

Multilingual Education

Heiko F. Marten
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Cultural and Linguistic Minorities in the Russian Federation and the European Union

Comparative Studies on Equality
and Diversity

 Springer

Multilingual Education

Volume 13

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This book is dedicated to all the activists in different parts of Europe and Russia who have contributed to our research with both critical and constructive insights, people fighting for a brighter future for small language groups, unafraid of the hard work and the dangers inherent in this paramount task.

Preface

Russia, its languages and its ethnic groups are for many readers of English surprisingly unknown territory. Even among academics and researchers familiar with many ethnolinguistic situations around the globe, there prevails rather unsystematic and fragmented knowledge about Russia. This relates to both the micro level such as the individual situations of specific ethnic or linguistic groups, and to the macro level with regard to the entire interplay of linguistic practices, ideologies, laws, and other policies in Russia. In total, this lack of information about Russia stands in sharp contrast to the abundance of literature on ethnolinguistic situations, minority languages, language revitalization, and ideologies toward languages and multilingualism which has been published throughout the past decades.

Aims of the Book

This book aims at bridging the gap between the lack of studies on minority languages and language policies in Russia published in English and the highly complex situation of languages and minorities in Russia, which in its diversity deserves as much attention as all other regions of the world. The chapter authors analyze the fates of minority languages in Russia and the whole Russian Federation and at the same time mirror the situation in Russia on a neighboring region whose linguistic diversity has received by far more attention in academic writing in English and other Western languages—the European Union. The book thereby aims at familiarizing the readers with assumingly little-known contents by comparing different minorities and indigenous groups within the Russian Federation, but also relates these analyses to a framework that will be much better known for most readers. The central question addressed by the authors contributing to this volume is how minority languages and minority language communities can survive in circumstances with traditional communities dispersing and new types of superdiverse ecolinguistic systems simultaneously emerging. At the same time, the book relates to the increasing awareness of the cultural value of endangered languages and the

benefits of multilingualism among many academics, in civil society, and in some political circles, although the political debates regarding the need for language protection continue and, in many countries, often take a fearful and hesitant tone.

The lack of knowledge about Russia among many Western researchers dealing with minority issues or questions of multilingualism is certainly, among other reasons, heavily based on the limited access to information on Russia—even though more than 20 years have passed since the collapse of the Soviet Union. Major obstacles in this are the lack of Russian language skills, and at the same time the only slowly increasing academic exchanges between Russian and Western academics. The small number of scholars who, in Western academic circles, read Russian—a language which is the mother tongue of approximately 144 million speakers and a second language or language of higher education by another 120–130 million individuals—is a clear indicator of the “otherness” of the discourse on minorities and languages in Russia and other post-Soviet countries. At the same time, even though knowledge of English in Russia and other countries with a high proportion of Russophones is increasing, there are few international publications providing research-based (as opposed to official or census-based) information on the situation of minority languages in Russia written by scholars with an access to the Western (European) academic semiosphere. This state of affairs has not only been caused by the language barrier. The ideological divide that for more than seven decades prevailed between many Western and Soviet academic communities has had consequences also on possible objects of academic study, as well as on available research materials and common methods of research implementation.

Since the main aim of the book is to contribute to spreading information about Russia, the focus of the chapters is on studies of situations in the Russian Federation, both from individual and contrastive perspectives. The parts on the European Union are to be understood as additional information which provides a reference frame for the situations in Russia. The single chapters are meant to complement each other—even though written by different authors, it has been the explicit aim to perceive the entire book as one unit, which sheds light on its major topic from different angles. The contributions are thereby concerned with socio-political, legal, and ideological processes which contribute to language loss or maintenance and revitalization of particular minority identities and languages. The case studies elaborate the multifarious factors that contribute to situations in which minority languages cease to be used in certain social contexts, move to other domains of social life, disappear and perish or, sometimes, are reinforced and revitalized in new domains of use. Consequently, many articles are of multidisciplinary nature, including aspects of linguistics as well as political and social sciences. The contributions thus tackle the question as to what are the essential components of cultural and linguistic survival in the twenty-first century from many different angles. The authors of this volume therefore wish to demonstrate how different politics, language policies, and sociocultural circumstances cause various outcomes for the prospects of minority language communities but also that there are limits to how these outcomes can be related to similar developments in other contexts.

Background and Content of the Book

The scholars who have contributed to this book have been engaged in joint research activities aiming at enhancing understanding between Russian and Western academic discourses. Most of these activities have taken place within an informal interdisciplinary research network called *Poga—The Language Survival Network*. This network was founded in 2007 as a body uniting scholars specializing in questions relating to minority languages and ethnicity in the European Union, the Russian Federation and other Eurasian countries. The members of the network represent different academic disciplines such as linguistics, sociology of language, history, ethnic and revitalization research, indigenous studies, legal anthropology, human rights, political science, and minority protection law. The network lays emphasis on a comparative research approach and fosters cooperation and exchange of ideas between scholars with Russian and non-Russian backgrounds. One of its main objectives is also to empower researchers of Russian origin working among their own minorities to become more successful in their work through a better knowledge of minority situations and policies elsewhere. The network members have been interested in understanding the diversity of elements that positively influence the commitment of minorities to promote and maintain their languages and cultures. At the same time, the researchers are interested to identify factors that inevitably have had a negative impact on the “cultural survival” of minority communities. Central to the network’s activities are also its emphasis on Russia and the simultaneous, comparative and interdisciplinary approach to minority communities.

Some of the contributions to this volume are based on papers which were first presented on the network’s first symposium which took place in Lovozero (Murmansk oblast, Russia) in 2007, other papers were initially presented at symposia in Inari (Finland) in 2009, Petrozavodsk (Karelian Republic, Russia) in 2009, in Mariehamn (Åland Islands) in 2010 and Tallinn (Estonia) in 2010. Drafts of the contributions were continuously circulating among network members, who collaboratively discussed their content and suggested additions, improvements and updates in order to best fit into the general topic of this book.

The book contains 12 chapters which are grouped into three parts. The first part with the title *Languages, Identities and Human Rights* includes three contributions that deal with general issues related to minority language maintenance. It is opened by the introductory chapter “[Change and Maintenance of Plurilingualism in the Russian Federation and the European Union](#)” by Janne Saarikivi and Reetta Toivanen. The chapter provides an overview of important contexts in which minority language decline and maintenance takes place in Russia, contrasted to the countries of the European Union. The authors discuss questions related to language extinction and maintenance in Russia, and highlight in which way they are similar to or different from languages in other geographical and cultural contexts. The chapter also introduces central theoretical viewpoints on language endangerment

and maintenance and scrutinizes the ways in which members of the rapidly changing communities of the twenty-first century use minority languages.

The introduction is followed by Suzanne Romaine's contribution on "[The Global Extinction of Languages and Its Consequences for Cultural Diversity](#)." This chapter provides an overview of the phenomenon of language death and its consequences for humanity at a global scale. The author points out that 50–90 % of the world's 6,900 languages are predicted to be extinct by the end of this century. Because a large part of any language is culture-specific, people feel that an important part of their traditional culture and identity is also lost when their language disappears.

The third chapter by Theodore S. Orlin on "[The Death of Languages; the Death of Minority Cultures; the Death of a People's Dignity](#)" discusses the extinction of minority languages and cultures from a human rights law perspective. It explores the question of when the loss of language may constitute a violation of human rights and by its negative impact on minority cultures may threaten democratic principles. The author points out that where state policy and/or action reflect the preference of its majority at the expense of the minority, then concerns are raised as to the protection of human dignity and identification of a minority.

Part II of the book is called *Case Studies on Cultural Change and Minority Language Maintenance*. It consists of studies describing challenges and problems related to individual situations of minority language and culture maintenance. All of these studies indicate in which way there are similar issues on minority languages at stake both in the European Union and in the Russian Federation.

Five chapters are included in this part. The fourth chapter by Reetta Toivanen discusses "[Obstacles and Successes](#)" for minority language activism among the Sorbs in Germany and the Sámi in Finland. It addresses problems faced by minority representatives when they act on behalf of the minority group. Looking at the cases of the Sorbian minority in Lower and Upper Lusatia in Germany and the Sámi home territory in Finnish Lapland, the author argues that the representatives of minorities face severe problems in trying to keep a balance between an authenticity acknowledged by the majority (state) and an authenticity recognized by the members of the minority.

The fifth chapter "[Fallen Ill in Political Draughts](#)" by Indrek Jääts deals with changes in social status among the users of Komi-Permyak. The main problem in preserving and developing this language has always been the weakness of the Komi-Permyaks' ethnic identity which has even been described as ethnic nihilism, and the related belittling attitude toward their own language, caused by an interplay of different historical factors, and, to a large extent, policies on nationalities by the Russian state. Despite these processes, however, tens of thousands of Komi-Permyaks are still living compactly in their villages. The chapter discusses the role of the language and culture today in relation to urban and rural settings.

The sixth chapter on "[Finnic Minorities of Ingria](#)" by Natalia Kuznetsova, Elena Markus, and Mehmed Muslimov is dedicated to the complex analysis of the language situation in contemporary Ingria by paying major attention to Ingrians and Votes. The authors present a summary of the results of their extensive

sociolinguistic and language sociological research during the last years and propose an analysis of the underlying reasons for the present language situation of these Finnic minorities in Russia.

The seventh chapter on “[The Challenge of Language](#)” is based on a research project by Lennard Sillanpää in collaboration with a group of researchers from the Russian Academy of Sciences. They conducted interviews with members of smaller ethnic groups in Russian Siberia to discuss, among other topics, the importance of their mother tongues and their future perspectives for ethnic survival. While many older persons interviewed claimed a working fluency in their mother tongues, most of those in their twenties, thirties, and forties confessed, often with tears, how they had completely lost any proficiency they once may have had or only possessed rudimentary skills sufficient to convey greetings or to produce snatches of phrases.

The eighth chapter “[Uneven Steps to Literacy](#)” is co-authored by Florian Siegl and Michael Rießler. They analyze the creation of literacy standards for indigenous languages in the Soviet Union and sketch this development from the perspective of four indigenous languages of the Russian North and Siberia, i.e. Skolt and Kildin Sámi, Dolgan and Forest Enets. In the context of this contrastive volume, it is of particular relevance that one of the languages discussed, Skolt Sámi, is also spoken in the European Union.

Part III of the volume, entitled *Why Some Languages Survive. On Language Laws, Policies and Changing Attitudes* deals with revitalization processes and current changes in minority identities and political frameworks. It provides answers to the central question as to why some minorities are able to successfully connect their cultural and linguistic heritage to the modern world while others face extinction.

The ninth chapter by Ekaterina Gruzdeva on “[Explaining Language Loss](#)” in the case of Sakhalin Nivkh provides a sociological survey of language use among Sakhalin Nivkhs from diachronic and synchronic perspectives. It traces the development of language shift, analyses political, economic and cultural reasons for language marginalization, and describes attempts for standardizing, teaching and preserving Nivkh at different stages of its history.

The tenth chapter by Heiko F. Marten on “[Parliamentary Structures and Their Impact on Empowering Minority Language Communities](#)” discusses the impact of political decentralization processes on minority language policy and language maintenance efforts. It demonstrates how new channels of decision-making have been used by minority language speakers and activists, and compares these ways of influence in the light of different models of decentralized parliamentary representation. The Scottish Parliament and the Sámi Parliaments in Norway are contrasted with the situations of Frisian and Sorbian in Germany, the political framework in multilingual South Tyrol, and the situation of Latgalian in Latvia.

The eleventh chapter by Konstantin Zamyatin deals with “[The Evolution of Language Ideology in Post-Soviet Russia.](#)” The author provides a comparative analysis and evaluates the effectiveness of language policies implemented in the Republics of Udmurtia and Mari El in the light of the goals of language policies.

Udmurtia and Mari El are compared to the Republics of Tatarstan and Chuvashia where more successful language revival projects have been implemented.

The final chapter on “[The Impact of Language Policy on Language Revitalization](#)” in the Case of the Basque Language, by Xabier Arzoz describes language policies implemented in the Basque Country after the proclamation of the Spanish constitution in 1978 and the transformation of Spain’s authoritarian unitary regime into a decentralized democratic state and their impact on the revitalization of the Basque language. The author points out that the Basque experience shows the effectiveness of selective intensive policies that focus on those segments of population most engaged and supportive of social change. Thereby, the chapter rounds up the collection by providing another contrastive picture from Western Europe which may serve as a point of reference for the Russian cases discussed previously.

The map on the following page illustrates the geographic area of investigation and shows all languages discussed in this book. More detailed maps, zooming in on the relevant areas are included in all chapters presenting case studies on specific languages.

The appendix includes an index, which refers back to all languages and peoples mentioned in the single chapters.

Tallinn
Freiburg
Helsinki
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Michael Rießler
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Acknowledgments

The editors of this volume would like to thank the contributors to this book as well as all members of *Poga—The Language Survival Network*—among them many language activists in different parts of Europe and Russia—for your participation in fruitful discussions and your contribution with critical and constructive insights. Our academic cooperation has, not least of all, been highly enjoyable and given all of us new awareness about numerous topics and perspectives. We would also like to thank our publisher for the supportive cooperation and patience in the production of this book, and most notably the reviewers for their valuable advice. Finally, we would like to thank all individuals who have directly helped in producing this volume through their comments, proofreading, and administrative work.

We are grateful for the generous support we have received from different research funding agencies. First of all we thank Volkswagen Foundation for believing in the importance of our research network and funding our inaugural workshop in Lovozero/Lujāvv’r. Since that time, we have received notable support from Kone Foundation, NOS-HS and HERA Nordic Council funding, and the Academy of Finland. We also wish to thank Siida, the National Museum of the Finnish Sámi, for the fruitful cooperation in organizing our conference in Inari/Aanaar/Aanar/Anár in 2009, the Karelian Research Centre of the Russian Academy of Sciences for supporting our conference in Petrozavodsk/Petroskoi in 2009, Åland Peace Institute for supporting our meeting in Mariehamn in 2010, and Tallinn University for enabling us to carry out our meetings in Tallinn 2010 and in Noarootsi in 2012. These meetings were organized by the editors of this book together with our project coordinators and conference secretaries Evgeniya Zhi-votova (Leipzig), Outi Tanzcos and Lotta Jalava (both Helsinki). For the practical preparation of this volume we have been assisted by Iris Perkmann (Freiburg).

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Fig. 1 Map of the European Union and the Russian Federation showing all languages investigated in the present case studies and the approximate area where they are spoken

Part I
Languages, Identities and Human Rights

Change and Maintenance of Plurilingualism in the Russian Federation and the European Union

Introduction to the Volume

Janne Saarikivi and Reetta Toivanen

Abstract Linguistics, anthropology, social sciences and law have treated languages as more or less closed systems. Scholars have been interested in the variation in language and the linguistic behavior of the people that speak particular languages. Some scholars have postulated that all languages are “invented” and questioned the very existence of languages, speech communities and ethnolinguistic groups. This chapter argues that denying the existence of a particular language may also represent denying the identity of members of minority communities, many of which fight for recognition as an independent ethnic and linguistic identity and stresses that in order to understand the processes leading to language attrition and loss of minority linguistic heritage, one has to create theoretical models that join the perspectives of contact linguistics and variation studies with a framework of careful ethnographic study of social identity and status position and critical research into power relations in a context of changing language use.

Keywords Language variation · Linguistic behavior · Revitalization of minorities · Power · Language identity

1 Plurilingualism at the Threshold of the 21st Century

The languages of the world represent a complex diversity that reflects human culture, thought, mentality and history in a variety of ways. Generally, linguistics, anthropology, social sciences and law have treated languages as more or less closed systems. At the same time, scholars have been interested in the variation in language and the linguistic behavior of the people that speak particular languages. This linguistic variation is areal, social and situational, and represents both the use of a single language in multiple settings and in different ways, as well as the use of different languages in different domains in multilingual contexts.

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1.1 Plurilinguistic Variation as an Object of Scientific Investigation

Notable interest regarding linguistic variation in multilingual contexts derives also from the field of language planning and governance studies (Gal 2010, 29). This line of research, situated in terms of its disciplinary characteristics in-between linguistics and social sciences, is interested in social meanings associated with particular languages as ethnic emblems, symbols of plurality, or in the governance of multilingual regions. It has often been connected with efforts of governing bodies to create a functioning state where minority groups can be either successfully governed, or integrated or assimilated into a linguistic majority, depending on the political agenda of the authorities.

The Russian Federation, the main focus of this volume, represents a country that has had an early and explicitly expressed interest in language planning as a means of modernizing, governing and culturally assimilating ethnic and linguistic minorities while simultaneously supporting certain aspects of a linguistic multitude (Lewis 1972; Grenoble 2003). The countries of the European Union that offer a comparative perspective for Russia in this volume have in turn, during the process of increasing European integration, become more pronouncedly interested in matters related to creating and maintaining multilingual realms but also in envisioning Europe as a commonwealth of nations representing multiple traditions of language use and governance (Kraus 2008).

In the scholarly literature of the last decade, the homogeneous entities of studies of historical and social variation, such as languages and speech communities, have often been replaced by more dynamic concepts such as multilingualism or “plurilinguism” or “linguistic resources”. Some contemporary scholars working on linguistic variation stress that people do not speak “languages” but instead “are languaging”, i.e. using pieces of languages, or linguistic resources to construct social identities (Jørgensen et al. 2011). In this vein, it has even been postulated that all languages are “invented” (Makoni and Pennycook 2007). For instance, Blommaert and Rampton (2011) question the very existence of languages, speech communities and ethnolinguistic groups. They describe a linguistic “superdiversity” (a notion first proposed by Vertovec 2007) and note that “mixing, political dynamics and historical embedding are now central concerns in the study of languages, language groups and communication” rather than “homogeneity, stability and boundedness” that used to be the starting assumptions of the traditional grammatical descriptions. Plurilinguism, i.e. multiple uses of several different linguistic codes, has even officially been set as the future goal of the European Union’s language policies (CEC 2005).

However, a radical deconstructive point of view regarding languages and speech communities can and should be challenged by the numerous anthropological investigations which point to the fact that even in primordial communities, there often are prevailing and robust ideas of languages, language communities and their physical and mental borders as well as linguistic differences and their social meaning as signifiers of group belonging (cf. Barth 1969; Smith 1986; Kraus 2008). Thus, denying the existence of a particular language may also represent denying the identity of

members of minority communities, many of which fight for recognition as an independent ethnic and linguistic group that, in the context of the majority culture, can be characterized as no more than a vernacular, or a regional or ethnic sub-identity dependent on the majority.

