI IN EDUCATION

Pre School

Sweden

Although the one-year pre-school education is not compulsory, almost all children in Sweden attend it. At the pre-school level, the municipalities within the administrative districts for Sami are required to provide pre-school opportunities for the children of Sami. In 2005, it was reported that the number of children who attended pre-school Sami language education was 107.³⁵ The situation seems to be gradually improving, given the fact that there was an opening of a Sami pre-school in 2010 with South Sami as its principal language.³⁶ Even if the Act on National Minorities and National Minority Languages (2009) of Sweden guarantees that "the municipal authority shall offer a child whose parents or guardian so request a place in the pre-school activity where the whole or *part of* the activity is carried out in Finnish, Meankieli or Sami as appropriate," it is not enough to state that only "*part of*" the activity to be carried out in minority languages. Article 8 of the Charter clearly states that *substantial part* should be in minority language. In fact, according to the report from NGOs, there are a limited number of pre-schools teaching Sami or in Sami due to the shortfalls of legal regulations. For example, the Swedish Schools Inspectorate's report shows that in 2011, only 16 out of 19 municipalities provided pre-school education for Sami children. There is even a reported case of the Dorotea municipality not being able to provide pre-school in Sami due to the lack of Sami-speaking staff.³⁷ In some municipalities, families are unable to wait long enough for a



place in minority language pre-school education and so decide to accept a place in Swedish language education instead.³⁸

Finland

In terms of pre-school education, a municipality must ensure that day care can be given in the child's mother tongue when that language is Finnish, Swedish or Sami.³⁹ Currently, all municipalities in Sami homeland provide Sami education and all three Sami languages are being taught.⁴⁰ Municipalities receive state subsidies for the costs of arranging education in Sami. The Sevettijärvi School provides pre-school education in Skolt Sami.⁴¹ The Sami Parliament produces teaching materials in all three Sami languages, also at pre-school level, but teaching materials in Skolt Sami are scarce. In addition, the Government supports various language nest activities for pre-school level in all three Sami languages.⁴² However, currently the access to Sami pre-schools are restricted to those who claimed Sami as their mother tongue at the population registry, in which people only register one language as their mother tongue.⁴³ Since most of the Sami pupils are raised bilingual, this makes it less accessible for Sami pupils to receive pre-school education in Sami.

Considering that all municipalities in the Sami homeland in Finland provide Sami education at pre-school level, Finland provides better pre-school education for Sami pupils. Sweden, on the other hand, fails to offer Sami pre-school education at a preschool level in several municipalities that should be covered on the basis of the Convention Article 14. As the Article 14 states, Parties shall endeavor to ensure, as far as possible, that persons belonging to those minorities have adequate opportunities for being taught

the minority language or for receiving instruction in this language, in the area inhabited by persons belonging to national minorities. In terms of material preparation, although there is still a huge demand for producing teaching materials in Skolt Sami language, Finland also provides better practices in this regards, as the Sami Parliament produces teaching materials in all Sami languages even for pre-school level.⁴⁴

Compulsory School

Sweden

After pre-school, in Sweden, pupils attend a compulsory school when they reach at the age 7. For Sami children, Sweden offers three choices of compulsory education: (1) Sami school (Sameskolan), (2) Sami integrated primary school, and (3) Compulsory schools with mother tongue tuition of Sami language. Pupils who attend a separate, state-run "Sami school" (Sameskolan) during their compulsory school years reside in accommodation provided by the school during their education.⁴⁵ Since Sami schools are part of Swedish public education, the national curriculum is also applied to Sami schools. In addition, the National Agency for Education has established a special syllabus for Sami tuition in the Sami School. Currently, there are six Sami schools. Sami schools have Sami language immersion as a main program.

However, some municipalities in Swedish Sami administrative areas do not have Sami schools.⁴⁶ In such areas, they have integrated Sami language education into primary schools. Also, after year 6 at a Sami school, integrated Sami teaching is organized for Sami pupils for the remainder of their time at compulsory



school, from year 7 to 9 (from age 13-14 until age 15-16). For integrated Sami language education, pupils attend the compulsory schools but are taught the Sami language, Sami culture and the Sami way of life. The schools that have integrated Sami teaching offer between two to four hours of Sami per week.⁴⁷ In such cases, pupils study other subjects in the ordinary teaching syllabus in the Swedish language. For pupils who cannot attend schools with integrated Sami language education, there is an option of studying Sami with mother tongue tuition as mentioned earlier, usually consisting of 30 minutes to 1 hour each week outside regular school hours. In order to receive mother tongue tuition in Sami, a pupil must have a basic knowledge of the language, and a teacher who is readily able to provide mother tongue tuition must be in place. Municipalities are obligated to provide mother tongue tuition if a substantial teacher is available,^{48 49} yet this is still an obstacle for the mother tongue education of Sami speaking pupils as there is currently a serious lack of Sami language teachers in Sweden.