Self-evidently, mixing of languages, borrowing and creolization are natural phenomena, commonplace and probably a natural condition of linguistic systems. But it should be equally obvious that the superdiversity that is visible in multilingual urban centers such as London, Paris or Moscow is also an expression of rapid and devastating cultural transformation among many traditional groups due to changing livelihoods, urbanization, new types of intergroup contact, rising standards of education, literalization of culture, new forms of labour related to literary language use and new types of media use. The identities and social networks related to the traditional groups have fostered most of the world's languages—or most of the world's linguistic heritage, if one is willing to deny the existence of languages as closed systems. The new social situation characterized by the replacement of large swathes of these groups in the urban environments, or a fundamental change in their lifestyles in the traditional settlements of the groups under consideration, is a threat to this heritage even if it simultaneously represents new diversities. The new superdiversity reflects the search for new individual and group identities in circumstances where the old ways of living in traditional communities have become difficult or impossible to exercise and people's future prospects lie in the cities and professions related to education and employment in the majority languages. Often, it represents more diverse patterns of language use than did life in the traditional communities (multi- and plurilingualism and the emergence of mixed codes), but one can nonetheless predict that it will likely lead ultimately to more uniform patterns of linguistic cultures and the disappearance of vast amounts of linguistic traditions.

Thus, the present process of global extinction of languages should be characterized not only as rapidly reducing linguistic diversity but also as new but short-lived diversities that reflect changing human networks and identities in dispersed traditional communities seeking for new ways of life. Certainly, traditional communities have not been stable or unilingual either; many types of resilient plurilingual systems that lasted for centuries have been described in the scholarly literature such as those that prevailed, to point to just some examples from the European context, in Transylvania (cf. Feischmidt 2003, 28–29), the Balkans (Lindstedt 2000) and the Middle Volga area (cf. Haarmann 1998, 235). Whereas the use of some minority languages has traditionally been restricted to intra-group communication, maintaining one's identity and the home, meaning that the language had no relevance in any other contexts (Crawford 1995, 21), the spheres of use of some other minority languages such as Komi or Tatar in Russia have, through a diversity of societal processes, expanded to the extent that the language has been adopted by several speakers of other minority languages (for Swahili, see also Mufwene and Klasen 2005).

In Russia, many different patterns of both contemporary as well as historical plurilingualism have been attested. The plurilinguistic nature of many of the small hunter-gatherer communities around the globe has been stressed in the ethnographic literature (cf. Saarikivi and Lavento 2012; Janhunen 1997) and in Siberia and the Far

East of Russia such patterns of multiple language use have survived up to the present day to some degree. Highly plurilingual rural communities have survived also in the Caucasus region, most notably in Dagestan, known as the linguistic diversity hotspot of Russia, and there is evidence of early widespread multilingualism even in other contexts. It is intriguing to note that the western Eurasian areas where the modern state of Russia subsequently emerged have, in the course of millennia, been dominated by mobile and multilingual herding communities (cf. Nichols 1997). Even the historical origins of present-day Russia are, according to many historians, to be traced back to a medieval multi-ethnic tribal union consisting of Slavic, Baltic and Finno-Ugric people (likely, under Northern Germanic leadership) that was based more on economic interests than a linguistic unity (cf. Lind 2007).

However, the kind of plurilingualism that presently emerges in (post)modern communities is different from old multilingual communities in that the language use in it fulfills partly different purposes and is executed in different societal frameworks. The dominating languages in these communities are widely used in writing, and practically the entire population of these communities can read and write in some language (on the effects of literacy on language, society and individual, see Scribner and Cole 1981; Blommaert 2008). The education system is based on a requirement of elaborate language skills, typically in one or several dominant languages. Employment is also increasingly executed through writing and reading. Professions are adopted through lengthy educational processes that involve constant contact with the standardized literary language(s). In addition, new types of media, most notably television and the internet, are changing the use of languages and affect the social processes in which the language-based discourses function (Cormack and Hourigan 2007).

All of these processes substantially alter and, in most cases, reduce the role of traditional minority languages in modern societies—even if the language communities within them may become increasingly multilingual. Undoubtedly, new information technologies also provide more opportunities to use minority languages in writing, but one can discern great variation in how these opportunities are used by the minority communities, whose linguistic identities and the prevailing traditions of literary language use have been shaped in the networks dominated by majority languages (Warschauer 2000).

1.2 Linguistic Variation in Language Attrition and Shift Situations

In studies of language maintenance and revitalization, one must distinguish between the necessary cultural change reflected in the patterns of language use and language form on one hand, and the processes that lead to abrupt language shift and loss of linguistic cultural heritage on the other. As has been pointed out above, it is obvious that the same social processes that lead to language loss in some communities also create new kinds of diversities, communities and networks. One should thus distinguish between language change and language shift, or the continuity and interruption of linguistic heritage. Bilingualism or the emergence of bi-, multi- and plurilingual

realms does not necessarily mean a threat to the existence of a minority language and may even create new and stable diversities. From the perspective of studies of language contraction and language death, it is thus a challenge to define when language interference and changes in linguistic behavior threaten the very existence of linguistic heritage (cf. Hoenigswald 1989).

Sometimes new varieties of dominating languages that emerge in communities undergoing language shift may have an important role as mediators of the minority language-related identity under new circumstances dominated by a majority language. For instance, Hebridean Scots emerged in a process where the Gaelic-speaking population shifted to English, but it has subsequently served as yet another emblem of Hebridean islanders' identity. Thus, the target language of the Gaelic language shifters is not Standard English, but a particular variant of Highland Scots representing a new type of diversity borne out by the language contact and shift situation itself (Filppula et al. 2009, on other varieties of English under Celtic influence).

In other cases new languages develop in the process of language shift in a plurilingual community. There has been a discussion of whether creolization is a result of abrupt and incomplete language-learning that creates a new language on the basis of linguistic universals and the characteristics of the languages in contact (Thomason and Kaufman 1988; O'Shannessy 2011, 91) or whether creoles emerge as languages created more or less consciously in a scenario of inter-ethnic contact (Baker 1994; Bickerton 2008). Most likely, both of these processes often take place simultaneously. Closely related to creoles are also the intertwined languages in which the lexicon and grammar derive from different sources and which are therefore typically unintelligible to the representatives of both source-language communities. For instance, the *stadin slangi* 'city slang', a mixed Finnish-Swedish vernacular spoken in Helsinki predominantly by the male working-class population, emerged in the first half of the 20th century as an emblem of a new social class, the urban working-class people, mostly men, on the basis of Finnish (the original main language of the population moving into city to work in industry), and Swedish (the main language of Helsinki at that time) that functioned as a lexifier language (cf. Paunonen and Paunonen 2000). In addition, a substantial portion of the lexicon of this vernacular derived from Russian. *Stadin slangi* thus represents an example of an intertwined language determined by social and gender factors and arising in a new plurilinguistic urban situation, but it turned out not to be particularly enduring. By the second half of the 20th century, this mixed vernacular moved increasingly closer to Standard Finnish due to lexical borrowing (Paunonen and Paunonen 2000). Similar processes have been described in creole studies in many different contexts. However, there is also evidence that new types of mixed vernaculars continue to emerge on the basis of Standard Finnish in plurilingual immigrant communities of Helsinki with new lexifier languages (Lehtonen 2004).

One must admit that the processes leading to language loss may simultaneously lead to the emergence of new languages and identities, yet new types of linguistic cultures and vital plurilinguistic realms also simultaneously threaten the old plurilinguistic status quo. Thus the idea of a majority language replacing a minority language in a situation of language shift needs to be seen within a language attrition process

that often lasts for generations and represents multiple variations in language use. In order to understand the processes leading to language attrition and loss of minority linguistic heritage, one has to create theoretical models that join the perspectives of contact linguistics and variation studies with a framework of careful ethnographic study of social identity and status position and critical research into power relations in a context of changing language use.

For instance, Sarhima (1999) discusses necessitative constructions in Karelian, a Finnic minority language spoken in Northwest Russia, in a typical language form of a language-shifting community characterized by remarkable code-mixing with Russian. The constructions under consideration are seemingly borrowed or copied from Russian, but they behave and develop partly according to Finnic patterns that on the one hand do not employ features such as grammatical gender or animacy and on the other hand bring in new features such as the alternation between a total and a partial object and different types of subject of the construction. Thus, multiple new complex constructions evolve and are endowed with social meanings within a scenario of language contact that, in fact, may end in the loss of the language form in which these new diversities emerge and thus doom both the new and old types of variation. In a similar vein, Edygarova (2014) investigates the genres of the Central Russian minority language Udmurt (see also Konstantin Zamyatin's chapter in this volume, "[The Evolution of Language Ideology in post-Soviet Russia](#)") spoken language that represent different mixes of traditional vernaculars and dialects, literary language, code-mixing with Russian dialects and the Russian literary language all of which represent different social gestures and roles. She concludes that the linguistic variation in the minority language community is much more versatile than the traditional documentary and comparative approach largely focusing on areal (dialectal) variation presupposes. In addition to the pressure exerted by the majority language, also efforts to revitalize the minority language through a literary standard and neologisms can create confusion in the language community when puristic linguistic attitudes based on the idea of the desirability of the standard language use spread. Even here, the result is much more diverse than the starting point, but it might turn out to be short-lived.

It is important to note that while the changing social context of languages often leads to a remarkable loss or change of the linguistic heritage, also most instances of more or less successful language revitalization described in the scholarly literature involve a substantial cultural change in the life of the language community. In these cases the language has been transformed into a means of communication in new domains, most notably in education and modern professions. They also nearly always mean the establishment of a literary form for the minority language under consideration and the creation of social identities and educational structures that favor the use of the new literary standard (on Inari Sámi, cf. Olthuis et al. 2013). This leads one to consider the necessity of cultural change as a vehicle that not only threatens minority languages but that also keeps them alive.

However, defining the circumstances in which the particular social value attained to a language form turns into a vehicle of language maintenance and revitalization is not an easy task. In many traditional communities that lose their language, it is often

the perceived situation that the language shift is caused by the change in living habits. The traditional languages are often associated with particular traditional settlements and their environment, particular forms of livelihood and human networks that are then considered by speakers to be old-fashioned and outdated due, for instance, to changing livelihoods and labor, educational policies that stress the importance of one state-bearing language, role models related to majority language use disseminated in the media, or the experience of outright racism by some members of the majority population. The changing social environment that is often also reflected in mixed marriages contribute to the low prestige of the minority languages and evidently also to loss of the language (on the different reasons for language shift among certain minority peoples of Russia, cf. Vachtin 2001).

1.3 Consequences of Language Loss

Language loss and language maintenance are thus not linguistic processes per se but social processes in which the human relationships and networks that support a language and transmit it to new generations of speakers are affected. The constant negotiation and identity creation in which people take part, shape the ethnic, social and linguistic identities they live by (Barth 1969; Brubaker 2004; Cowan et al. 2001). In these processes, the linguistic features are constantly reinterpreted and turned into social emblems of particular groups and identities.

The loss of language thus almost always entails significant changes in social networks and value systems of the community. Such changes are reflected not only in the linguistic behavior but also in changing societal hierarchies, identities, and networks as well as in forms of livelihood and governance. In this multifaceted field of investigation, language use, language practices, language policies and language politics represent interrelated aspects of social and linguistic relations that cannot be meaningfully addressed from a point of view of one scientific discipline only. Negative attitudes towards minority languages held by the dominant population, or even the fear that the speakers of languages other than the dominant one might endanger the unity of the state, have for decades and across the world led to rigid monolingual ideologies that, in turn, have been reflected in laws and policies (Skutnabb-Kangas 2000). On the other hand, it has been pointed out that the fate of individual languages or types of linguistic heritage are determined not only by language politics and policies but by entire linguistic cultures that prevail in society and consist not only of legal and educational politics and policies, but of attitudes, tolerance and traditions of intergroup communication (cf. Schiffman 2006). Schiffman describes the linguistic culture as the “sum totality of ideas, values, beliefs, attitudes, prejudices, myths, religious structures, and all the other cultural ‘baggage’ that speakers bring to their dealings with language from their culture” (112, 121). Thus the perspectives of the social and political sciences, anthropology, law and history are all relevant in understanding the social settings and the prevailing ideologies in which language shift or maintenance takes

place. It is easy to point to various communities from both Russia and the European Union that live in a seemingly similar societal framework from the point of view of size, majority/minority proportion or language planning yet display very different degrees of language maintenance. This social diversity related to linguistic cultures and language choices of communities makes the investigation of language loss and maintenance, as well as the creation of effective measures for language revitalization, an extremely challenging task.

The factor most frequently mentioned when discussing language extinction is the inequality of educational systems which typically function in the framework of states and only provide schooling in the languages of the linguistic majority or elite. Of the approximately 6,000 languages in the world, only ca. 100–200 are used widely in education or different working environments outside traditional economic settings. Self-evidently, the language choices of schooling institutions are also reflected in access to institutions of political and economic power (Skutnabb-Kangas et al. 2009; Skutnabb-Kangas 2000).

It is important to stress that the raising of educational standards is related to many other thorough changes in a society undergoing modernization, most notably the changes in the fields of work and labor. Thus, in today's society, much of the work is somehow connected with language use, either in that the work itself takes place in a certain language (for instance, in schooling, consulting, courts, administration, etc.) or in that professions are obtained through a years-long educational process that takes place in a standardized language. Languages thus turn increasingly from means of communication to tools of work. It would seem to be the case that the underlying change in all these processes is the transition of a language to literary use that enables the creation of much larger linguistic communities and changes the use of the language in a society in a multi-faceted manner. Along with the turn to literary use, also standardization of the languages and their use in electronic media (television, radio, internet) emerges. The introduction of these facilities often entails a significant change in community practices and values (on the introduction of radio and TV in Tibet, cf. Lakhi et al. 2013).

Thus, it seems to be the case that often only those languages which have functions in the domains of work, labor, employment or in the economy at large, represent the sufficient value by which they remain relevant in the globalized world. This is also reflected in that the last stronghold of several threatened minority languages is often a domain related to a particular livelihood, such as reindeer herding in the case of Russian indigenous peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East.

Apart from education, among the factors that predict whether or not language loss will take place are the size and demography of the linguistic minority, the characteristics of language transmission, availability of media, economic situation, labour-related issues, language standardization, attitudes and religion (Edwards 2010). These are also those aspects of language vitality assessed in the UNESCO language vitality report. A recently created alternative Language Maintenance Barometer (EuLaViBar) by the international research project ELDIA¹ has adopted the

¹ <http://www.eldia-project.org/>.

conceptual tools created by Grin (2005) and Strubell (1999) and assesses language use, education, media, language-related legislation and media separately within the realms of capacity, opportunity, desire and “language products”. The study shows that factors influencing language maintenance are manifold and cannot be studied in isolation (Laakso et al. 2013).

1.4 Language Loss: Why Should Anyone Care?

When academics are becoming increasingly aware of the threat that most of the world’s languages may disappear in a generation’s time, there is growing interest in the relationship of language and cultural heritage and the dangers that language extinction poses to human cultural diversity (for an overview see Lewis and Simons 2010; this is also one of the themes addressed by Suzanne Romaine in the chapter “[The Global Extinction of Languages and Its Consequences for Cultural Diversity](#)”). Some aspects of cultural loss related to language loss that have been pointed out in the scholarly literature are the loss of metaphors and semiotics related to particular languages (Idström and Piirainen 2012) and ecologically relevant information regarding plants and animals (Skutnabb-Kangas et al. 2003; Skutnabb-Kangas and Heugh 2012). Other aspects of this process may include the loss of patterns of thought related to grammatical categories or lexical semantics and the loss of lexicon-based associations connected to a particular language (cf. Zamyatin et al. 2012).

Further, it has been pointed out that the loss of ecological and linguistic diversity is—at least in some contexts—interconnected (Mühlhäusler 1996; Mufwene and Klasen 2005; Crystal 2000). This is understandable in that human cultural diversity typically reflects the diversity in terrain, flora and fauna through different livelihoods, settlement patterns and diet and all such aspects of cultural life support distinct speech communities. Such aspects of human life, in turn, have a linguistic expression in the system of toponyms, denominations of geographical features, plant and animal species.

Even health problems among indigenous peoples seem to be linked with the loss of languages, disappearance of traditional communities and loss of cultural heritage (Hallett et al. 2007; see also the chapter by Suzanne Romaine “[The Global Extinction of Languages and Its Consequences for Cultural Diversity](#)”). This is due to a variety of factors, most notably, the psychological stress experienced in a rapidly changing community marked with the loss of intergenerational cultural and also linguistic ties.

Each language, or a mix of languages used in a particular speech community, represents a unique discourse framework with a distinct tradition of use that has the potential to foster a culture different to those nurtured by any other linguistic bases and that functions as an expression of local values, social history and the conceptual realm. This is also the reason why for language revitalization, it is not enough to offer translations into the minority language of the same information that is already available in the majority languages. A translation merely transfers the discourse of the

dominating languages into the minority context but does not support the conceptual diversity that, in principle, is reachable in a plurilinguistic community (cf. also Fettes 1997).

1.5 Politicizing the Minority Language Issue

Clearly, the level of modernization of the language, i.e. the use of the language in schooling, work, media, popular culture and administration, as well as the social prestige of the language predicts much better the prospects of a language's survival than the number of speakers that the language has or the proportion of the minority and majority language speakers in an administrative territory. Therefore, the protection of minority languages is also an object of investigation for the political and social sciences (Gal 2010).

To understand how languages could be protected, in-depth research is being carried out by numerous scholars regarding the social processes that lead to marginalization, disempowerment and language death as well as those processes that make it possible for languages and cultures to survive in the circumstances of rapidly changing, urbanizing societies (Fishman 1991; Romaine 2000; Nettle and Romaine 2000; Crystal 2000; Skutnabb-Kangas 2000; Hinton and Hale 2001; Extra and Gorter 2001; Kymlicka and Patten 2003; Harrisson 2007; Arzoz 2007; Edwards 2010; May 2012).

It can be assumed that, at least in most cases, guaranteeing social participation, most notably in the educational process through the transformation of minority languages into literary ones, access to resources and self-determination of groups differing in language or culture from dominating groups in a state are crucial for effective language maintenance. At the same time, minority-majority relations are frequently a polemic issue even in the most democratic of states. Although it has deep roots in the history of international law, awareness of the need to protect minorities has only in the last several decades become more widespread, with highly varying political regimes and solutions. As is presented in this book, even inside the European Union and in the Russian Federation the status of minority languages and their speech communities may range from fairly far-reaching minority protection regimes and autonomy regulations to a continuing lack of acceptance of linguistic and cultural diversity, where minority demands continue to be perceived as threats to nationhood.

Minority-majority relations are always inherently subjects to conflicts which may include questions of access to important resources, wealth, educational opportunities, political and societal participation and of setting linguistic and non-linguistic behavioral norms. Although minority protection thus goes hand in hand with issues of democracy and human rights, it would seem to be the case that the advancement of the latter is not necessarily accompanied by maintenance of linguistic diversity. In fact, many of the world's most democratic regimes are also the most linguistically uniform, such as the European states (only approx. 3 % of the world's languages are spoken in Europe). On the other hand, many societies with enormous linguistic diversity have dismal human rights record. The Chapter by Theodore Orlin in this book demonstrates that there is no human right to language maintenance, and such a

right can only be executed as part of one's right to practice his/her own culture. Even more notably, it has been pointed out that many of the Western democratic societies have emerged through a process of homogenization of identity and language in a vast area that, quite obviously, often had devastating consequences for linguistic and cultural plurality (Mann 2005). Therefore, there may be reason to suggest that a certain reduction of cultural and linguistic diversity has, at least in some historical periods, been one part of the democratization process where the ideological foundation of the state has been that of a homogeneous population.