According to statistics from the Swedish National Agency for Education, during the academic year of 2006/2007, the total number of pupils in compulsory schools who were eligible to receive mother tongue education in Sami was estimated at 637, out of which 63% of pupils were reported to be actually participating in education in Sami. In addition, according to research, the use of Sami as a medium of teaching is reported to vary considerably from school to school.^{50 51} The Provisions of the Charter to provide a *substantial* part of education in minority languages are not met. Moreover, a municipality is currently only obliged to provide mother tongue tuition in a minority language if a

suitable teacher is available.⁵²

In addition, although Sweden has developed a separate system of education for Sami pupils, there are some municipalities which do not have Sami schools and so pupils are left without education in Sami. Sami schools are sometimes described as “different” from “ordinary” schools even in official documents from the Government.⁵³ It is noteworthy to draw an attention to the use of the word “ordinary” in the Government report in 2007, indicating the fact that schools for Sami are not considered to be ordinary compared to other state owned schools. Considering the history of the segregation policy of the government toward reindeer herding Sami, as it used to have Nomad schools for Sami populations, it might be the product of country’s history to have a separate system of education for Sami.⁵⁴

Finland

After pre-school education at the age of 7, Sami children in Finland are entitled to attend basic compulsory education (perusukoulu) in all municipalities in the Sami homeland. Sami pupils in Finland do not have a separate system of education, such as the Swedish Sami schools (Sameskolan). In Finland, currently, for all three varieties of Sami languages (North Sami, Inari Sami and Skolt Sami), compulsory school education in Sami language is available systematically in Sami administrative areas.⁵⁵ For instance, in Sami homeland municipalities, there are 11 pupils who have attended basic (compulsory) education in Inari Sami and 4 pupils in Skolt Sami.⁵⁶ In addition, since 2008, the revitalization has had a positive result as the teaching of Inari Sami has slightly increased.⁵⁷ During the academic year 2013-2014, a total of 15



students benefited from basic education in Inari Sami. The number of students participating in teaching in Inari Sami serves as an indication of successful language revival: the number of students has regularly increased since the 1990s, when no students participated in Inari Sami. During this academic year 2015, 39 students are benefiting from education in Inari Sami.⁵⁸ In all municipalities of the Sami homeland, the lack of teachers is reported as a serious problem. In such an area, it is often only the younger year groups that have access to Sami language education. Due to the lack of teachers, schools are often unable to offer classes for older children in Sami languages. Another problem which the Sami population in Finland has been confronting is that of education for children who reside outside the Sami homeland. Statistics reveals that in 2007, 59% of Sami aged 11-17 years and more than 60% of Sami aged 18-24 resided outside the Sami homeland.⁵⁹ Furthermore, the percentage of children under 10 who live outside the Sami homeland was estimated as 70% (Council of Europe, 2010). One of the reasons for this is because the Sami Language Act of Finland does not obligate municipalities outside of the Sami homeland to provide teaching in Sami.⁶⁰ Within the current system, under the decree of the Ministry of Education, Sami children who reside outside the homeland may only be granted government subsidies for Sami language teaching, on the condition that the teaching group of the language has at least *two pupils* at the beginning of the term, or that at least two pupils or students attend the course when it begins.⁶¹ Also, for those children who reside outside the Sami homeland, only two teaching hours per week are required by law.⁶² In addition, since they are taught a course outside the usual school timeta-

ble either in contact teaching in the cities of Rovaniemi, Oulu and Tempere, or though the virtual learning program over the Internet, pupils with Sami background who reside outside homeland still have difficulties due to the shortfalls of current system.

Comparison

Compared with Sweden, Finland does not have a separate school or a separate syllabus specifically for Sami speaking pupils at compulsory level. Municipalities in the Sami homeland that arrange Sami instruction are responsible for the arranging and adopting of the national curriculum. Besides the reported difficulties for schools such as the shortage of Sami speaking teachers and educational materials in Sami, it is even more troublesome for those schools for Sami pupils to adopt the national curriculum into their own schools.

Given that Sami people have their own traditional world view and values, which differ from the mainstream values with which the state education system was developed, the Swedish system might be beneficial towards keeping the Sami languages and traditions alive. Since Sweden has its own separate system of education for Sami pupils, it enables Sami people to include their own values into a school curriculum that is usually determined by “dominant” values of education.⁶³ In this regard, the Swedish system could result in the preservation of Sami culture and languages. However, as mentioned above, the problem of the Swedish system is its inconsistency for Sami pupils. Pupils who cannot attend Sami schools can receive education in Sami only for a couple of hours per week. This amount of time is not sufficient for pupils to acquire a proper understanding of a language, par-



ticularly an endangered one such as Sami languages, where in the majority of cases of Sami children, their home language may not be only Sami.⁶⁴ In both Finland and Sweden, pupils who are outside Sami homeland municipalities and who cannot attend Sami schools (in the Swedish case) are left without enough mother tongue instruction. Without proper and systematic support from the authorities, pupils might lose their mother tongue, which could result in the loss of the Sami languages over several generations. Moreover, since three Sami languages are spoken in Finland and four in Sweden, it is even more challenging to provide teaching in all three languages outside the Sami homeland due to the lack of teachers and materials. On the basis of the provisions of the Charter, the parties of Finland and Sweden which aim to make minority language education available to *every* person who belongs to a minority group need to improve.

Secondary Education

Sweden

The Government of Sweden states that “after attending Sami school from year 7 to 9, Sami pupils could transfer to *ordinary* compulsory school if they wish from age 16-18.”⁶⁵ In these schools, pupils can receive mother tongue tuition in Sami or they can receive mother tongue tuition via the Mother Tongue Theme website.⁶⁶ At the secondary level, there is one Sami upper secondary school in Jokkmokk in the very north of Sweden. This school offers education with a Sami specialization, in the form of language, handicraft and culture courses. The school offers two different programs, namely Sami industries and Sami civic programs. Sami industries is a

program to prepare pupils for special skills needed in society, while the Sami civic program aims to prepare pupils for higher education with a Sami orientation. In 2013, there were 15 pupils in the civic program and 8 pupils in the vocational (industries) program.

Children who cannot attend this Sami upper secondary school attend secondary schools with other children, with the option of distance education offered by the Sami Education Center. However, since it is distance learning, a very limited number of students can actually attend it. In order to meet the provisions of the European Charter of Minority Languages in Sweden, it is necessary to make a “substantial” part of the Sami language education available for students who cannot attend this school in Jokkmokk for various reasons.

Finland

After compulsory education, Sami children are entitled to attend upper secondary school education (Toisen Asteen Oppilaitos) mainly in Sami if they reside in the Sami homeland, which is the municipalities of northern Finland including Enonkekiö, Inari, Sodankylä and Ustjoki. As far as general upper secondary education is concerned, the Sámi General Upper Secondary School in Utsjoki is the only one to also provide instruction in North Sami in some subjects.⁶⁷ In this school, pupils can study some subjects in Sami. Despite being the Sami High School, this school only offers language subject in north Sami and some handicraft classes for Sami speaking students.⁶⁸



Comparison

Although systematically, it is possible to find education in Sami, the lack of teaching materials as well as the lack of teachers is reported as a hindrance to the provision of quality education for all Sami pupils.⁶⁹ In both countries, there is a tendency that towards the upper school grades, Sami language instruction decreases (in all Sami languages).⁷⁰ Comparing the two countries at the level of secondary education, Sweden organizes systematic organization for Sami pupils, providing them with opportunities to choose the Sami industries program or the Sami civic program. This creates a way for Sami pupils to participate in further education if they wish. On the basis of the Convention and the Charter, this Swedish practice is valuable as it recognizes the right of Sami students to choose their preferable method of secondary education, which could lead to wider opportunities in higher education. Although as the following section states, there is a problem in that the entrance exam is only in Swedish, Sweden does offer Sami pupils opportunities to further develop their literacy for higher education in Sami.