Typically, countries have developed measures for protection of minority languages, but in many cases, these are orientated only towards those people who are considered to represent a particular minority. An analysis of the language legislation of different countries shows that it is usually assumed by the authorities that a person can have only one "true" mother tongue or ethnic identity. Those countries that collect information regarding the native languages of the population usually allow announcing only one native language in their statistics, thus creating what is often a heavily distorted image of the actual language use in the plurilingual minority communities. In circumstances when minority languages are increasingly spoken by bi- and multilingual communities with a variety of ethnic and linguistic identities, this state of affairs often leads to overt or hidden support of the majority identity at the expense of the minority identity.

Further, it would seem to be the case that very few (if any) countries support multi- and plurilingualism for the majority populations. It has been pointed out by ELDIA specialists that typically "acquired multilingualism" (i.e. learning major languages such as English) is seen as an asset for the individual and a necessary educational investment for the society but minority languages, on the other hand, are seen not in terms of 'doing' but in terms of 'being', as an integral part of belonging to an ethnic group (cf. Laakso et al. 2013).

In this respect, the linguistic cultures of Western countries and Russia would seem to be surprisingly similar. Although the official European Union language policies stress the need to develop a "plurilinguistic" approach to language education, minority languages are typically not taught to majorities and few measures are taken to promote their learning and use among the main population group. Exceptions to this are those cases where the linguistic minority exists in a nearly-majority position, and represents a well-integrated traditional group, such as the Catalan or Basque community in Spain, the Welsh community in the UK or the Swedish-speaking community in Finland. In Russia, a similar situation prevails: only few regional languages are widely taught to the Russian-speaking majority, and only in the autonomous regions that have the strongest local power centres (cf. Zamyatin et al. 2012). Even so, an asymmetric bilingualism prevails and the majority population's command of the regional language is low or often lacking altogether.

The existing modes of power exercised by policy-makers but also members of minorities influence the probability of cultural and linguistic survival. The degree of minorities' involvement in decision-making and particular channels of influence that concern specifically minority groups play a crucial role in defining the status of a minority community (Toivanen 2003). The latter includes the autonomy of

a minority in a given geographical area, independent decision-making in certain matters, special representation granted to minority groups in decision-making bodies or a special hearing procedure for minority groups in decision-making (Green 1995; Levy 1997; Arzoz 2008; Saarikivi and Marten 2012; Marten 2009; see also the chapter by Theodore S. Orlin “[The Death of Languages; the Death of Minority Cultures; the Death of a People’s Dignity](#)” and the chapter by Heiko F. Marten “[Parliamentary Structures and Their Impact on Minority Language Communities](#)”). With regard to the possibilities of political influence, the significance lies in who are considered to be entitled to participate in political decision-making. This, in turn, depends on how the nature of the political community is understood; what kinds of conceptions about citizenship, nation and democracy hold a hegemonic position (Hammar 1990; Brubaker 1994; Rieger 1998). In order to understand the exercise of political power in the Russian Federation and the European Union, it is central to clarify the multifarious ways of marginalization by disseminating how the power structures of a hegemonic state organization are already a hidden agency of the empowerment projects and its consequences.

2 The European Union and the Russian Federation as Multilingual Regions

The identities, decline or empowerment tendencies and revitalization opportunities among the European Union and Russian minorities, developments in decentralized decision-making and self-determination and thereby also the long-term prospects of language survival provide an interesting possibility for a wide range of studies that profit from a comparative approach. As is apparent from the aforementioned, both regions share a number of interesting parallels, and it is remarkable that despite their proximity, contrastive studies which include both Russia and Europe seem to be rare.

2.1 The Present-Day Linguistic Multitude

About 8 % of Europe’s population belongs to autochthonous minorities and 6.5 % to immigrant minorities and ca. 55 million people speak a minority language. In Russia, over 19 % of the population belong to national minorities and approx. 20 million or over 14 % report knowledge of their languages (Russian Census 2010, down from approx. 23 million and nearly 16 % in 2002). This number includes both the autochthonous as well as the immigrant minorities, although it should be noted that the former are more numerous in Russia (on the difficulties of determining the immigrant and autochthonous minorities, cf. below).

While the countries of the European Union represent a wide range of governance traditions, the Russian administrative structure is, for the most part, inherited from the Soviet period. Presently, there are 21 autonomous republics and four autonomous

districts (the latter located within predominantly Russian-speaking regions) in the Russian Federation. In addition, four more autonomous districts have been merged with larger administrative units during the past decade. Altogether, there are 83 federal subjects of administration in Russia (down from 89 by the end of the Soviet Union), and the national regions thus represent roughly one fourth of the whole federation. In addition to those minorities that have their own titular autonomous regions, there are a large number of other minority peoples whose status has been designated in the legislation. Typically, the minorities are represented by hundreds of national “cultural autonomies”, regional bodies that can organize cultural events or support initiatives related to minority ethnicities in specific regions. A notable group of minorities with its own legal status are the “small indigenous peoples of the north”, a group of 44 peoples with under 50,000 representatives and (partly) practicing nomadic or hunter-gatherer-fishing livelihoods (cf. Sillanpää 2008; see also Lennard Sillanpää’s chapter “[The Challenge of Language](#)”). This traditional group of minorities coined in the 1920s for the (at that time) illiterate people leading a tribal way of life is fairly close to the notion of indigenous people employed by UN bodies but not identical with it. Around 250,000 people or 0.2 % of the population belongs to these groups that predominantly reside in the Northern regions, Siberia and the Far East (Mikkelsen 2013, 26).

The degree of autonomy that the regions have as well as the regimes aimed at protection of their titular and other minority languages vary widely (see also the chapter by Lennard Sillanpää “[The Challenge of Language](#)”). Thus, despite the fact that all of the autonomous republics, with the exception of the Karelian Republic, have defined one or several regional languages as co-official with Russian, only four minority languages of Russia (Tatar, Bashkir, Yakut and Tuvan) are officially used as languages of instruction through the entire school curriculum (Zamyatin et al. 2012).

Thus, the minorities living in the European Union and Russia represent a variety of different social frameworks. There are large nations united by languages with millions of speakers and hundreds of years of literary history such as Catalan or Tatar. Russia also has a considerable number of small, territorially limited and fragile linguistic minorities which are threatened especially by a low birth rate, devastation of traditional communities and rapid urbanization. It has been pointed out, however, that many of the small and vulnerable linguistic minorities have, against all odds, been surprisingly resilient and enduring in Russia. Vachtin (2001, 263–268) cites numerous 19th-century sources that point to the inevitable extinction of various northern peoples in the near future. However, all the peoples mentioned in the early sources exist even today, over a century after the first gloomy accounts were written. In the countries of the European Union very few such small local minority language communities have survived up to the 20th century, the most prominent being some Sámi communities in Finland and Sweden and in the non-EU country Norway, with the largest number of Sámi people (on Sámi, see also chapter “[Obstacles and Successes](#)” by Reetta Toivanen, chapter “[Uneven Steps to Literacy](#)” by Florian Siegl and Michael Rießler and chapter “[Parliamentary Structures and Their Impact on Empowering Minority Language Communities](#)” by Heiko F. Marten).

Russia also represents a particular hotspot for linguistic diversity in the Caucasus, most prominently Dagestan, which alone comprises approximately half of the minority languages of Russia. No similar region of extreme language diversity exists in the European Union, while the Union in turn represents a relatively small number of languages but a high number of fully-fledged and modernized linguistic cultures. The Caucasus region with its highly varied indigenous population, often characterized by local traditions of Islamic culture and with very little Russian population around, can be characterized as *sui generis* in the Russian context of minority issues. The internal migrants leaving this area for the big cities often face racism and are continuously debated in Russian media due to terror attacks related to both radical Islam and the separatistic aspirations of some parts of the population. It has been proposed that one of the underlying societal reasons for the radicalization of parts of the population is the cultural change that involves urbanization and language shift to Russian in the multiethnic cities of the Caucasus, which have very little Russian population but use Russian as the main language of communication (Alpautov 2011). The Caucasus region is also the home of those Russian minorities with the highest reported percentage of knowledge of a minority language, most notably the Chechens. This minority people formed the titular nation of the break-away republic of Chechnya in the 1990s and two bloody wars have been fought in the area in which the language is spoken. Clearly, the overt ethnic conflict reflects and also reinforces the identity related to the use of a minority language. In the circumstances of constant ethnic conflict, assimilation into the majority people proves nearly impossible.

Some minority languages are in rapid decline both in the European Union and Russia despite a relatively large number of speakers. For instance, the Roma languages spoken in most of the EU countries, or the Mordvinic languages, Erzya and Moksha, scattered around a wide geographical area may become extinct at a relatively rapid pace in most of their historical speech communities despite their relatively large number of speakers. At the same time, a notable revitalization of a previously threatened minority language is observable among some other minority communities. The Basque and Welsh languages are undergoing a kind of renaissance, becoming languages of education, media, administration and popular culture alike over the course of only a few decades, not least because of consolidated political activities, processes of decentralization and democratization and a sharp increase of awareness of so-called “linguistic normalization”. The term is borrowed from Catalan language politics and means that the local or minority use is made the norm in all spheres of people’s lives and interaction.

Although no similar cases of rapid and thorough revitalization are to be attested in the Russian Federation, a notable transformation in the living conditions of many large minority languages took place in the 1990s. For instance, Yagmur and Kroon (2003) discuss a rise in the ethnolinguistic vitality of the Bashkir language in the post-Soviet period. There is also evidence that more young people are speaking Udmurt and Mari in the urban environment now than three decades ago—in spite of rather ambiguous official policies (see also the chapter by Konstantin Zamyatin “The Evolution of Language Ideology in post-Soviet Russia”).

2.2 *Counting Minorities and Defining Languages*

Self-evidently, one has to be very careful regarding the reliability of census-based information that derives from self-reporting. In the Russian context, there is evidence of both very notably under- and over-reporting of linguistic and ethnic groups. For instance, Janne Saarikivi has conducted field work among Tver Karelians who have an ethnic Karelian identity and who speak Karelian, yet who were registered as ethnic Russians according to the census. In other documented cases, powerful political leaders of particular regions have made efforts to increase the number of the titular ethnic group of their region (cf. Stepanova 2011). Also, the particular benefits aimed at supporting small indigenous northern peoples would seem to have a substantial increase in the number of these peoples as an effect. Whether such a statistically significant change reflects some real demographic change is debatable (Lallukka 2006).

Also in the European Union, the different countries produce very different types of statistical information on minorities, and the definitions of a representative of an ethnic or linguistic minority vary widely. Thus, many countries, such as Spain or France, traditionally do not allow census data to be collected on ethnic or linguistic groups, since the country is organized as a civic state. Further, the lines of division between a majority and a minority language as well as the distinction between immigrant and regional languages are not straightforward. A language that is a national language in one EU country may be spoken as a minority language in another EU country (such as Hungarian in Romania, Austria, Slovakia and Slovenia). Russia, in turn, has a notable number of Russian-speaking or nearly bilingual-Russian immigrants from the former Soviet republics turned independent countries such as Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Armenia. Many of these people are originally internal migrants who moved from one region to another in the Soviet Union and subsequently became minority nationals when the Soviet state collapsed. This process has also led to the emergence of prominent Russian-speaking minorities in the former Soviet republics, in which various types of de-Russification policies have been applied (cf. Pavlenko 2008, 7–11).

Many countries of the European Union and some regions of Russia also have a federal structure of government that blurs the concepts of majority and minority. Particularly in Europe, there are cases where legislation grants a particular minority language nearly majority language rights in a particular autonomous region. For example, the Catalan language that is a minority language in both Spain and France can be considered a *de facto* majority language in Catalonia. In bilingual Finland, the province of the Åland Islands is defined as a unilingual Swedish-speaking autonomous territory where the country's majority language Finnish has only a restricted function. Many other regions in the EU countries have similar regions with varying regimes aimed at guaranteeing the functioning of a minority language within a defined territory. Among the well-known examples is the partly German-speaking region of South Tyrol in Italy, the autonomous region of Wales within the UK or the Sorbian homeland in Germany. Belgium, in turn, has a regional concept of governance.

It consists of three linguistic communities (French, Flemish and German) and a bilingual French-Flemish capital area, and the majority-minority relations are thus different according to the region. Switzerland, a non-EU member state, represents a similar structure of governance. Some languages of the European Union, most notably German, Hungarian and French, function as legally recognized minority languages in several countries.

Due to the federal structure of Russia it has been questioned whether the concept of a minority language is appropriate for Russia at all (Haarmann 1998, 286). Many Russian minority languages have (semi)official status in a particular region where these languages may be supported by some educational institutions, media and administrative use. Often these regions also stipulate in their constitutions that guaranteeing the flourishing of a particular (de facto minority) people is the main purpose for which the region exists. However, the actual language legislation of the regions represents a notable variation. The “officiality” of the Russian minority languages can, in most cases, be characterized as a declarative recognition of the ethnic languages and their communities in “titular” regions. In many cases, the language laws do not include requirements regarding the role of languages in the organization of the educational process or the functioning of the administration, or these are weakly formed. Notwithstanding the bi- or multilingualism declared at a regional level, the de facto language of administrative functions and education is Russian (Zamyatin et al. 2012; see also Konstantin Zamyatin’s chapter in this volume “[The Evolution of Language Ideology in post-Soviet Russia](#)”). Therefore, in the Russian context there are no examples of such fully-fledged and modernized (or “normalized”) minority languages as the Catalan language in Spain. However, there are many cases of notable revitalization processes and increasing interest in the country’s minority languages, most importantly in the Turkic republics of Tatarstan and Bashkortostan, but also in the Finno-Ugric republics of Udmurtia and Komi, to mention just some examples.

The Russian federal structure is largely asymmetrical, and in many other cases even large minorities may have great differences in executing their right in minority language use. At the same time, there is evidence that the Russian minorities have survived better in the autonomous regions of their respective groups than elsewhere in Russia. For instance, over 60 % of Mordvinians and Tatars reside outside their autonomous regions, and especially in the case of the Mordvinians, this is reflected in the language maintenance that is substantially higher in the titular republic than elsewhere. In the large and predominantly Russian-speaking cities, representatives of such minorities can be considered as internal migrants whose language is typically not transmitted to the following generations.

2.3 Ideological Background of the Prevailing Linguistic Situation

The present-day European Union has grown from a union of six countries into a tight economic, political and, partly, monetary union with a remarkable position among the global powers. The EU member states include European countries with diverse

governance structures such as federations (Germany, UK, and Spain), early-emerged centralized states (France, Sweden and Romania), relatively new nation states (Finland, the Baltic republics and the Czech Republic) and countries representing characteristics of all of the aforementioned. Some of the countries represent traditions of nationhood that go back 1,000 years or more (Denmark, Sweden), whereas others first emerged as independent countries in the 1990s or even later (Slovenia). The EU countries thus represent diverse traditions of centralism and federalism, democracy, nation-state models, human rights and minority protection standards that have, over the past decades, increasingly influenced each other and currently are approaching each other in a process fostered by Brussels.

Notwithstanding the actual processes at work in the European Union, the nation-forming principles of the European countries derive in most cases from the nation-state ideologies that arose in the early 19th century (Anderson 1991). Some type of language nationalism is typically deeply-rooted in the ideological foundations of European countries, but in many cases it is all too obvious that, from the point of view of dialect and language boundaries, many European states could also have taken a different shape were the borders drawn on purely linguistic grounds. Also, all of the EU countries are characterized by some form of democratic and human rights ideologies that are rooted in the tradition of Western thought and received their political expression most prominently in the French and American revolutions of the late 18th century.

In turn, the unique history of Russia as a multilingual community, its long tradition of administrative classification of people according to ethnicity and language, as well as its organization in diverse federal structures (albeit in a centralized and blatantly non-democratic way) make it a *sui generis* regarding both the fates as well as the protection measures of the ethnic minorities and minority languages. Although many of the modernization processes began in western European centers in the late 18th and early 19th centuries and reached the Russian peripheries much later, in the 1930s, it can be noted that no similar thorough and rapid modernization process has yet occurred in many other traditional multilingual states such as India, Indonesia or many African countries.

Throughout the history of Russia, a particular type of asymmetric federation in which inter-ethnic relations have been managed by local agreements and subordinating while simultaneously supporting the local leadership has been characteristic of the country (cf. Kappeler 2001). Thus, in tsarist Russia up to the beginning of the 20th century, a wide range of regional language politics emerged. Some parts of the Russian Empire such as Finland or Poland were governed as separate states and their languages functioned in education and administration. Others were governed predominantly through a Russian medium, although particular local regimes for the minority people were also created.

It can be argued that in comparison to the Western colonial powers and their colonies especially in Africa and the Americas, the cultural distance between the ruling and subjugated groups was not so vast in Russia, and that many of these groups preserved much of their culture down to the 20th century. It has even been argued that in the pre-Soviet Russian Empire, Russification of the minorities was

a rare process (Pavlenko 2008), although certainly a large wave of Russification of Finno-Ugrians had already occurred in the Middle Ages (on Northern Russia, cf. Saarikivi 2007). This is also reflected in that the Siberian indigenous peoples had, in some cases, the possibility of maintaining their traditional culture somewhat longer than the Native Americans, for instance.

2.4 European Language Nationalism and Its Russian Variant

The history of linguistic cultures in Europe is closely linked to the development and success of the idea of the nation state, which on one hand made it possible for several national languages and cultures to flourish in the area of the present-day European Union but also reinforced the marginalization of many other linguistic groups. This is reflected in the fact that the number of languages in Europe is notably smaller than on the other continents, yet it also has more fully-fledged and modernized languages than the other regions of the world. The rise of nationalism, with its interest in local vernaculars, from the mid-19th century onwards made it possible for large parts of the population to integrate into supra-regional networks for the first time, receive instruction in school, often in a language form that resembled their own spoken vernacular, and take part in many cultural activities.

However, the dark sides of these developments are obvious as well. These include the violent history of Europe in the 19th and 20th centuries and the gloomy fate of those national and linguistic minorities that did not fit within both the physical and mental boundaries of the state-forming ethnicities (Mann 2005). National romanticism was often orientated towards regions considered as peripheral but simultaneously also “pure” and “original”, supposedly preserving the national culture in its genuine form. Multicultural regions such as Transylvania, Bosnia-Herzegovina or Karelia were culturally investigated for the purposes of Hungarian, Serbian or Finnish nationalism and the local people were not given a say on the development of their region or cultural identity. Linguistically and culturally diverse areas were integrated into nation states administrated from faraway centers, or linguistically fairly uniform areas were divided between different nation states. Borders were drawn in the middle of local communities whose networks thus disintegrated and cultural orientation was pushed in new directions.