Higher Education and Teacher Training

Sweden

At the higher education level, Sami for beginners can be studied at the University of Umeå and the University of Uppsala, with the requirement of prior knowledge for basic eligibility.⁷¹ In addition, some examples of the courses offered at university level are “Sami language-revitalisation studies,” “Sami cultural studies,” “Lule Sami and South Sami,” at both basic and advanced levels.⁷² In 2013, the Government

assigned Umeå University with the national responsibility and funds for building up and developing a course for teacher training in Sami.⁷³ The government has also tasked the Luleå University of Technology with developing teacher training in Sami. However, the University has not received any applicants for a number of years and the course was not held in the autumn of 2010.⁷⁴ The lack of adequate job opportunities is stated as a reason for it.

In addition, another problem lies in the accessibility of higher education for Sami pupils in Sweden. The Scholastic Aptitude Test (The Högskoleprovet), which is an exam for higher education in Sweden, cannot be taken in languages other than Swedish.⁷⁵ The Scholastic Aptitude Test examines students' Swedish language ability with verbal sections divided into four sections; vocabulary (in Swedish), reading comprehension of Swedish texts, sentence completion (in Swedish) and English reading comprehension. For students who study Sami languages, if they cannot learn Sami for the purpose of this test, it is likely that fewer and fewer students are motivated to learn Sami at secondary school level.

Finland

Sami languages, including Inari Sami and Skolt Sami, could be studied at the University of Helsinki, the University of Oulu and at the University of Lapland. The Giellagas Institute at the University of Oulu is responsible at a national level for the teaching of the Sami language and culture and teacher education in Sami.⁷⁶ The University of Lapland has initiated studies in Sámi pedagogy.⁷⁷ Basic professional education in the Sami language is provided at one educational institution maintained by the State, at the



Sámi Education Institute at Inari. The purpose is to meet the needs of the business sector in Lapland.

Comparison

With regard to accessibility of higher education, Finland offers students of Sami with opportunities to take the mother tongue examination in Inari Sami, North Sami, and in Skolt Sami. A foreign language examination can also be taken in North Sami, Inari Sami and Skolt Sami.⁷⁸ However, in reality, under the current system, Sami pupils who received education in Sami earlier cannot further continue studying in Sami. Since other subjects are examined in Finnish, many students who received basic education in Sami switch to Finnish language classes to take the matriculation examination in Finnish. In order to take the matriculation examination, they should be familiar with Finnish language concepts.⁷⁹ Considering the availability of mother tongue examination in Sami languages, Finland has better practices in terms of the examination for higher institutions, although in reality, Sami children have to switch to Finnish to take other subjects of the matriculation examination.

In Finland, there are three universities which offer teaching of Sami, covering three Sami languages. Finland also offers Sami languages in its capital city, at the University of Helsinki. Considering the number of students who study in the metropolitan area, higher education in Sami is more accessible in Finland, whereas in Sweden there are currently only two universities which offer Sami languages as a subject of study. Under the current system, students in Sweden cannot take Ume Sami language or Pite Sami language courses at any university in Sweden. Considering that these two smaller Sami languages

are severely endangered yet are spoken in Sweden, the situation is alarming. In fact, the Swedish Government report does not even state the situation of smaller Sami languages.⁸⁰

Through a comparison of the higher education systems of Finland and Sweden, it is clear that although both countries provide teaching of Sami languages at universities, there is definitely a lack of systematic teacher training systems in both countries. Both countries should establish training systems for teachers of Sami languages. As mentioned earlier, the Swedish municipalities are only obligated to offer mother tongue tuition *if a sustainable teacher is available*. This regulation makes it more difficult to provide Sami pupils with teaching of Sami. In reality, since there is a lack of systematic teacher training at university level, it is surely impossible to establish Sami teaching in schools.

Teaching Materials

Sweden

The Sami Education Board received SEK 1 million to develop teaching materials in Sami. A further 1 million was earmarked in 2010 for the production of teaching materials in Romani Chib and also for Sami at pre-school and school level. Sweden has also introduced the “Mother Tongue Theme Website (*Tema Modersmål*)”⁸¹ which assists mother tongue tuition in school by providing materials such as textbooks, audio, and brochures of various degrees of the target languages. Teaching materials are available for downloading from the website.⁸² For this website, the National Agency for Education initiated the distribution of funding from the government by contacting the target groups.⁸³ This distribution was based in part on the number of pupils in



each language group. Under these conditions, the Agency started gathering materials on the Mother Tongue Theme website in 2009. The method of distribution is problematic as it cannot distribute funds for numerically smaller languages. Usually, numerically smaller Sami languages often have a smaller number of pupils. Especially in the case of Sweden, Pite Sami (less than 40), Ume Sami (less than 20), Lule Sami (1,000- 2,000) and South Sami (600), having fewer speakers and learning materials for numerically smaller languages could be ignored under this method of distribution.