For instance, the fact that all of the Western South Slavic languages are mutually intelligible has not prevented many different types of language nationalisms from emerging in the area in which they are spoken. The area under consideration has, in different historical eras, been divided between various states (the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, Serbia and Montenegro in the beginning of the 20th century, or Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Montenegro in the present day) or united into a single nation state (Yugoslavia 1918–1991). Consequently, the mutually understandable language forms in the area have been referred to by different denominations in different time periods and political frameworks (Croatian vs. Serbian until 1918, Serbo-Croatian until 1991 and Bosnian, Croatian, Montenegrin and Serbian

languages thereafter) and the linguistic identities of the region still show considerable variation despite the linguistic closeness of the language forms under consideration (on Montenegrin identity, cf. Kõlhi 2013).

On the other hand, many European linguistic identities harbor a wide diversity of language forms. For instance, significantly different types of Germanic or Finnic dialects have been labelled the “German language” or the “Finnish language”. From a purely linguistic point of view, it is obvious that the Low German and High German could, on several grounds, be considered different languages, but the political, and along with it, perceived language borders which have resulted in the use of Standard High German as the *Dachsprache* (‘roofing language’) are not established along the historical dialect isogloss line between those dialects that underwent the High Germanic sound shift and those that did not, but on the Dutch-German state border that, from a dialectological point of view, is not a major boundary line. In a similar manner, the Finnish language is understood to cover a variety of Finnic dialects that, from a historical perspective, represent two very different types of Finnic language forms divided by a variety of phonological and morphological isoglosses.

In Russia, the fundamental rejection of multinational ideologies that nationalism meant for Europe officially never occurred (Köhler 2005). All three Russian states (the Russian Empire, Soviet Russia and the Russian Federation) that existed in the 20th century declared both an international and multilingual identity within a single federative country. In this respect it is interesting that while some EU-related ideologies are highly critical towards the nation state and see the construction of a multi-ethnic pan-European identity as a suitable goal, they in fact consider a multi-ethnic situation that resembles the imperial past of many EU nations and Russia as their future objective (Kraus 2008).

In 20th-century Russia, the history of minorities looks in some respects like a mirror-image of the European developments in the same period. Thus, in the early Soviet period up to the mid-1930s, the heyday of exaggerated European nationalism, the establishment of autonomy for the various peoples was encouraged, new literary languages constructed and national institutions founded to meet the needs of minorities (Fitzpatrick 2008, 78–80). National elites emerged and even if the national cultures were organized according to a single Communist pattern, the young Soviet state certainly considered itself a multinational formation with an international mission to raise swathes of backward peoples to flourish economically and culturally.

This creation of the autonomous regions within the Soviet Union can, in many respects, be considered as nationalism imposed from above. Communities that had their own historical networks were split when new autonomous subjects of governance were formed according to ethnic and linguistic boundaries defined by Moscow specialists. Thus, for instance, the fairly unified Komi language area was divided between a Komi-Zyrian-dominated Komi Republic and the Komi-Permyak Autonomous District (Lallukka 1995; see also Indrek Jääts’ chapter “Fallen III in Political Draughts”). Separate literary languages were created for each group though they were actually very close linguistically. In the north, the bilingual Komi-Nenets region was made an autonomous territory for the Nenets.

In the second half of the 1930s, the newly created national cadres in most of the national republics were accused of nationalism and wiped out in purges. A new political course was chosen, moving away from multilingual ideologies and aimed at building communism in one state only. During the post-Stalin era (approx. 1956–1985) education, administration and media in minority languages were reduced or abandoned altogether in many regions of Russia. Enforced settlement by speakers of Russian in many non-Russian areas of the Soviet Union resulted in the marginalization of autochthonous populations, a functional decline of languages other than Russian, and power structures which favored Russian as a de facto nation-state language (Hajda and Beissinger 1990). Probably, the most important event in the course of the changing nationalist politics of Russia was the school reform (1958) that led to a substantial increase in the use of the Russian language in schooling, especially in the Federal Soviet Republic of Russia that was to become the Russian Federation (the other Soviet republics retained national languages in their schooling systems to at least some extent).

The entire wave of Russian modernization was organized “from above”, in the spirit of the European ideologies, but implemented on pre-modern communities that had only recent or still emerging literary traditions (Garibova 2011). Thus, also kind of nationalism was imported to the regions and reflected in the politics of *korenizacija*, i.e., the organizing of the local structures of governance in cooperation with the national minorities. The language policies played a fundamental role in this process from early on, and they retained this role independently of the actual contents of such policies, or the successes in their implementation that has always been up to the local leadership more than the political decision-making (cf. Grenoble 2003). In this sense, the Soviet Union can probably be considered the country with the longest and most extensive tradition of language planning (cf. Pavlenko 2005; Grenoble 2003).

Despite the rejection of European nationalism, the European nation-state ideologies were thus clearly expressed both in the creation of the autonomous republics and districts for several minorities in the 1920s, as well as in the increasing use of the Russian language in education in the Khrushchev era. Presently, a kind of Russian nationalism with an occasional accent on the multinational characteristics of the inhabitants of Russia which is expressed by the use of the Russian adjective *rossijskij* ‘Russian’ as opposed to *russkij* that only refers to an “ethnic Russian” serves as a state ideology under the current head of state Vladimir Putin.

During the whole Soviet period, the multi-ethnic structure of the empire remained largely the same. The fate of the minority languages was mainly determined by the kind of administrative autonomy their respective communities had and, in some cases, their size. Thus, in the Soviet republics there were more administrative, educational and other possibilities available for the minorities than in the autonomous republics (cf. Lewis 1972; Grenoble 2003). In those autonomous republics with large minorities, most notably Tatarstan, the minority languages typically had more possibilities to function than in those republics with just a small number of minority nationals, such as Khakassia or Kalmykia. Being among the minorities living in officially Russian-speaking administrative units, they had even fewer possibilities to use their

language. It has also been noted that those regions with the highest minority protection standards for the titular people often also foster cultures of other minorities. For instance, while there is likely not a single school with Mari as the language of instruction in the Mari people's titular republic Mari El, such schools are commonplace among the Mari diaspora in northwest Bashkiria.

2.5 New Regionalisms

Today, the social and political circumstances in which the ethnic and linguistic minorities in the European Union and Russia live vary considerably both between the macro-regions under consideration and between the different minorities and administrative districts. Analyzing the solutions for minority protection and their effects on the transmission and change of minority languages, traditional knowledge and identities in these two federal regions thus not only provides information on the history, present state and development prospects of the minorities but also creates knowledge that has proven crucial in preserving the threatened linguistic and cultural heritage of the world while simultaneously avoiding inter-ethnic conflicts.

The present minority policies of the EU countries can be considered to differ depending on the extent of the civic state as opposed to the nation-state principle in the legislation and its implementation. Those countries that represent the “purest” civic state tradition (such as France) have typically been very reluctant to grant specific rights to particular groups of the population such as the ethnic and linguistic minorities (Kraus 2008). On the contrary, it has been a tradition to stress the free choice of the individual, and the individuals as the nation-forming entity in these countries. It would seem to be the case, however, that taking into account the very complex identity-formation processes among social groups of different types, the free choice is not always a sufficient prerequisite for creating a just multilingual regime.

In the European nation states of the early 20th century, the ethnic and linguistic minorities were, in the spirit of the nation-state related nationalism, often considered to be “fifth columns” providing grounds for separatism and political influence from abroad (Gálantai 1992). After World War II when the most brutal forms of nationalism began to weaken and the minority protection standards rose in many European countries, several national minorities—such as the Basques, the Sorbs and the Sámi—succeeded in revitalizing their languages and cultures in a significant manner in the framework of regionalism and human rights-related ideologies. The improvement of the status of minority languages has taken place in the spheres of administration, education and media (Mahler and Toivanen 2004). At the same time, no similar empowerment is discernible among many other minorities. Also, several types of inter-ethnic conflicts continue to exist in EU countries and it is not impossible that in the future some federal structures such as Spain or the UK may dissolve into independent countries (Catalonia, Scotland).

Also during the break-up of the Soviet Union and the early years of the Russian Federation (1980–1990s) minority protection became again a political issue, both in Russia and in other post-Soviet states where speakers of Russian now found themselves in the position of minorities. Many minority languages in Russia were declared official in at least part of the areas in which they were spoken, and symbols associated with the minorities were introduced in public. Nonetheless, only a decade later, the new politics of centralization again weakened regional and national autonomy and minority protection.

The new regionalist tendencies have also brought about the emergence of new linguistic identities. In many cases these are building upon traditional local ideologies that have been interpreted in a new regionalist framework. Often it is a question of linguistic minorities that have been living outside the respective nation state and whose languages have thus been left outside the standardization. For instance, Alsatian in France and Meänkieli in the Torne valley in Northern Sweden have, in Germanic and Finnic philology, been considered dialects of German and Finnish but in the late 20th century have emerged as recognized regional languages. In such cases it is often borders, or more precisely the standardization of the language on the one side of the border and the lack of standardization on the other side that are responsible for the emergence of the new language. It is also a question of different national identities emerging from different networks, the presence or lack of bi- or multilingualism as well as the roles of different schooling languages that have played a role in the development of different linguistic identities on the two sides of the borders. In addition to physical borders, also religious and livelihood-related borders seem to create new national identities to some respect. Simultaneously, one should remember that many of the “new” European regional languages represent old linguistic traditions that have long been considered dialects of national languages but would, from a linguistic point of view, be classified rather as languages than dialects. This is the case of e.g. Latgalian in Latvia, South Estonian (*Võru/Setu*) in Estonia, and Low German in Germany.

A similar tendency of the number of recognized minorities to increase is also discernible in the Russian context, where several subgroups of larger minorities (such as reindeer-herding as opposed to agriculturalist Izhma-Komi) demand independent recognition. In many cases groups that existed in the censuses of the 1920s have been reinvented, such as the Beserman, a Tatar-influenced group formerly considered a part of the Udmurt nation. Especially some subsidies and quotas designated for the “Small-numbered people of the North” have led not only to a rise in the number of representatives of these groups but also to situations in which traditional minorities or some parts of them seek recognition as a small-numbered people (Izhma-Komi, Veps, Komi-Permyak).

Superdiverse regions such as the European Union and the Russian Federation are varying and largely dissimilar contexts for language minorities. At the same time, the regions share many lessons to be learned and points worthy of comparison. Studying a language in its community, its cultural representations or the political aspirations of its speakers, means that the human context that fosters a particular language or linguistic heritage has to be an object of an understanding, hermeneutic analysis.

Although languages have an intrinsic cultural value as matrices of concepts and discourses, they are always supported by a particular system of social relations and a change in this system is always reflected in the language in one way or the other.

The contexts, including those aspects that seem far away (such as a history of subordination) as well as those that are clearly present (power relationships) explain why some languages and many aspects of cultures related to language disappear. A comparison between the European Union and the Russian Federation also provides evidence on how strong a role the state, even though it may be influenced by the international organizations, plays in these processes. At the same time, the comparison also shows that language revitalization can take place in contexts in which international minority rights-oriented policies have not been adopted as guiding principles of states. In order to be successful, the revitalization has to be at least tolerated by the majority population. Thus, comparing superdiverse regions of the European Union and the Russian Federation and considering the conditions for fostering plurilingualism among the individuals in these contexts confirm how the survival of minorities is always to a large extent dependent on the goodwill of the state-forming majorities.

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The Global Extinction of Languages and Its Consequences for Cultural Diversity

Suzanne Romaine

Abstract Most people are aware that global biodiversity in the early 21st century is experiencing mass extinction. Yet few are aware of a parallel crisis for languages, with predicted extinction rates ranging from 50 to 90% of the world's some 7,000 languages by the end of this century. Many regard languages as a benchmark for cultural diversity because virtually every major aspect of human culture ranging from kinship classification to religion is dependent on language for its transmission. This chapter focuses primarily on the consequences of the global loss of linguistic diversity for cultural diversity. Discontinuities in transmission of culture and language are frequently accompanied by large human and social costs. Maintaining the world's languages can be seen as part of a larger strategy of cultural survival providing an indispensable foundation for well-being and resilience.

Keywords Linguistic diversity · Cultural diversity · Language death · Human rights · Multilingualism

1 Introduction

Most people know that global biodiversity in the early 21st century is experiencing mass extinction. According to some accounts, annual losses of plant and animal species are occurring at 1,000 times or more historic background rates.¹ Yet few are aware of a parallel crisis for languages, with predicted extinction rates ranging from 50 to 90% of the world's 6,900 languages by the end of this century (Nettle and Romaine 2000). Indeed, languages may be at even greater immediate risk of disappearance than species (Sutherland 2003). UNESCO's launch of 2008 as a special year with the slogan "languages matter" was intended to direct attention to the possible disappearance of much of the world's linguistic diversity. UNESCO's World Report (2009, 1) on cultural diversity followed quickly on the heels of this special year, reiterating its firm commitment to languages as a key vector of cultural

¹ Millennium Ecosystem Assessment 2005 <http://www.maweb.org>.

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diversity and “the view that full and unqualified recognition of cultural diversity strengthens the universality of human rights and ensures their effective exercise”. This chapter contends that a satisfactory answer to the question of why languages matter requires a new understanding of the critical role of linguistic diversity in the survival of cultural diversity.

2 Human Rights and Linguistic Human Rights

The issue of human rights comes into play in connection with the disappearance of languages and the erosion of cultural diversity when we confront the fact that people do not normally give up their languages or cultures willingly, but continue to transmit them, albeit in changed form over time. Not coincidentally, the vast majority of today’s threatened languages and cultures are found among socially and politically marginalized and/or subordinated national and ethnic minority groups. Estimates of the number of such groups range from 5,000 to 8,000 and include among them the world’s indigenous peoples, who comprise about 4% of the world’s population but speak up to 60% of its languages (Nettle and Romaine 2000, ix). The disappearance of a language and its related culture almost always forms part of a wider process of social, cultural and political displacement where national cultures and languages are in effect those of dominant ethnic groups. Although language is only one of many features (e.g. dress, behavior patterns, race, religion, nationality, occupation, etc.) that may mark identity, either individually or collectively, many regard languages as a benchmark for cultural diversity because virtually every major aspect of human culture ranging from kinship classification to religion is dependent on language for its transmission. UNESCO (2010b) recognizes culture as a fundamental component of sustainable development because it functions as a repository of knowledge, meanings and values permeating all aspects of our lives and defines the way humans live and interact both at local and global scales. Because such a large part of any language is culture-specific, people often feel that an important part of their traditional culture and identity is also lost when that language disappears. Moreover, once lost, a language is far less easily recoverable than other identity markers that might stand in its place.

Some groups see their existence as distinct cultural entities dependent on the maintenance of their language. René Lévesque, former leader of the Parti Québécois and Quebec Prime Minister, stressed the centrality of French to Québécois identity when he said:

Being ourselves is essentially a matter of keeping and developing a personality that has survived for three and a half centuries. At the core of this personality is the fact that we speak French [...] To be unable to live as ourselves, as we should live, in our own language and according to our own ways, would be like living without a heart. (Lévesque 1968, 14)

Sir James Henare expressed similar feelings about Māori when he said “Ko te reo te mauri o te mana Māori.” ‘The language is the essence of Māori identity’ (Waitangi Tribunal 1989, 34). Although distinct cultural and ethnic identities can

survive language shift, a Québécois or Māori identity expressed through English is not the same as one expressed through French or Māori. To say they are different does not imply that one is necessarily better than the other. It does mean, however, that to argue for the preservation of French in Quebec or Māori in New Zealand is to argue for a people's right to choose the language in which they want to express their cultural identity. UNESCO's Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001) recognizes cultural rights as an integral part of human rights constituting an enabling environment for cultural diversity. Article 5 declares that "all persons have the right to participate in the cultural life of their choice and conduct their own cultural practices, subject to respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms."

At the same time, however, in a world where cultural survival is viable only in connection with well-defined geopolitical boundaries, the nation-state plays a key role in determining which cultures and languages will survive and which will not. As the bedrock of the current political world order, the nation-state is the most critical unit of analysis because it is policies pursued within national boundaries that give some languages (and their speakers) the status of majority and others that of minority. In a rapidly globalizing world with a handful of very large languages and many thousands of small ones, maintenance of linguistic diversity is inextricably linked to the survival of small communities. If all languages were equal in size, each would have around 878,000 speakers. Instead, we find large disparities: 94% of the world's population speaks 6% of its languages, while 6% speaks 94% of its languages. Only eight out of the currently estimated world total of 7,105 languages have more than 100 million speakers and these are spoken by about 41% of the world's population. Only 308 (4%) have a million or more speakers. By contrast, 96% of the world's languages are spoken by populations comprising fewer than a million speakers. The smallest languages with fewer than 100 speakers are spoken by a mere 0.2% of the world's population (Lewis et al. 2013). Most, if not all, of these may be at risk because small languages can disappear much faster than larger ones due to the vulnerability of small groups to external pressures in a rapidly changing world. Indeed, the speakers of most of the languages at greatest risk of disappearing over the next few decades are very often also the poorest of the poor at the bottom of the economic ladder, and at the margins of a rapidly globalizing world. Africa, for instance, is simultaneously the linguistically richest, but economically poorest region on earth. Africans speak around 2,146 (30.2%) of the world's languages but make up about a third of the world's poor surviving on less than 1\$ per day (Romaine 2009b). Moreover, while poverty has been falling for over a quarter century in other parts of the world, in Africa (and sub-Saharan Africa especially) it has been rising (UNDP 2012).

Languages of colonial conquest and dominant languages of nation-states penetrate into, transform and undermine a minority community's ability to maintain its language, culture and identity in various ways. Hence, Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) has referred to language shift occurring within the context of forced assimilation as linguistic genocide. Where education does not support or actively prohibits the use of a group's native language, the state in effect moves children from a minority to the dominant group. The notion of linguistic human rights (LHR) has arisen out of

the concern to situate language loss within the context of the relatively well-defined international legal framework already in existence for human rights. Nevertheless, in spite of efforts to develop international norms for minority rights at both global and regional levels, many problems remain, and the question of whether and when language shift can be required or expected in deliberative democracies is still unresolved. Likewise, one can question whether it is legitimate for the state to insist that all children be schooled in the majority language of the state as the sole or main medium of instruction.

Virtually all major international treaties and other legal instruments regard human rights as inalienable entitlements inherent to the person and belonging equally to all human beings. As embodied above all in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), these rights comprise not only civil and political rights but also social, economic, and cultural rights. The latter category includes, among other things, labor rights, right to an adequate standard of living, social security, food, housing, clothing, education, and health. The inalienability of our common entitlement to these rights follows from the fact that we are all human, and therefore all the same, but paradoxically the need to guarantee such rights in law arises from the fact that we are diversely different. Indeed, Mill (1859, 1955:81) recognized human diversity in life modes as essential for liberty and happiness when he wrote:

If it were only that people have diversities of taste, that is reason enough for not attempting to shape them all after one model. But different persons also require different conditions for their spiritual development; and can no more exist healthily in the same moral, than all the variety of plants can exist in the same physical, atmosphere and climate. The same things which are helps to one person towards the cultivation of his higher nature, are hindrances to another [...] Unless there is a corresponding diversity in their life modes, they neither obtain their fair share of happiness, nor grow up to the mental, moral, and aesthetic stature of which their nature is capable.