Finland

In Finland, the funds granted to the Sámi Parliament for the production of teaching material have amounted to EUR 258,000 per year. Materials in Skolt Sami and Inari Sami for upper secondary schools are especially necessary. However, the greatest amount of materials has been produced for teaching in the North Sami language.⁸⁴ Gradually, the production of material in Inari Sami has increased in recent years, while to date, little material in Skolt Sami has been produced.⁸⁵ In 2013, a total government subsidy of EUR 290,000 was allocated to the Sami Parliament for the production of Sami language learning material.⁸⁶ In particular, work related to learning material in Inari Sami has intensified. The government subsidy was used to fund approx. 40 projects. During 2014, they resulted in four new learning materials in North Sami, two new learning materials in Inari Sami and one in Skolt Sami. There is one case of the manuscripts of learning materials being completed in 2013, but due to a lack of funds, printing of the manuscripts was postponed. Considering the fact that learning materials in Skolt and Inari

Sami for upper secondary school, professional education and adult education are most lacking, it is necessary to take further steps in the production of learning materials in Inari and Skolt Sami for upper grades.

VII. CONCLUSION

Finland

In Finland, more attention should be given to including all the Sami languages in the education system. Firstly, the issue of the registering of a mother tongue limiting access to pre-school education in Sami should be reconsidered as it prevents Sami pupils who registered Finnish as their mother tongue from receiving pre-school education in Sami. This should be regulated based on the provisions of “equal opportunity to education” in the European Charter. Secondly, as with the Swedish case, the lack of teachers and learning materials needs to be addressed. It is also necessary for higher education institutions to establish structured teacher training programs for Sami teachers. Finally, it is essential to establish a measure to protect the right of Sami pupils who reside outside of Sami administrative areas. Many researchers criticize this point, however, Article 14 of the current Framework Convention states that Parties are *only* supposed to provide adequate opportunities for education in areas traditionally inhabited by persons belonging to national minorities or where there are substantial numbers. Therefore, within the Framework, and also within the Language Act of Finland, pupils who reside outside of the Sami homeland are being ignored, and lack opportunities to be taught in Sami. In order to support Sami pupils outside Sami municipali-



ties, it is necessary to reconsider the provisions of the Framework. It is often more difficult to keep the minority languages for those pupils who are exposed to “majority” languages outside traditional residence areas.

In comparison to the Swedish government, the Finnish government recognizes varieties within Sami languages, as highlighted by the fact that the governmental reports which cover Sami languages of Finland specifically state the situations of three languages which are spoken in Finland. Although their Language Act refers to the Sami language in a singular form, the fact that the Finnish government reports the situation of Inari and Skolt Sami languages in their official report shows the recognition of the government of the different Sami languages.

At the legislation level, the Language Act of Finland merely states “other languages,” ensuring the right to use languages other than Finnish, Swedish or Sami. In this sense, Sami is treated separately, being distinguished from other minority languages such as Roma, Karelian, Russian or Yiddish. In addition, Finland has the Sami Language Act, which exclusively protects the rights of Sami languages. These facts represent the attitude of the government to provide Sami people with rights that are not given to other national minorities. In other words, Finland views the Sami population differently from other national minorities.

The reason behind this might be related to Finland’s long history of being controlled by Swedish authorities and later by the Grand Duchy of the Russian Empire until its independence in 1917.⁸⁷ Having experienced a situation where the Finnish language was not the language of power during a time when Finland was a part of Sweden for example,⁸⁸ the structure of

current multilingual society may be a result of Finland’s realization of the need to include Sami languages as part of their nation and to provide them with “rights.” In this sense, Finland might have been more sensitive toward issues of Sami languages which used to be “controlled” by the Finnish majority.