Mill also cited von Humboldt (1854) in the front matter of his book, in effect endorsing Humboldt's belief in the "absolute and essential importance of human development in its richest diversity".

Nevertheless, cultural and linguistic rights are still being denied and undermined, with negative impacts on the peoples and communities concerned. Discontinuities in transmission of culture and language are frequently accompanied by large human and social costs manifested in poverty, poor health, drug and alcohol abuse, family violence, and suicide. William Stanner, for instance, writing from his personal and professional experience as an anthropologist who studied Aboriginal culture, commented thus on Australia's assimilation policies:

Since the 1950s we have known that it is a false assumption, but we have often persisted with substantially the same outlook and new methods. There was already pretty plain evidence in the 1950s that what we were requiring the Aborigines to do was radically maladaptive for them. What clearer meaning could sickness, drunkenness, alcoholism, criminality, prostitution and psychic disorders have? (Stanner 1979, 352)

Similarly, Hallett et al. (2007, 394) conclude that "the generic association between cultural collapse and the rise of public health problems is so uniform and so exceptionless as to be beyond serious doubt." A substantial body of research indicates that

indigenous peoples fare far worse than non-indigenous populations with respect to numerous other health indicators such as morbidity, life expectancy, incidence of diabetes, cardio-vascular disease, etc. By some estimates, suicide rates are as much as 40 % higher among indigenous peoples than among other populations (Hunter and Harvey 2002). This is especially true for young people, whom some have characterized as the lost, broken or stolen generation. Many young people are weakly integrated into traditional culture, and disconnected from their elders, and family support networks (Trudgen 2000). Suicide is a choice of last resort when things go so badly wrong with identity development that youth see no viable way of linking their past, present and future selves.

The United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP 2007, 183) observes that “cultural change, such as loss of cultural and spiritual values, languages, and traditional knowledge and practices, is a driver that can cause increasing pressures on biodiversity [...] In turn, these pressures impact human well-being.” Recent empirical studies from countries like Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Norway strongly suggest that cultural diversity has the capacity to increase resilience of social systems in the same way that biological diversity increases resilience of natural systems. While most studies are small in scale, and typically rely on cross-sectional rather than longitudinal data, making causal arguments problematic, a strong sense of cultural identity is associated with higher levels of psychological health among indigenous youth. In a sample of 450 indigenous Sámi adolescents between 15 and 16 years old residing in northern Norway, researchers found that enculturation factors are significantly but moderately associated with decreased mental health problems. Participation in cultural activities and native language competence were the enculturation factors most strongly linked to better mental health symptoms (Bals et al. 2011). A New Zealand study showing positive correlations between high levels of cultural efficacy, identity engagement and subjective well-being among Māori provides support for ‘culture as cure’ rather than culture as problem (Houkamau and Sibley 2011). In other words, restoring attachment of indigenous youth to their culture may be an integral part of the solution to some of the health problems in native communities.

Others looking at the same evidence, however, have drawn opposite conclusions from those of Stanner and the studies just cited; namely, that poor health conditions and serious social problems result from the failure of indigenous peoples to abandon their traditional cultural values and lifeways that will eventually doom them to extinction because they are dysfunctional in the modern world. Within this assimilationist narrative there is no place in the modern world for people who choose not to adapt; indigenous languages and cultures are dismissed as primitive and backward-looking, an argument which is then used to justify their replacement by western languages and cultures as prerequisites to modernization and progress. Former President Festus Mogae of Botswana, for instance, asked in reference to the San minority, “How can you have a stone-age creature continuing to exist in the time of computers? If the Bushmen want to survive, they must change, otherwise, like the dodo they will perish” (Ohenjo et al. 2006, 1942). Despite the fact that Botswana has the fourth highest per capita income in Africa, the poorest 10 % of the population consists largely of San and related minority communities, who receive only 0.7 % of the nation’s income

(1942). The National Constitution makes no reference to the San among the main eight tribes of the country. The government has justified its relocation of San people from the Central Kalahari Game Reserve by claiming that the San deplete the natural resources of the reserve and that providing services to them on the reserve is too expensive. Since their displacement, the San have been unable to adapt to their new surroundings, where they have no means of subsistence, and are increasingly dependent on the government for food relief and cash-for-work programs.

The San, who comprise a number of culturally, linguistically and economically diverse communities with distinct histories and cultural practices, have inhabited the Southern African region for more than 27,000 years. Numbering only about 30,000–40,000, they are widely recognized as the most impoverished, disempowered, and stigmatized ethnic group in Southern Africa. They fare even worse outside Botswana. The human development index for 32,000 some San living in Namibia, where the second largest population resides, is not only the lowest, but they are also the only group whose human development index fell between 1996 and 1998 (Suzman 2002, 4). Health and welfare among San in resettlement areas have declined; alcohol consumption and violence against women have increased. Ohenjo et al. (2006, 1943) regard these trends ultimately as “a problem of poverty stemming from the loss of land and livelihoods without a viable alternative”.

The circumstances of the Kxoe community of San people in Namibia, who number only about 4,000, have greatly deteriorated since the 1960s to the point where their prospects for survival are extremely poor. Once highly mobile hunter-gatherers, they were settled on agricultural schemes in the western part of the Caprivi Strip of northeastern Namibia after independence in 1990. An influx of workers involved in the construction of the trans-Caprivi highway linking Namibia to Zambia, Botswana and Zimbabwe has made the Kxoe (especially young girls) particularly vulnerable to HIV/AIDS, which occurs at a higher rate along this major transport corridor than anywhere else in sub-Saharan Africa. Since 1996 AIDS has been the major cause of death for all age groups, and the Caprivi region has the worst health indicators in the country (Brenzinger and Harms 2001).

3 Why Language Matters

Although the conventional wisdom on which most development theories are premised often assumes that people and places are poor because they lack resources, poverty is clearly a complex phenomenon. Cause and effect are often confused in arguments claiming that poverty is caused by lack of infrastructure, services and employment opportunities in the rural communities where most indigenous peoples live. Thus, prevailing policies have generally entailed assimilation and integration into the dominant society's modes of production and employment, often requiring migration or forced relocation to urban areas. Such strategies are motivated by misperception and stereotyping of indigenous peoples (particularly hunter-gatherers), their lifestyles and languages as primitive, backward, and obstacles to development (Romaine

2009b). Widdowson and Howard (2002, 34), for instance, contend that the cultural gap between the Neolithic period and late capitalism rather than cultural loss is at the root of dependency and “all the related social problems in Canada’s native population and throughout the industrialized world.” More recently, they have argued that maintaining indigenous identity, cultural traditions and languages deters development among Canada’s native peoples because it prevents them from acquiring the necessary skills and knowledge for productive participation in the mainstream economy and society. Hence, they reject policies offering financial incentives for cultural preservation because they claim there is no evidence that disappearance of languages is detrimental to humanity’s survival (Widdowson and Howard 2008).

The situation of the San is symptomatic of the circumstances of indigenous peoples throughout Africa and many other parts of the world. Health is systematically worse than among the non-indigenous population, particularly where loss of land and customary resource bases has rendered people unable to maintain their traditional livelihoods and cultural practices, including their languages. Without adequate access to education, health care, and water, many indigenous peoples and other minorities are frequently not recognized by the governments of the states in which they reside and thus are deprived of the right to participate in or direct their own sustainable human development. Taylor (2007, 16), for instance, points to “a clear contradiction between the desire of many Indigenous people to live in remote areas in small dispersed communities on traditional lands, and the general thrust of government policy that is intent on securing Indigenous participation in the mainstream urban economy as the core means to enhance well-being.” Many indigenous people define themselves in terms of their close relationships to land and community, where a good life is associated with maintaining traditional hunting, gathering, and herding practices. Many of the Arctic’s residents, for instance, would not want to exchange this way of life for the lifestyles of residents of southern metropolises, even though such a life may offer higher standards of living in material terms (Einarsson et al. 2004, 16–17).

This does not mean, however, that they want to remain unchanged and unengaged with the dominant society or the modern world. Many critics of efforts to preserve endangered languages think in a simplistic dichotomizing fashion; namely, that maintaining small languages means abandoning modernity, while abandoning them in favor of world languages such as French or English means joining the modern world. These prejudices reverberate in other parts of the world, such as among Navajo youth who “feel they must make an either-or choice between language affiliations” because they have been told that Navajo is linked with backwardness and English with modernity and opportunity (McCarty et al. 2006, 672). This view of modernity suggests erroneously that societies or cultures are anchored to different historical points aligned on a single linear trajectory from a traditional past to a modern present according to the extent of their socioeconomic and political development. The opposing ends of this supposed developmental pathway get reified in terms such as ‘developing’, ‘primitive’ versus ‘developed’, ‘modern’, etc. At the same time ideological constructions of the languages spoken in such contexts derive their perceived values in terms of these oppositions. Ultimately, what the Inuit,

Navajo and other indigenous peoples are being told by Widdowson and Howard and others is to forget their past, stop being themselves, move from their homeland, assimilate, and they will be all right. However, without access to land, many indigenous peoples find it hard to maintain their ways of life and their cultural identity on which transmission of their languages depends. There are strong associations between the physical and mental health of people and places. Research conducted among some of the 300,000–500,000 Pygmy people living in ten central African countries shows that those able to maintain their traditional forest-based life have better health than those who have lost access to the forest through logging and farming. Forests are a vital component of a Pygmy sense of physical and spiritual well-being. Pygmy communities living outside the forest in fixed settlements cannot meet their food needs and experience higher rates of infectious diseases such as malaria, tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS and parasites. In the absence of traditional cultural practices reducing social tensions, domestic violence against women and alcohol abuse have increased (Ohenjo et al. 2006, 1939–1941).

Some of the strongest and most powerful evidence supporting the value of language and culture maintenance to community well-being comes from research based on data from ca. 7,800 indigenous adults collected by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (2009). Four separate elements of ‘cultural attachment’ (i.e. participation in cultural events, cultural identification, indigenous language use, and participation in traditional economic activities), were associated with better outcomes across a diverse range of dimensions of socio-economic well-being. Not surprisingly, those residing in remote areas generally had higher attachment than those living elsewhere, as did older rather than younger people. Contrary to claims frequently made about Aboriginal culture and language being maladaptive and leading to poverty and despair, stronger cultural attachment and identity were associated with greater participation and achievement in education and training and a higher probability of being employed. Speaking an indigenous language was also associated with markedly superior health, and a lower likelihood of abusing alcohol or being arrested (Dockery 2010, 329, 2012, 2013). Moreover, Aboriginal Australians living in remote areas also appeared not only to be better able to maintain aspects of language and culture, but also to achieve other aspects of well-being, in particular higher levels of self-reported happiness (Biddle and Swee 2012).

Hence, maintaining the world’s languages can be seen as part of a larger strategy of cultural survival providing an indispensable foundation for well-being and resilience. Safeguarding linguistic and cultural diversity does not mean preserving the status quo, which is in any case impossible. Languages and cultures are constantly changing, and so our concepts of them cannot be static. The survival of many indigenous peoples is now often dependent on modern means of production. Many appreciate that there are some benefits arising from increased interaction with the dominant society, and most want to acquire dominant languages as a means of accessing economic and other resources associated with them. At the same time, however, they want to preserve some cultural autonomy for themselves and to have some say in determining their own fate, in particular, the right to educate their children

in their own way, and to maintain their language and culture. In order to preserve their distinctive identities, cultures and languages, however, most need and want economic resources gained in the dominant market. Today the maintenance of Inuktitut in the eastern Canadian Arctic is partly a product of its integration into the dominant linguistic market and political economy, where it has been standardized and promoted in education, government publications, and other written forms. Some newly adopted western practices have come to be defined as Inuit, such as the syllabic writing system introduced by Christian missionaries, and are now being used to justify and pursue modern goals such as increased political autonomy (Patrick 2003, 107). Despite numerous transformations in traditional lifestyles, it is possible for indigenous peoples to find a new niche within dominant cultures and still maintain their language and culture. Driving snowmobiles instead of sleds drawn by dogs or reindeer, wearing jeans and listening to pop music are not inherently incompatible with cultural continuity and indigenous identity. Indeed, one consequence of globalization has been the emergence of a new common global indigenous identity through the international movement of indigenous peoples (Niezen 2003).

Recent studies from First Nations communities in British Columbia have provided powerful evidence in support of the value of language maintenance to community well-being. Bands with fewer than 50% of members reporting conversational language knowledge of their ancestral language had more than six times (96.59 per 100,000) the number of suicides as communities with higher levels of language knowledge. Among the latter the suicide rate was 13.00 per 100,000, well below the provincial average for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal youth. In fact, reported language knowledge proved to have predictive power over and above that of the six other cultural continuity factors identified in previous research (Hallett et al. 2007, 396). This constitutes strong empirical evidence against the view that assimilation to dominant cultures is harmless or even beneficial to individuals and communities in the ways suggested by prevailing policies and ideologies. Language does indeed matter. When communities are successful in promoting their linguistic and cultural heritage, they are better positioned to claim ownership of their past and future (Lalonde 2006). The positive effects reverberate in a variety of measures relating to youth health and welfare: suicide rates fall, along with rates for intentional injuries. Fewer children get taken into care and school completion rates rise. If what we really care about is people's well-being, then we must acknowledge that policies pursuing higher rates of employment and integration with the mainstream economy at the expense of culture may address economic disadvantage, but will likely have negative impacts on well-being (Dockery 2010, 317), as well increased costs for health care and resource management when people are removed from places they are attached to.

The treatment of the San and many other indigenous peoples by the respective governments of the countries where they reside constitutes a clear violation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966/1967) and of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities (1992). Efforts at developing international norms of minority rights at both global and regional levels have resulted in a post-1990 flood of international declarations, conventions and recommendations, including, for example, the

Council of Europe's Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (1995) and the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007). Kymlicka and Patten (2003, 11) doubt whether international law will ever be able to specify more than the most minimal of standards. Nor is there an international legal consensus on how to define a minority. For example, the ten to twelve million Roma who comprise Europe's largest ethnic minority, and are present in most European Union member states, are recognized as national minorities in some countries but not in others. While some have recognized the Roma and the Romani language under the provisions of the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages and the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, a long history of European repression against the Roma goes back several hundred years following Roma migration from the Indian subcontinent (COE 2012). In discussing the evolution of the United Nations framework for human rights and minority protection, Duchêne (2008, 17) highlighted a series of paradoxes arising from the necessity and impossibility of defining minority groups at supranational and national level. Minorities demand protection from the state and what they demand to be protected from is the state. Meanwhile, the state seeks to protect itself from the risk posed by the very existence of minorities. The need for specifically targeted minority rights has emerged in response to demands from different types of groups wanting to belong to states in different ways, and to exercise specific promotion rights going beyond anti-discrimination and toleration. The resulting patchwork coverage whereby different types of minorities like national minorities and indigenous peoples are accorded different kinds of rights, powers, or accommodations from the state, but others have only generic rights has emerged in an ad hoc way and is riddled with gaps and inconsistencies.

The pervasive presence of some degree of multilingualism in practically every nation in the world, whether officially recognized or not, indicates a universal need for multilingual/multicultural policy and planning to ensure that all members of different language groups within nations have access to and can participate in national affairs without discrimination. Nevertheless, despite insistence from some experts that there should be no distinction in law between the linguistic rights of autochthonous and allochthonous minorities in human rights treaties (de Varennes 1996), national ethnic minorities still have many more internationally and nationally coded rights than immigrants under current international conventions and laws. Some, like the Roma and Travellers, have suffered such severe and deeply rooted discrimination and human rights abuses that "no European government can claim a fully successful record in protecting the human rights of the members of these minorities" (COE 2012, 11). In its annual reports and other statements the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance has repeatedly criticized the Italian government for its lack of policy with respect to non-territorial minorities such as the Roma and Sinti, at the same time as it urged granting citizenship to all children born in Italy (ECRI 2006, 6–8). In 2008 Amnesty International condemned Italian politicians for embracing increasingly racist and xenophobic language which created a climate in which vulnerable groups were targets of violence and the European Parliament

voted to condemn the government's policy of fingerprinting Roma, who are widely stereotyped as vagrants, thieves and child kidnappers.

We are still far from a coherent account of the kinds of targeting appropriate in international law. Targeted norms have emerged in an ad hoc way and are often presented as unique exceptions to the rule of generic minority rights. Kymlicka (2007) argues that this sort of ad hoc 'mono-targeting' where one particular type of group is singled out for distinctive legal rights, while according all other groups only generic minority rights, is unlikely to be stable. Similarly, Romaine (2007) contends that the legal approach to reconciling status differences in languages with equality in a world where majority rights are implicit, and minority rights are seen as 'special' and in need of justification, is fraught with difficulty. Because traditional peoples have adopted a large number of western practices voluntarily and involuntarily, this appears to suggest that they have assimilated. Hence demands for what outsiders see as 'special' rights in order to maintain their language and culture often generate resentment. To many non-indigenous inhabitants of Canada, for instance, the idea of Inuit living in houses with running water, using snowmobiles, and shopping in supermarkets violates the dominant culture's stereotypical and romantic images of Inuit living in igloos, hunting with dogsleds, and living off the land (Brody 1987). This results in irreconcilably contradictory demands for assimilation on the one hand, and a denial of their modernity on the other. Many Inuit would prefer to adopt only those outside elements that facilitate their own practices. They have chosen rifles and snowmobiles, but want to continue speaking their own language alongside English, French and other languages.

In the absence of both clarity about defining which groups should be targeted as well as bodies empowered to enforce norms, rights to maintain distinctive cultural and linguistic identities are further undermined by an almost complete lack of recourse for individuals whose rights have been violated. Signing an agreement is not the same thing as implementing and complying with it. The non-binding nature of declarations and recommendations permits states to claim that they are meeting the requirements, even if only in a minimalist fashion. The adoption of the International Labor Organization's (ILO) Convention No. 169 in 1989 marked a break with the integrationist approach to indigenous peoples. Although it is a legally binding instrument recognizing "the aspirations of indigenous peoples to exercise control over their own institutions, ways of life and economic development, which includes the maintenance and development of their identities, languages and religions", as of 2013 it has been ratified by only twenty countries. Despite attempts to guarantee freedom of expression and non-discrimination on grounds of language as fundamental human rights, and implicit recognition of the intimate connections between language and forms of cultural expression, national policies are radically out of line with the realities of multilingualism. The majority of countries in the world actually operate either de facto or de jure as monolingual in recognizing only one language for use in education. Only a quarter of all nations recognize more than one language (Edwards 2007, 44). When a multilingual country uses one or more languages exclusively in public schools, and in the administration of government services and activities, it is making a distinction based on language. In showing a preference for some

language(s), whether designated as official or national or not, the state's decision benefits those for whom the chosen language(s) is a primary language, to the detriment or disadvantage of others who either have no or lower proficiency and are denied the benefit of using and identifying with their primary language (Romaine 2007).