The educational reform which took place in Finland during the 1970s⁸⁹ might also have influenced its policy toward Sami languages in education. Based on the philosophy of education in Finland, which was to “[provide] equal opportunities for everyone” and “support the younger,” the Finnish government has paid consistently careful attention to pre-school and primary education.⁹⁰ During the economic difficulties in the late 20th century, Finland as a nation had to strive for an improved economy. One of the major methods to build the nation was through education.⁹¹ Finland was, in a sense, built upon a strong focus on education. This model of education has increased the status of Finland in the European Union. Today, the Finnish system of education is reported as one of the best in the world. Despite being often portrayed as a model of education for many countries in the world, the Finnish system of education for Sami pupils still possesses many issues of concern, particularly teacher training-materials, effective teaching, and access for Sami pupils outside the Sami homeland. As pointed out in this article, these main issues need to be improved further.

Sweden

By comparing policies towards Sami populations, it has been revealed that in Sweden more effort is required to implement the Framework Convention as well as to meet provisions of the



European Charter in the field of education. First of all, similarly to the case of Finland, the Language Act of Sweden also describes Sami as one group of languages. As discussed earlier, this should be regulated, since there are five Sami languages spoken in Sweden. In comparison with Finnish official reports, Sweden does not specify smaller Sami languages in their official reports.⁹² This is noteworthy due to the fact that Sweden has five Sami languages, all of which are endangered. Smaller Sami languages are almost invisible in the education policy of the country. For instance, the National Agency for Education's method of distributing the resources among various minorities, as mentioned previously, does not take into consideration numerically smaller languages.

In terms of the system of education, as mentioned previously, the Swedish system allows pupils of Sami heritage to attend Sami schools from grade 6 to 10. Due to the earlier policy of cultural segregation of the reindeer herding Sami known as the “Lapp ska vara lapp – Lapp must remain Lapp,” the current system of education in Sweden has separated Sami pupils, especially those of the reindeer herding Sami. For instance, Sami schools are sometimes described as “different” from “ordinary” school even in the official documents from the government (for instance, government report, 2007).⁹³ In this sense, even if it was within a policy of segregation, Sami people were recognized by the government. Sami languages are closely related to reindeer herding culture, and those Sami who do not engage in reindeer herding activities tend to have less proficiency in the language.⁹⁴ In Sweden, as mentioned earlier, reindeer herding activities are restricted to the Sami population, while in Finland everyone is permitted to engage

in reindeer herding. This fact perhaps suggests that since reindeer herding has been an exclusive activity for Sami people, they have been subjected to a strong segregation policy, resulting in separate system of education.

Although Sweden has developed a separate system of education for Sami pupils, there are some municipalities which do not have Sami schools and so pupils are left without education in Sami language and culture. Moreover, apart from Sami schools which extend from grade 1 to 6, the Swedish system of education allows pupils to receive “integrated Sami language teaching” or “mother tongue tuition” if a pupil cannot reach a Sami school. However, in cases of integrated Sami language teaching and mother tongue tuition, pupils are only taught for 30 minutes to 2 hours of Sami per week. This is far less than the amount of language tuitions needed to acquire another language, especially as it is the case that some of the pupils do not speak Sami at home. Furthermore, the prerequisite for a pupil to have the basic knowledge of Sami languages in order to receive mother tongue tuition remains in force, as well as the requisite of municipalities to provide mother tongue tuition only if a suitable teacher is available.⁹⁵ This makes the situation for pupils with Sami background challenging, considering the fact that there is a serious lack of teacher training programs in the country; there is a resulting serious lack of Sami teachers in Sweden. The lack of a system for education at a university level is one of the reasons for this.

At the secondary school level, Sweden seems to offer a better system when compared with Finland, as it offers choices for Sami pupils to study either a Sami industries course or a Sami civic program. This opportunity could pos-



sibly guide pupils towards higher education. However, the issue remains that the entrance exam for higher education in all subjects is only conducted in Swedish, thereby creating potential problems for the Sami pupils to continue their education in Sami if they want to attend universities. Even though the education system allows study in Sami, students who studied in Sami at upper secondary school have to switch to Swedish in order to take the exam.

Comparing the policies of Finland and Sweden in terms of multilingualism in indigenous Sami languages, Sweden seems to have a

desire to keep Swedish as the principle language of the country. In comparison with Finland, Sweden ratified the Framework Convention and the European Charter later (in 2000). Due to the fact that Sweden has been an independent country that controlled the territory of modern day Finland, the Swedish language has never been the language of lower or weaker status in Sweden. This may mean that the Swedish might have less of an understanding of the need to respect and teach a minority language than Finland does, having never had to fight for this right themselves.



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