In addition to all these difficulties, many legal experts and political theorists see signs of an impending retreat from the international commitment to multiculturalism. Bell (2007, 602) for instance, refers to a standoff over how far it is possible to accommodate the marginalized without committing suicide as a state, which is countered by concerns of the marginalized not to let states define them. Many are not hopeful about achieving more than minimal tolerance rights plus minor accommodations within LHR. Although the LHR movement has focused on securing a universal right to mother tongue primary education in line with UNESCO's (1953, 6) much cited axiom "that the best medium for teaching is the mother tongue of the pupil" Kymlicka and Patten (2003, 36), contend that this sounds more like the conclusion of an argument than the argument itself. A more realistic way forward may reside not in trying to specify a particular policy, but to establish fair background conditions under which members of different language communities can survive.

Despite evidence of growing rather than decreasing diversity in many education systems, in some countries the trend has been not towards recognition of the need for policy and planning, but the imposition of ever more centralized provision and greater intolerance of diversity (Romaine 2009a). Although there are some encouraging developments in some countries, in most parts of the world schooling is still virtually synonymous with learning a second language. Education for minorities in many parts of the world still operates in ways that contradict best practices, with fewer than 10 % of the world's languages used in education (Skutnabb-Kangas 2000). The continuation of educational policies favoring international languages at the expense of local ones is part of a more general development fiasco. Use of local languages is inseparable from participatory development. A high-level roundtable convened at the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) summit at the United Nations in September 2010 emphasized strong linkages between primary education, other components of basic education and the MDGs, the largest and arguably most ambitious initiative on the international development agenda (UNESCO 2010a, 6). Above all, however, the roundtable stressed that "a basic education of good quality is an essential human right and as such should be a priority for governments and donors" (7). Exclusion of most of the world's languages from school severely compromises the power of education to improve the lives of those suffering multiple sources of disadvantage, who have least access to the small number of dominant languages favored at school, i.e. ethnolinguistic minorities (especially girls) living in rural areas. UNESCO's (2003) position paper on education in a multilingual world also endorsed many of the recommendations that have emerged from the debate about linguistic human rights as a means of reaching consensus on the rights of linguistic minorities to ensure social justice. These include the rights of indigenous and minority groups to education in their own language, access to the language of the larger community, and that of the national education system, and international languages.

4 Conclusion

As a species humans display remarkable cultural diversity despite a high degree of genetic uniformity (Pagel and Mace 2004). This chapter has argued that this diversity is at risk when languages become extinct because languages are a critical vector for cultural diversity. As the world becomes less biologically diverse, it is becoming linguistically and culturally less diverse as well. The fate of most of the world's linguistic diversity, and by implication its cultural diversity, lies in the hands of a small number of people who are the most vulnerable to pressures of globalization. Sen (2006) stressed that all development is ultimately about expanding human potential and enlarging human freedom. It is about people developing the capabilities that empower them to make choices and to lead lives that they value. Freedom of choice is therefore both a principal means and end of development. Good development involves local community involvement, control and accountability. Nettle and Romaine (2000) see the need to preserve languages and the need for development in the world's peripheral societies as complementary aspects of the same problem rather than opposing ones. Although impediments to participation in and the right to exercise control over development processes affecting peoples such as the San are increasingly being recognized internationally as human rights violations, the neoliberal ideology underpinning the United Nations Development Programme approach to poverty reduction through prioritizing economic growth has propelled human rights and development down increasingly separate paths (Romaine 2009b). Linguistic diversity receives almost no mention in the Millennium Development Goals (Romaine 2013). Safeguarding and sustaining linguistic and cultural diversity does not, however, mean preserving the status quo. Lévi-Strauss (1952, 258) emphasized that it is "diversity itself which must be saved, not the outward and visible form in which each period has clothed that diversity." Protecting cultural and linguistic diversity means ensuring their continued existence, not the perpetuation of a given state of diversity. Policies that promote a community's economic and cultural well-being will be likely to sustain linguistic diversity as well.

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The Death of Languages; the Death of Minority Cultures; the Death of a People's Dignity

Its Implications for Democracy and the Commitment to Human Rights

Theodore S. Orlin

Abstract This chapter explores when the loss of language may constitute a violation of human rights and may be destructive of democratic principles by its negative impact on minority cultures. It reviews the development of human rights law that led to the growing jurisprudence of treaty-monitoring committees and judicial bodies to determine when state action or inaction (state duties) may constitute a violation of human rights. The chapter argues that the assimilation of a minority into a majority culture, with the concomitant likely death of the minority language, is not in itself a violation of human rights. If the choice to discard culture and language is free, without coercion and without a state policy and action designed to eliminate the minority interests, then human rights will not be deemed to be violated. However, where state policy does not protect the right to use one's language via action or inaction, and reflects the preference and agenda of its majority, at the expense of the minority, then concerns are raised as to the protection of human dignity and identification of a minority. Such action may constitute a denial of our human right to self-expression. While the extent and nature of the case law and legal analysis of the pertinent instruments will be preliminarily referenced, an in depth exploration is beyond the scope of the chapter and requires additional discussion and analysis.

Keywords Death of language · Human rights · Linguicide

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1 Introduction: The Human Rights Dimension to the Loss of Language

Raising her voice, a Han teacher calls the correct answer in Chinese at a Uygur high school. Despite an official bilingual policy, the Uygur language is disappearing from classrooms. Some Uygur parents want their children to learn Chinese as a way to get ahead, but many decry the stifling of language and identity. (Teague 2009, 39)

The underlying “foundation of freedom” of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (hereafter UDHR), as expressed in its Preamble, is the recognition of the “inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family” (UN 1948c). This dignity, undoubtedly, is largely rooted in self-identification. From birth, our sense of self is reliant on family identification and the communities, as well as the cultures we identify with. Important, if not essential, for our sense of identification is our “nationality” and the citizenship of the state we are subject to. An element and part of the foundation of cultural identity is the language that allows us to express our thoughts and provides us with an identity that structures our sense of “self” in community with others.

The “death of a language” (Crystal 2000, 1) attacks the very essence of our very being and identity within our communities. The loss of this essence may fatally jeopardize the continuation of our cultures. When languages are threatened, our cultures may be threatened, and consequently our sense of “self”, our identity, our dignity, are at risk (Skutnabb-Kangas 2000; see also Romaine’s chapter “[The Global Extinction of Languages and Its Consequences for Cultural Diversity](#)” in the present volume).

The demise of a language is mourned by those who appreciate the diversities of our cultures. Just as environmentalists or zoologists decry the loss of the diversity of species, students of human behavior, social scientists, and linguists bemoan the loss of language as a loss to the richness of our global culture (see the chapter “[The Global Extinction of Languages and Its Consequences for Cultural Diversity](#)”). The identity of peoples, who express their culture reflecting their work, their family relationships, their rooted beliefs, may be severely impacted by the death of their language. Consequently, the heterogeneous qualities of our planet are challenged by the continuing trend towards homogeneity, where the diversity of our cultures is challenged by the demise of minority languages (Hale 1992).

Languages may die natural deaths, rooted in personal choice and preference (consistent with the right of self-determination of individuals and communities), or as a result of natural disasters or change in the natural habitat, famine, or disease, that cause the death of all its speakers. Yet, when minorities are subject to political and other pressures of majorities or ruling elites, in alliance with States or with State complicity, this has genuine consequences for the commitment to democracy and human rights. What constitutes “language murder” or “linguicide” or, perhaps more properly, “language homicide”, as a broader legal conception which takes into account the material elements of proportionality and intent of the perpetrators, is beyond the focus of this chapter (cf. for a thorough discussion Skutnabb-Kangas and Dunbar 2010). It is however appropriate to explore if state action or inaction may constitute a violation of human rights, including the consideration of “cultural genocide” or

“ethnocide” e.g. when languages are deliberately attacked as a means and with the intent to destroy a people.

The assimilation of a minority into a majority culture, with the concomitant likely death of the minority language, is not in itself a violation of human rights. If the choice to discard culture and language is free, without coercion and without a state policy and action designed to eliminate the minority interests, then human rights will not be deemed to be violated. However, where state policy does not protect the right to use one’s language (Articles 2, 10, 19, 26 in UN 1948c) via action or inaction, and reflects the preference and agenda of its majority, at the expense of the minority, then concerns are raised as to the protection of human dignity and identification of a minority. Such action may constitute a denial of our human right to self-expression and, as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (CCPR) determines, “in those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist”, such action threatens minorities’ “right to, in community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practice their own religion, or to use their own language” (Article 27 in UN 1966a; see also below for a discussion of the CCPR).

This chapter explores when the loss of language may constitute a violation of human rights and may be destructive of democratic principles by its negative impact on minority cultures. It will review the development of human rights law that led to the growing jurisprudence of treaty-monitoring committees and judicial bodies to determine when state action or inaction (state duties) may constitute a violation of human rights. While the extent and nature of the case law and legal analysis of the pertinent instruments will be preliminarily referenced, an in depth exploration is beyond the scope of the chapter and requires additional discussion and analysis.

2 Nationalism, Language and the Nation-State—The Political Thirst for Linguistic Purity

[...] and therefore I am always sorry when any language is lost, because languages are the pedigree of nations [...] (Boswell 1785, 273)

There is an inclination, even among those who claim to be knowledgeable, to assume that a common language is a key component and may even be an incentive for the growth of nationalism and the emergence of the “nation-state” (Orlin 2009).¹ The easily made assumption is that a common means of communication among peoples is at the heart of a desire to join peoples together into a political entity identified with a ‘nationality’. Yet scholars have shown that language, at least at the birth of nations

¹ When using the term “nation-state” I am referring to one of several classical definitions: a form of political organization under which a relatively homogeneous people inhabits a sovereign state; a state containing one as opposed to several nationalities. When using “state” I am referring to what is clearly a more “neutral” concept describing sovereignty and governance; a politically organized body of people, usually occupying a definite territory; one that is sovereign.

and states has not always been the only or primary centralizing force that has joined peoples together in a shared sense of nationalism or statehood. There are innumerable instances where at the inception of nation-states the peoples that identified with an emerging sense of nationhood spoke a variety of languages and nonetheless clearly identified with a sense of a common nationality.

As Eric J. Hobsbawm noted, after the 1830s it evolved to where it was accepted that “language [was] the soul of the nation and [...] increasingly the crucial criterion of a nationality” (Hobsbawm 1992, 95), although in an earlier era a common language was not an “essential” for the formation of nationality. In giving examples of the growth of nationalities among groups of diverse language speakers he asserted that, “[F]or language was merely one and not necessarily the primary, way of distinguishing between cultural communities” (58). He concluded that “special cases aside, there is no reason to suppose that language was more than one among several criteria by which people indicated belonging to a human collectivity” (62).

Yet national languages eventually become an essential, if not a critical identifier, for states whose existence is closely associated with a specific nationality. Consequently, imposing an official language by the state was a political device for establishing or encouraging a single “nationality”. Political agendas increasingly saw the use of minority languages regarded as inconsistent with the national ideal as a critical threat. Government policies often imposed a label of ‘non-patriotic’ among those who had mother tongues or predominately used languages different to the “official national language”.

Why then, when the nation-state begins to evolve in later centuries, does a national language take on such significance that it becomes a force for political unity and causes serious dissention among peoples, who use and identify with minority languages different to the language of a “pure nation”? Why, even in an era of human rights and the assertion of the acceptance of pluralistic diversity and democracy, have linguistic majorities, who control states, continued to assert monolingualism of the state for the enhancement of patriotic nationalism?

Hobsbawm’s summary of Benedict Anderson’s (1991) work provides some insight as to the importance of a national language in the development of nationalism. He cites several reasons why “elite literary” or “administrative languages” are tied with the growth of nationalism:

- 1 “[...] It creates a community of this intercommunicating elite which, if it coincides with or can be made to coincide with a particular territorial state area and vernacular zone, can be a sort of model or pilot project for the as yet non-existent larger intercommunicating community of the ‘nation’ ” (59);
- 2 “[...] a common language when forced into print, acquired a new fixity which made it appear more permanent and hence (by optical illusion) more ‘eternal’ than it really was” (61).

Thus the development of printing technology and the spread of the printed word relates to the development of official languages and nationalism with a trend to standardize the state language. Consequently, because of an understanding of the important political need to impose language on the collective:

- 3 “[...] the official or culture-language of rulers and elite usually came to be the actual language of modern states via public education and other administrative mechanisms” (62).

As Anderson (1991, 84) states, “[...] for essentially administrative purposes these dynasties had, at different speeds, settled on certain printed vernaculars as languages-of-state—with the ‘choice’ of language essentially a matter of unselfconsciousness, inheritance or convenience.”

In essence, the official language, now appearing in print with a new formality associated with state activity (i.e., in governmental proclamations, textbooks, etc.), became the voice of officialdom, carrying with it the cultural and legal preference of the nationalistic state. Further, as the ‘dominant’ language took on an ‘official’ status the attention it received in its authentication by lexicographic studies further precipitates its significance for legitimizing the nation-state in demanding that the language reflects governmental authenticity. Hence, it becomes apparent that the dominant language of the ruling class and development of a national identity becomes intricately tied with strong motivations for the insistence that the language of the rulers, either actually reflecting the majority or that of an elite, is imposed on the collective; including the minorities whose mother tongues differ.

Consequently, if the state is tied to a nationality, the national language assumes an important element in its nationalistic identity or purity. The use of minority languages, therefore, can be viewed as a threat to the legitimacy of the ruling entities if their language is seen not to reflect the prevailing culture of the nation-state. Given this political component to the use of language it is understandable why states seek to make a nationalistic language an ‘official language’ and why nationalistic states often impose limitations on the use of minority languages.

A state in essence possesses a monopoly of legitimate coercive power (Orlin 2009a), often desiring to express a national identity to the exclusion of minorities. It can compel, via its governing power, to assert its will on a minority by insisting on an ‘official language’ to impose its nationality on all its subjects to the exclusion of the existing minorities. The use of minority languages, especially in official or public functions as in court proceedings, education, or in the printed word, can be more than affront to the state; it may be a challenge to its very authority. The wide acceptance of a minority language can be seen as a clear threat to a perceived national identity. The ‘official language’ as a policy may be pursued by nationalists seeking national unity within the state’s jurisdiction (see also Zamyatin’s chapter [The Evolution of Language Ideology in Post-Soviet Russia](#) in this volume). The motivation is clear as to why nationalistic states see linguistic issues at the heart of a functioning nationalistic state, whose legitimacy is dependent on an identity with the majority culture and/or the culture of the ruling elite.

Simply, the use of languages can be seen as critical in a war for ‘cultural purity’. Where the state proclaims that ‘nationality’, of which the national language may be the most important element, is the legitimating quality of its existence, the use of language may be central to its legitimate rule. Hence, the death of a language can be demonstrative of the de-legitimizing of the minority culture, the conquest

of a challenging cultural identity, and consequently, the victory of the nation state, at the expense of minorities. The state, via these actions, can assume dominance with the authority to govern reflecting the ruling culture. Although there are many exceptions where the acceptance of pluralistic use of languages is part of national identity, language often becomes a principal identifier of the ruling class.²

Even the name of a state may reflect the battle for linguistic purity and identity. Evidencing this are the events at the turn of the last century where the sovereignty of 'Kosovo' was an issue resulting in internal belligerency and eventual international intervention. The Albanians' claim to 'Kosova' and the Serbian insistent use of 'Kosovo' became a significant issue in the dispute and remains critical even after the declaration of Kosovo's independence. Ironically despite the long existing linguistic and political sensitivities, the legal status of 'Kosovo' and the declaration of independence made by the Albanian-dominated government was considered by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in an Advisory Opinion, where the following question was reviewed: "Is the unilateral declaration of independence by the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government of Kosovo in accordance with international law?" (Mathias 2009).³

The protection of minority languages in light of being threatened by a nation state, whose interest is cultural dominance, therefore is critical for a human rights regime that seeks to protect the 'dignity' and identity of all the state's subjects including its linguistic minorities. Further, it can fuel serious ethnic conflicts and even result in pervasive domestic violence as well as serious inter-state disputes and even may facilitate wars, e.g. instances of communal violence in Kashmir⁴ or Tamil Nadu⁵ in India or the Balkan wars that resulted in the demise of Yugoslavia.

² In a visit to Kandy, Sri Lanka in July 2009, I witnessed testimony by human rights advocates who told how Tamil Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in refugee camps were required to sing the national anthem in Sinhalese, a language alien and unknown, or else face the degrading consequence of cleaning latrines. This practice was conducted by the authorities despite the fact that the Sri Lankan constitution once recognized Tamil as an official language. The subjugation of Tamil rights and culture, including the Tamil language, began as early as 1956 with the imposition of the Sinhala Only Act, encouraged by Sinhala mobs. Unsuccessful peaceful protests (1980s) culminated in armed conflict by 1983, which resulted in the present occupation of the north by the Sinhala dominated Sri Lankan Army (p.c. Dr. Paul Newman, Bangalore/India, 2014) On the other hand, in countries like Finland, which also constitutionally recognizes two official languages (Finnish and Swedish), the singing of the national anthem is done in both languages at the same time as an acceptance that patriotism can be equally reflected in different linguistic forms.

³ For international legal and political reasons, rooted in Security Council Resolutions (i.e. SC Res. 1244) "Kosovo" was arguably imposed as its official name on the Albanian majority out of respect for the languages of the minorities living within its jurisdiction, Serbians. For the UN Resolution calling for the Advisory Opinion see ICJ (2010, 403).

⁴ Although the problem of Kashmir is largely a political dispute, the Kashmiri language spoken by both Moslems and Hindus identifies those in the region and thus adds to the tensions and arguments relating to the pursuit of independence by those in the state who seek separation from India.

⁵ The Indian state (1950–1960) attempted to impose Hindi as an official State language which led to large scale protest resulting in violence. Many young people (60 or more) committed self-immolation. Subsequently the Congress Party lost power in Tamil Nadu and failed to regain control

3 The Development of Minority Protection as a Legal Obligation

Steiner, Alston, and Goodman (2008) noted the development of nationalism and confirm the linguistic confusion that is rife in their discussion of the term ‘nationalism’: “From concepts like ‘self-determination’ and out of a legacy of nineteenth-century liberal nationalism, that saw the development of nation-states like Germany and Italy, the principle of nationalities took on a new force. Here was another ambiguous and disputed concept—the ‘nation’ or ‘nationality’—as distinct from the political state, the nations (often identified with a ‘people’) defined in cultural or historical terms, often defined more concretely in racial, linguistic, and religious terms.”

These perceptions, as they noted, contributed at the end of World War I to the goal of “displacing the old empires with new and redrawn states” in order to “identify the nation with the state—ideally, to give each ‘nation’ its own state. Membership in a ‘nation’ would ideally be equivalent to membership in a ‘state’ consisting only or principally of that nation” (Steiner, Alston, and Goodman 2008). In this sense, the 20th century, in a continuum that can be traced to the 1848 revolutions, at the conclusion of World War I, saw the recognition of a need for self-determination of European nationalities and the realization of sovereign entities for peoples who were once minorities in larger political entities like the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian Empires (Orlin 2009a, 158).

Consistent with the recognition, expressed in the “Fourteen Points” in which US President Wilson outlined his ideas for post-war Europe, the lack of national ‘self-determination’ was a cause of the tragic war that was not to be repeated; as such the drive for the creation of new states was a policy imperative. Concomitantly, the creation of these new sovereign states, reflecting the demands of nationalistic majorities (within their new national boundaries), created the need to recognize that these nationalistic states must not abuse the religious, ethnic and linguistic minorities, which became subject to the ethnic, religious and linguistic majorities, who now dominated the policies of their own nation-states. The solution was to be “the minority-treaty system which is associated with the League of Nations experience. It is not only illustrative of European minority history, but instructive as to the inherent problems associated with minority rights” (Orlin 2009a, 158).

The Paris Peace Conferences ultimately created new states which were based on nationalist agendas, but at the same time imposed legal conditions on both old and new states to protect minorities. This applied not only to Austria, Hungary, Bulgaria and Turkey as the countries which had been defeated in World War I, but also the newly recognized states of Czechoslovakia, Greece, Poland, Romania, Yugoslavia, Albania, Lithuania, Estonia and Iraq made unilateral declarations on the protection of minority rights when joining the League of Nations. In addition, special provisions applied to the Åland Islands, Danzig, the Memel Territory and Upper Silesia (De Varennes

(Footnote 5 continued)

of the State government. The opposition movement based on the language issue was called the Dravidian movement (p.c. Dr. Paul Newman, Bangalore/India 2014).

2001, 5). Via these agreements, Europe began to see the legal institutionalization of minority protection as an international legal obligation. Earlier views that states were free to treat their subjects as they wished, immune from international pressure and concern, were challenged. The system reconfirmed the necessity of conditioning independence and the exercise of sovereignty in international legal commitments to protect the rights and interests of minorities subject to the established governments (Orlin 2009a, 158). In responding to the failures of the 19th century it was argued: “Experience has shown that this was in practice ineffective, and it was also open to the criticism that it might give to the Great Powers, either individually or in combination, a right to interfere in the internal constitutions of the States affected which could be used for political purposes. Under the new system, the guarantee was entrusted to the League of Nations.”⁶

The attention to linguistic minorities and their issues were of considerable concern during this period as reflected by the 1935 Advisory Opinion of the Permanent Court of International Justice (PCIJ) on “Minority Schools in Albania” (cf. Sohn and Buergenthal 1973, 260). Albania in its Declaration to the League of Nations (October 2, 1921) accepted that “Albanian nationals who belong to racial, religious or linguistic minorities will enjoy the same treatment and security in law and in fact as other Albanian nationals.” As part of that legal commitment Albania declared that minorities could create private institutions, including schools, “with the right to use their own language”. Contrary to its international commitment, the 1933 Albanian Constitution made primary education compulsory, reserving it as a State obligation and consequently closed “private schools of all categories” (261).

The Greek government, interested in protecting the Greek Orthodox community of Albania along with the Greek-speaking Albanian minority, took exception to this constitutional prohibition of minority linguistic and religious education. The League of Nations Council sought an advisory opinion as to the threat to minority education (Steiner et al. 2008, 100).

The PCIJ concluded, among other findings, that the Declaration was legally binding as an international treaty designed to protect “equality” for the protection of minorities and that it “is to ensure for the minority elements suitable means for the preservation of their racial peculiarities, their traditions and their national characteristics” (Steiner et al. 2008). Significantly it argued that “equality” does not mean that the same practice, namely state Albanian schools for all, i.e. those who identified themselves as Albanian as well as the minority whose mother tongue was Greek, constitutes an acceptable practice in light of Albania’s international commitment. To the contrary it concluded:

Equality in law precludes discrimination of every kind; whereas equality in fact may involve the necessity of different treatment in order to attain a result which establishes equilibrium between different situations. [...] Far from creating a privilege in favor of the minority, as the Albanian Government avers, this stipulation ensures that the majority shall not be given a privileged situation as compared with the minority. (109)

⁶ Letter addressed by Georges Clemenceau to Ignacy Jan Paderewski, June 24, 1919 (cit. Sohn and Buergenthal 1973, 216).

The PCIJ opinion, despite its age, provides clear guidance as to the importance of international law in protecting minorities and their use of their language from the onslaughts of a State determined to impose its “official”, and in this instance, “majority” language on a minority through the use of State authority. The opinion concluded that the Declaration ensured

for Albanian nationals belonging to racial, linguistic, or religious minorities the right to maintain, manage and control at their own expense or to establish future charitable, religious and social institutions, schools and other educational establishments, with the right to use their own language and to exercise their religion freely therein.

The clarity of the logic remains vibrant for contemporary examples where minority linguistic education is threatened. The abolition of minority institutions,

which alone can satisfy the special requirements of the minority groups, and their replacement by government institutions, would destroy the equality of treatment, for its effect would be to deprive the minority of the institutions appropriate to its needs, whereas the majority would continue to have them supplied in the institutions created by the State. (Sohn and Buergethal 1973, 260–267)

Unquestionably the application of this PCIJ opinion for contemporary examples, where minority languages are threatened by State action, would certainly go far in altering State policy towards the protection of endangered languages. Perhaps more meaningfully, it implies an obligation on the State to take positive steps to ensure that language survival is a concern, at minimum, if not a duty, of government. Its logic, if taken to heart by State authority, would require, or at least encourage, states to take the necessary steps to ensure the protection of language that is central to the preservation of many minority cultures.

Significantly, the approach does not necessarily destroy the protection of individual rights. To the contrary, it provides support for the protection of the individual in practical terms: “The salient point is that, if special rights are not granted to such groups to defend their cultures, the practice of their religion, and the use of their languages, they will be treated unequally and unjustly. Minority rights thus have the purpose of ensuring the effective implementation of fundamental individual rights” (Triggs 1988, 145). An important milestone in the recognition of these rights was the 1974 *Lau versus Nichols* case in the US, which acknowledged the rights of a group of Chinese students with limited proficiency in English to receive special support. In more recent times, this discussion has been taken up by coining the distinction between negative (non-discrimination) and positive (affirmative) rights (cf. e.g. Van der Stoel 1999) on a discussion of these concepts in the framework of the OSCE countries.

4 The Case for the Destruction of Language as an Example of “Cultural Genocide” or “Ethnocide”

It is an understatement to conclude that the recognition and the problems associated with minority interests remained a critical issue throughout the inter-war period. State policies towards minorities were more than irritants, but were often central to extreme discriminatory practices expressed horrifically by the Hitler policies of the Third Reich and repeated, if not always quite to the same extent, in other parts of Europe. Hitlerism, in the name of Aryan superiority, emulated by other fascistic and extreme nationalistic state actors, aimed its wrath on civilians targeting Jews, Roma, Slavs, and other “inferior” races and classes. Even though the main aim of the Nazis was not linguistic but genocidal and, in spite of the fact that many Jews had linguistically assimilated, it is part of the history of the Holocaust that the use of Yiddish as the identifying language of European Jewish culture was an affront to the German racial policies. Its attack was a critical step in the plan to eliminate Jewry. As early as April 19, 1933 “the use of Yiddish was forbidden in the cattle market in Baden” (Friedländer 1997, 1877).

The “minority” issues earlier rooted in a thirst and drive to nationalism and the creation of a nation-state now became “racial” policies with the intent to eliminate peoples seen as “inferior”. Based on political philosophies endorsed by brutal State authority, people were to be eliminated not just from the state, but from the face of the earth. The Holocaust became the epitome of the attack not just on minority interests, but on their very existence. Ultimately it led to the realization on the part of the international community to criminalize the “destruction” of “national, ethnical, racial or religious groups”, but not, directly, the category of “linguistic or cultural groups”. The agreed-upon legal definition of Genocide culminated in the “Genocide Convention” (UN 1948b).⁷

Yet such practices, when perpetrated, as Winston Churchill noted, were: “crime(s) without a name” (Kuper 1981, 12), until 1944, when Lemkin (1944), in his book *Axis rule in occupied Europe*, devised the term to describe this criminal phenomenon: “Genocide”. Although later the drafting states of the Genocide Convention did not include the attack on “culture” and excluded “language” from the targets to be considered an act of genocide, in spite of arguments offered by Lemkin, who was a strong proponent for its inclusion. Lemkin, who was at the Nuremberg trials and introduced the term “genocide” in 1945 to the prosecution team,

attached great attention to the cultural aspects of genocide. [...] Destruction of a people often began with a vicious assault on culture, a particular language, religious and cultural monuments and institutions. (Taylor 1992, 103; cf. also Schabas 2000, 38)

Yet, although the attack on a “national group” could and did include an attack on the minority language, it is clear that a policy directed at the “death of a language” in itself does not constitute the crime of genocide via the Convention’s definition (Schabas 2000, 112; Skutnabb-Kangas and Dunbar 2010).

⁷ As of 2006 there were 138 State-Parties to the Convention. See <http://untreaty.un.org>.

In the post-war Nuremberg trial proceedings, reference was made to the cultural aims of the Nazi regime with “defendants charged with participation in a ‘systematic program of genocide’ that included ‘limitation and suppression of national characteristics’ ” (Schabas 2000, 179). Two examples of this policy were noted in the trial proceedings: Artur Greiser was found guilty of a “genocidal attack on Polish culture and learning” and Amon Leopold Goeth, who while found guilty of “extermination of Jews”, was also cited for the “destruction of the cultural life of these nations” (cf. UNWCC 1949b, 7–9; 1949a, 112).

The Court in Goeth made reference to the Nuremberg trials, and while not charging the accused with genocide, nonetheless made references to Lemkin’s central arguments and used the term.

The word ‘genocide’ is a new term coined by Professor Lemkin to denote a new conception, namely, the destruction of a nation or of an ethnic group. [...] It is intended to signify also a co-ordinated plan of different actions aiming at the destruction of the essential foundations of the life of national groups, with the aim of annihilating the groups themselves. The objectives of such a plan would be the disintegration of the political and social institutions of culture, language, national feelings, religion, and economic existence of national groups, the destruction of personal security, liberty, health, dignity, and even the lives of the individuals belonging to such groups. (UNWCC 1949b, 7–8)

Lemkin’s earliest argument, evincing the importance of the attack on language for the perpetration of genocide, was clear. As he noted in *Axis rule in occupied Europe*, the Nazi attack on language was not limited to Yiddish and Hebrew. He stated that in addition to political, social economic, biological, physical, religious and moral policies designed to bring about the Nazi aims, there was a concerted attack on “culture” including, and prominently so, language:

The techniques of genocide, which the German occupant has developed in the various occupied countries, represent a concentrated and coordinated attack upon all elements of nationhood [...]. In the incorporated areas the local population is forbidden to use its own language; [...] the language of instruction in all Luxembourg schools was made exclusively German; the French language was not permitted to be taught in primary schools

and German as the sole language was required in all aspects of life (Lemkin 1944, 440).⁸

Poignantly, he noted the Nazi destruction of the library of the Jewish Theological Seminary in Lublin, Poland (1939) and quoted the German account:

For us it was a matter of special pride to destroy the Talmudic Academy which was known as the greatest in Poland. [...] We threw out of the building the great Talmudic library, and carted it to the market. Then we set fire to the books. The fire lasted for twenty hours. The Jews of Lublin were assembled around and cried bitterly. Their cries almost silenced us. Then we summoned the military band and the joyful shouts of soldiers silenced the sound of Jewish cries. (82–85)

⁸ See also Genocide Legislation Order Concerning the Use of the German Language in Luxembourg, August 6, 1940.

Despite the early judicial developments following the war and Lemkin's evidence, cultural genocide was not to be included within the actual Genocide Convention definition of the crime. As Schabas noted, the Secretariat draft of the Convention did include reference to "cultural manifestations" including "the prohibition of the use of national language even in private intercourse; the systematic destruction of books printed in the national language or of religious works or prohibition of new publications" (Schabas 2000, 179). This formulation ultimately was attacked by members of the staff and State representatives, which resulted in its exclusion from the actual Convention.

Lemkin throughout remained its great advocate, insisting "that a racial, national or religious group cannot continue to exist unless it preserves its spiritual and moral unity" (Lemkin 1944, 82–85). Kiernan (2007, 10) wrote that "[Lemkin] thought that genocide should be understood to include the attempted destruction not only of ethnic and religious groups but of political ones and that the term should also encompass systematic cultural destruction." The United States and France supported the experts who were opposed to the inclusion of cultural genocide as part of the Genocide Convention, with the USSR taking a different position arguing that "national cultural genocide", that prohibited the use of a national tongue in both private and public life, along with similar destructive practices, should be condemned by the Convention (Schabas 2000, 179–180).

The UN's Sixth Committee debate on the issue is informative and gives light as to why "cultural genocide" was and remains controversial. For example Sweden, among other states, who objected to its inclusion in the Convention, expressed considerable concern of being accused of genocidal practices in its conversion of the Lapps (as Sámi people where called at the time) to Christianity. Ultimately the Sixth Committee decided to exclude "cultural genocide" from the Convention, thereby eliminating the possibility of an accusation of cultural genocide or as many academics name it "ethnocide", unless cultural genocide is associated with the brutal elimination, the "'destruction', of a national, ethnical, racial, or religious group" (184–185).⁹ Schabas concludes, by citing the International Law Commission: "As clearly shown by the preparatory work for the Convention, the destruction in question is the material destruction of a group either by physical or biological means, not the destruction of the national, linguistic, religious, cultural or other identity of a particular group" (187).¹⁰ However, as Skutnabb-Kangas and Dunbar (2010) argue, only one of the definitions of genocide relates directly to the physical destruction of a group.

The decision of the Trial Chamber (TC) of the International Criminal Tribunal for Yugoslavia (ICTY), Kristić, confirms this view:

Hence, an enterprise attacking only the cultural or sociological characteristics of a human group in order to annihilate these elements which gives to that group its own identity distinct from the rest of the community would not fall under the definition of genocide. The Trial

⁹ See UN Doc. A/C.6/SR.83 "The National Archive of Canada reveals that 'cultural genocide' was the single most important issue for the Canadian government." The government was directed to eliminate it from the Convention.

¹⁰ Report of the International Law Commission May 6–July 26, 1996.

Chamber however points out that where there is physical or biological destruction there are often simultaneous attacks on the cultural and religious property and symbols of the targeted group as well as attacks which legitimately can be considered as evidence of an intent to physically destroy the group [...]. (Sec. 580, cit. Cassese 2008, 136)

Yet, despite the clarity of this position, it is hard to dismiss an argument for the condemnation of governments, when their policies are destructive of a language with the intent to limit or impact the identity of a minority. While conceding such practice may not constitute the crime of genocide, it certainly can be argued that it is a significant step in the destruction of a culture and may ultimately lead to a physical attack on the minority or be a part of that attack. As it will be discussed below, such policy can constitute a violation of international obligations to protect human rights. It must be understood that practices and policies that endanger language are tantamount, in many instances, to an attack on a critical identifying component of a minority culture. As two commentators recently noted:

The drafters of the Genocide Convention intentionally excluded political, social, linguistic, economic and other groups from the list of protected groups. All subsequent definitions of genocide have mirrored this approach. As a result, many 20th century episodes of mass killing [...] do not cleanly satisfy the elements of the crime of genocide as they are defined by the Convention. (Slye and Van Schaack 2009, 224)

The authors further note that the crimes they cite could be viewed as crimes against humanity or possibly war crimes.

Accordingly there is a perceived need for the recognition of “ethnocide”, not only among academics, but among those who argue for its inclusion in international instruments and an eventual determination that it constitutes a violation of international law (Robinson and Paten 2008, 504). The UNESCO “Declaration of San Jose” (UNESCO 1981) reflects the recognition and need to consider “cultural genocide”, i.e. “ethnocide”, a violation of international law: “We declare that ethnocide, that is, cultural genocide, is a violation of international law equivalent to genocide.” The Declaration in defining ethnocide “means that an ethnic group is denied the right to enjoy, develop and transmit its own culture and its own language, whether individually or collectively. This involves an extreme form of massive violation of human rights”.

If one considers the policies of Australia in their treatment of indigenous people, or the U.S. and Canadian history of the removal of Native American children to boarding schools, as part of their intent to force assimilation by having children abandon their mother tongues in favor of English, it is difficult not to argue that there is a link between such practice and the accusations of genocidal policies (cf., e.g. Robinson and Paten 2008, 505–506).

5 The Development of Human Rights Law as a Means of Protecting Minority Interests—From the Charter of the United Nations to the Creation of Treaty Monitoring Bodies

While cultural genocide remains a problematic concept in criminalizing the practice of language or cultural destruction (the denial “to enjoy, develop and transmit one’s own culture and one’s own language”), it does not mean that the practice is legally permissible. To the contrary, international human rights law addresses the need to hold States accountable for their policies and practices towards respecting the linguistic rights of minorities.

5.1 *Charter of the United Nations*

In the history of international law the UN Charter of 1945 (UN 1945) was a legal breakthrough in elevating human rights from a political or ideological theory to a treaty obligation. By including human rights not only within the second sentence of the preamble¹¹ but, making it a purpose of the organization¹² and then clarifying the commitment by having “all Members pledge themselves to take joint and separate action in co-operation with the Organization for the achievement of the purposes set forth in Article 55” (Article 56), the Charter did much in beginning to elevate the individual to a subject of protection of international law. The very fact that “language” was included as a classification along with race, sex and religion in Article 55, as deserving of the State-Parties’ “promotion” and “observance”, made it clear that states were to be protective of the respect of language and that policies directed at the destruction of language would not be consistent with their UN obligations.

5.2 *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) (UN 1948c), unquestionably the wellspring of the more developed, more concrete and more descriptive human

¹¹ “determined [...] to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women”.

¹² Article 1, “The purposes of the United Nations are: “in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion”; Article 55: “the United Nations shall promote (c) universal respect for, and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, *language* or religion” (emphasis added).

rights treaties that it inspired, provides some insight into the obligations towards minority and language protection in Articles 55 and 56.¹³

Despite the UN Charter Article 55's reference to an equal application of rights, the UDHR, as a "common understanding of human rights", does not actually use the term "minority rights" although its protection of "equal dignity and rights" for "all human beings", (Article 1), and anti-discrimination clause(s) (Articles 2, 7) does provide wording that protects minorities and the use of their language. Morsink (1999, 331) wrote: "This Article 2 states in a negative way what Article 1 states positively. It and Article 7 are the two textual anchors for the nondiscrimination theme that runs throughout the document. The list of items in this article is crucial for the protection of members of the groups whose minority status is defined by one of terms on the list."

According to the Article 2, "[e]veryone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, *national* or social *origin*, property, birth or other status" (emphasis added). This article provides minority protection by prohibiting discrimination against the classes referred to, which can easily be seen to include linguistic and national minorities along with its "other" classifications (Orlin 2009a, 160–161). Nonetheless, it is construed as a right belonging to the individual members of the minority, and not the collective that identifies itself as a minority deserving of protection.

"National [...] origin", as discussed by Johannes Morsink's work on the *Origins, Drafting & Intent of the Universal Declaration* (1999), provides overwhelming argumentation that minorities are included as a protected *classification*; "national origin" was first proposed by Vladimir Borisov, the Soviet expert, on the Sub-Commission. It links "it to 'race' and 'color' and strengthens the protection of the rights of members of ethnic and cultural groups" (Morsink 1999, 103–104).

Further, the inclusion in Article 2 of "language", "race" and "color" makes the prohibition of discrimination inclusive of minorities: "All four items [...] protect members of ethnic, *cultural and linguistic minority groups* from being discriminated against with respect to any of the rights in the Declaration. Such minority members cannot be kept from participating in the government of their countries (Article 21); they have just as much right to food, clothing, housing and medical care (Article 25) as members of majority groups; they have the right to work (Article 23) and cannot be barred from holding public office (Article 21(2)); they have the same right to freedom of movement within and between countries (Articles 13 and 14); they also have the same right to nationality (Article 15) and the protection that comes with that status. More specifically, *the right not to be discriminated against on the basis of language applies to 'all the rights and freedoms in this Declaration'*" (UN 1948c, emphasis added).

¹³ For the reader not familiar with international human rights law, the UDHR is a recommendation of the General Assembly, which is not a legally binding instrument, and was intended to be "a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations". Although it is not a treaty, it does add meaning to the Articles 55 and 56 pledge of the Charter and its often cited articles are seen as reflective of international customary law, as well as being the inspiration for subsequently drafted human rights treaties which do bind state parties.

Significantly, the UDHR makes no specific requirement to take positive steps to protect minorities and their languages except arguably, for the right to education. Article 26, and specifically paragraph (3) states: “Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children”, but without making any specific reference to language preference. It has been made explicit that this article is not applicable to language, as for instance in the Belgian Linguistic cases where education takes place according to a strict territorial separation of the language areas (with a few exceptions at the language border where minority education is provided).¹⁴

At the time of the drafting of the Declaration, the Danish delegation presented to the Third Committee an amendment stating that members of minority groups had the right to “establish their own schools and receive teaching in the language of their choice.” Rene Cassin, a Nobel prize winner for his contribution to the UDHR, stated in response to this suggestion that Article 2 provided a secure basis to protect minorities without the need for this additional alteration (Morsink 1999, 105). Nonetheless, we can argue that, based on the considerable debate surrounding the right to education and the concerns for minorities, the Declaration provides a basis to argue that there is an obligation to accommodate minority needs, especially for the teaching in minority languages as part of the State’s educational policy. Similarly, the UDHR’s Article 18 gives the right to minorities to use their own language in religious activities.

However, just as the Genocide Convention (adopted on December 9, 1948, a day before the adoption of the UDHR) omitted from its protection “cultural genocide”, i.e. “ethnocide”, the Declaration’s construction does not provide clear protection of linguistic rights. This lacuna, of not including a more concrete minority protection article in the Declaration, (which would have specifically protected minority languages as a right from abusive State actions and policies), was not accidental nor without considerable controversy.

John Humphries, as a member of the Secretariat and as a principal drafter of the early drafts of the UDHR, relying on suggestions by Hersch Lauterpacht, a member of the UN International Law Commission, was mindful of the earlier history of minority rights. In his report to the first session of the Commission, when it created the Sub-Commission for the Prevention of Discrimination and the Protection of Minorities, he provided a definition for minorities: “groups within a country that differ from the dominant group in their *culture*, religion or *language* and which usually desire to maintain and foster their *culture*, *linguistic* and religious identity” (emphasis added). Importantly, for future interpretation he noted that “protection of minorities includes both protection from discrimination and protection against assimilation.” Lauterpacht, quoted by Humphries, was very mindful of the then-recent past: “The abandonment of the present (League of Nations) system of protection of minorities, without an alternative and compensating international arrangement, would mean a disservice to the minorities, to the cause of international protection of human rights and international peace and progress” (cit. by Morsink 1999, 271).

¹⁴ No. 1 (1967), Series A; No. 5 (1979–1980) 1 EHRR 241; No. 2 (1968), Series A; No. 6 (1979–1980) 1 EHRR 25.

Humphries placed a draft article before the delegates for consideration to specifically protect minorities, but ultimately even with considerable support, (Belgium, USSR, Lebanon, Yugoslavia, Poland, and China) it failed to be included in the Declaration. The logic of Eleanor Roosevelt, the Commission Chair, prevailed that “provisions relating to rights of minorities had no place in a declaration of human rights” (UN 1948a), labeling minorities as essentially a “European problem”.

Consistent with this logic, the Indian delegate, Mehta, argued that a minority clause was “unnecessary because members of minority groups were protected as human beings by other articles of the Declaration” (Sect. 7.4). Thus the individual right to language was to be protected, with no direct attention given to the rights of a collective that identified themselves as a minority by a common language.

Although “language” and “national origin” were not ignored, its protection was left as an “individual right” and not a collective one, without any reference to the “community” as identified by a language. Its clearer and more precise and extensive protection would be left to the development of subsequently drafted human rights instruments and their accompanying protective mechanisms.

5.3 *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*

Unlike the UDHR, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (CCPR) (UN 1966a), a treaty obligation with legal implications, provides clearer and more pervasive protections for minorities via its Article 27. It arguably reflects a different approach from the UDHR’s recommendation for minority protection:

In those States in which ethnic, religious or *linguistic* minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right, *in community with the other members of their group*, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practice their own religion, or to use their own *language* (UN 1966a, emphasis added).

Thus, we see that the CCPR treaty language goes further than the UDHR in providing a stronger and more positive State commitment to protect minority linguistic interests; the right “to enjoy their own culture [...] to use their own language” (Nowak 1993, 481). The specific reference to “linguistic minorities” provides a recognition of the existence of minorities based on language. Further, although the right remains centered on persons, it accompanies it with the recognition of identifying phrases; “belonging to such minorities” and “in community with the other members of the group”.

The argument can be asserted that the objections raised by the critics of the UDHR construction received some recognition in this treaty obligation enlarging minority protection beyond the discrimination clause which still included “without distinction of any kind, such as [...] language [...] national and social origin” (Article 2(1)).

Yet, as has been made clear by legal commentators, CCPR Article 27’s language is “cautious” and remains vague, requiring interpretation as to its meaning and breadth (485).

The importance of the inclusion of “community” in Article 27, as noted by Suksi (2008), is clear: “Community clearly adds on a collective dimension to the individual rights established in the other articles.” He goes further, writing that “Article 27 is phrased as a negative duty for the state to refrain from attempts of public authorities or private or third parties to prevent joint activities of the minority community. [...] They would have something to do with enjoying a minority culture, expressing and practicing a minority religion and using a minority language.” (158–159)

Arguably, we can see the difficulty in asserting that state-parties to the CCPR have a positive obligation to protect and promote threatened minority languages reliant on Article 27. Nonetheless, it may be appropriate to question when a state has gone to such an extent as to support majority languages to the disadvantage of minority languages as to conclude that its policies are tantamount to preventing the use of the threatened language. Furthermore, could such a policy be perceived as a form of impermissible discrimination (Article 2)?

The CCPR’s protection for minority languages can also be inferred from the application of the freedom of conscience and religion (Article 18), the freedom of expression (Article 19) and association (Article 22) (Hannikainen 2007). Hence, language protection may find protection in the interpretation of other substantive rights critical for cultural and national identification.

Among the possibilities is the “right of self-determination”, found in Article 1, common to both the CCPR and the International Covenant on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights (CSECR, see also below): “All peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development” (UN 1966b).

As discussed earlier, there may be a critical legal distinction between whether a group views itself, or is viewed as, either a “people” or a “minority”. Since neither “people” nor “minority” is concretely defined, it presents interpretive problems in extending the protection of the CCPR and other human rights instruments that require a similar interpretation. Nonetheless, it is of significance whether a group as a “people” may assert a right to self-determination proclaimed by Article 1 or whether they claim the rights of a “minority” found in Article 27. As Nowak (1993, 487) argues: “[t]he term ‘minority’ is extremely vague, is not defined by Article 27 [...] and is employed by governments in quite different manners”.

The right to self-determination does not necessarily mean that a group has the right to establish a state as the sole means of realizing its identity. However, if a right to self-determination is realized via the creation of a state reflecting a linguistic group, it could change the status of the former linguistic minority. The new linguistic majority within the “new” governing state authority can now assert their linguistic right reflective of their perceived cultural right, not as a minority, but as the ruling majority.

This of course may cause new minority rights issues for those remaining in a new governing authority, who wish to assert their minority linguistic rights differently than the majority linguistic group. Significantly, the right of the “new minority” (a linguistic group numerically smaller than the linguistic majority who asserts their claim to a language as representative of their culture of nationality) to use its

language may need protection. Just as in the earlier era of the League of Nations' system of minority protection and the recognition of new national states, the right of self-determination does not necessarily mean the end of the issues surrounding minority linguistic rights. When, as in the examples discussed earlier, Albania asserted its right of self-determination, the Greek minority sought protection from the Albanian State; or when Finland claimed its independence, there remained the need for a linguistic settlement for the Åland Islands protecting a linguistic minority, i.e. Swedish-speaking Finns, but who represented a majority in the Åland Islands, yet were a numerically smaller number compared to the Finnish speakers on the mainland.

This distinction takes on a significant importance as to how to treat the protection of "indigenous peoples", when they constitute a minority in a state and claim protection as a "minority" (Scheinin 2000, 160–161). Here, the General Comments (No. 23) of the UN Human Rights Committee (HRC),¹⁵ along with its case law, provide insight as to the meaning of "peoples" and when they may assert "minority protection" as a numerically inferior group, or as an "ethnic" or as a "linguistic" minority under Article 27. Cases like *Lovelace vs. Canada*, *Lubicon Lake Band vs. Canada*, and *Kitok vs. Sweden* (cited in Nowak 1993, 494),¹⁶ are illustrative of the fact that the HRC has used Article 27, as in the case of Sámi rights, to protect the culture of an indigenous people as a minority threatened by the State's majority culture.

5.4 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

A short reference to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR), a convention that is an integral part of the UN International Bill of Rights, is necessary in this review of the protection of culture and language. In addition to its inclusion of the right to self-determination, Article 2 (discussed above), its Article 15 protects the right "to take part in cultural life." This article could be seen to extend the protection of minority cultures including their language. Yet, it must be noted that at the time of its drafting, it was "considered to refer to the dominant national culture: arguments for a reference to the cultural life of communities other than the national were rejected." (Holt 2007, 218)

As Sally Holt notes though, the ESCR Committee (1990), has altered the position, requiring that State-Parties must report periodically on minorities and indigenous

¹⁵ Human Rights Committee, General Comment No. 23: The rights of minorities (Article 27):08/04/94. CCPR/C/21/RRev.1/Add.5 (paragraph 3.1): "The Covenant draws a distinction between the right of self-determination and the rights protected under Article 27. The former is expressed to be a right belonging to peoples and is dealt with in a separate part (Part I) of the Covenant. Self-determination is not a right cognizable under the Optional Protocol. Article 27, on the other hand, relates to rights conferred on individuals as such and is included like the articles relating to other personal rights conferred on individuals, in Part III of the Covenant".

¹⁶ Human Rights Committee cases No. 24/1977, No. 167/1984, No. 197/1985.

people and their cultural rights. Thus we see development towards a recognition of the importance of minority cultures further confirmed as reflected in Article 29(1) of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) where education “must develop respect for the Child’s own identity as well as for the national values of the country” (Holt 2007).

5.5 Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities (1992)

Emphasizing that the constant promotion and realization of the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities, as an integral part of the development of society as a whole and within a democratic framework based on the rule of law, would contribute to the strengthening of friendship and cooperation among peoples and States. (Preamble, Paragraph 6)

This non-binding Declaration, adopted without a vote by the General Assembly,¹⁷ does provide recognition of the link between linguistic rights of minorities, the rule of law and the normative requirements of democracy. Its provisions “1. encourage conditions for promotion of that identity” and seek that “2. States adopt appropriate legislation and other measures to achieve those ends” (Article 1), suggesting that states have a positive duty to have proactive policies to protect the languages of linguistic minorities before they disappear. In addition, it recognizes that “persons belonging to minorities may exercise their rights individually as well as in community with other members of their group, without discrimination”, thus arguably protecting the individual and the community he/she identifies with, including the use of language, and bridging the protection of personal and collective rights.

Its Article 4(2) goes further in having states “take measures to create favorable conditions to enable persons belonging to minorities to express their characteristics and to develop their culture, language, religion, traditions and customs”. Significantly, it argues for a State to take (3) “appropriate measures so that, wherever possible, persons belonging to minorities may have adequate opportunities to learn their mother tongue or to have instruction in their mother tongue.” If states accept and take the Declaration to heart, it would provide concrete steps to protect threatened languages, since it recommends that states (4) “take measure in the field of education in order to encourage knowledge of the history, traditions, language and culture of minorities”.

While the Declaration calls for the protection of minority rights including their languages, it does not attack the fundamental sovereign rights of states and adequately balances minority rights and the State’s interest in “territorial integrity and political independence” (Thompson 2001, 121). Yet it does provide normative authority to argue that states have a positive obligation to protect the languages of their linguistic minorities. At minimum, the Declaration, albeit not legally binding, as a UN-approved instrument, reflects a consensus among member states and gives sup-

¹⁷ GA Resolution 47/135, December 18, 1992.

port to those who assert that states have an obligation to take proactive measures to ensure the use of minority languages, language education and other policies taken to protect the demise of a minority language.¹⁸

6 The Protection Afforded via the European System for the Protection of Human Rights

The global efforts and the human rights instruments they rely on, i.e. the United Nations bodies, the UN Declarations, the multiple human rights treaties, and the treaty bodies that monitor State-Party adherence to human rights norms, are by no means the only instruments and mechanisms that attempt to protect the linguistic rights of minorities. The creation of regional approaches to human rights has added considerable protection beyond the UN norms and machinery. Many assert that the regional systems provide more concrete and broader protection than the UN ones.

Unquestionably the development of a European system of human rights, initiated by the Council of Europe, coupled with the broad ratification of the European Convention of Human Rights¹⁹ and the development of a continent-wide judicial system culminating in an extensive jurisprudence, is viewed as an important, if not a critical effort to protect human rights and dignity among its members (Brownlie and Godwin-Gill 2006, 610). Its activities serve not only as a protector of human rights for Europeans, but as a beacon of the understanding and application of human rights norms in a contentious context that governments, IGOs, human rights activists and jurists look to for examples around the world.

While the European Court cases are extensive and often relate to linguistic rights in association with the other rights protected by the Convention the protection extends to individuals and not groups. “[The European Convention] contains no minority rights provision akin to Article 27 (CPPR). Therefore, there is no direct way for members of minority groups to claim minority rights at the Court” (Gilbert 2002, 737).

Nonetheless, the protection of the individual has provided opportunities to deal with language issues in interpreting the various protections proclaimed by the Convention; e.g. Article 4–2, Article 6–3(a)—when arrested or detained the right to “be informed promptly in a language which he understands”; Article 6–3(e)—the right to have free assistance of a translator in court; Article 8—the right to a private and family life; Article 9—Freedom of thought, conscience and religion; Article

¹⁸ Even in states that officially recognize two official languages the Declaration can provide meaningful guidance for States in their language policies and practices. For example, Israel, which recognizes Arabic as an official language, has been criticized for the lack of road signs in Arabic.

¹⁹ See Council of Europe Treaty Series, ETS 001 to 193 inclusive and ETS No. 194 and following. The Convention was signed in Rome 1950 and entered into force on September 3, 1953.

10—Freedom of expression; Article 11—Freedom of Assembly and association; Article 14—Prohibition of discrimination. Thus considerable case law has been promulgated protecting minority rights including the use of language.²⁰

Unfortunately, the ECHR decisions do not necessarily extend the protection of linguistic rights for minorities under the Convention, as would be necessary to properly protect minority languages and cultures. Take, for example, the *Case Relating to Certain Aspects of the Laws on the Use of Languages in Education in Belgium* (1 Eur. Ct. Hum. Rts. 1968). In the decision, the Court held in interpreting Article 2 of Protocol 1, that it “does not require of States that they should, in the sphere of education or teaching, respect parents’ linguistic preferences, but only their ‘religious’ and ‘philosophical’ convictions.”²¹ There is a certain paradox to this interpretation in light of the broad European acceptance of the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education (December 14, 1960, entry into force 1962). As of 2010, of the 97 State-Parties to the UNESCO Convention, sixteen European states have ratified it with others giving notice of acceptance or indicating their accession to the treaty’s commitments.²² Its Article 5(1), unlike the ECHR requirement, provides a greater consideration for the duty to protect minority languages. The relevant part reads:

The States Parties to this Convention agree that: [...] (c). It is essential to recognize the right of members of national minorities to carry on their own educational activities, including the maintenance of schools and, depending on the educational policy of each State, the use of *the teaching of their own language*, provided however:

- i That this right is not exercised in a manner which prevents the members of these minorities from understanding the culture and language of the community as a whole and from participating in its activities, or which prejudices national sovereignty;
- ii That the standard of education is not lower than the general standard laid down or approved by the competent authorities; and
- iii That attendance at such schools is optional. [...] (emphasis added)

A complete review of the European case law goes beyond the scope of this chapter. However, a close review of the case law, past, present and future will hopefully reveal that the continued interpretation of the Convention may result in judicial decisions that will impact the protection of minorities and the use of their languages.

²⁰ Id. Gilbert reviews the ECHR’s minority case law up until 2006. Included is the discussion of *Ekin versus France* (39288/98, January 18, 2000 & July 17, 2001), where an 1881 French law was held to be in violation of Article 10. The Law was used to prohibit a book on the history of the Basques that was published in the Basque language. See the case law of the ECHR at: <http://www.coe.int> and <http://conventions.coe.int>.

²¹ See a discussion of *Lagerblom vs. Sweden*, 26891/95, 2000) dealing with the right to counsel of a Finnish speaker in a Swedish Court.

²² See UNESCO’s webpage. The full text is available on the above website.

The European Court of Human Rights will remain an important forum for the protection of minority languages from the assault of those who see the use and perpetuation of those languages as a challenge to majority domination of culture.

6.1 European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (1992)

Europe was not only to rely on the European Convention to protect linguistic rights, but soon recognized the need for additional efforts and drafted more protective human rights instruments. Accordingly, the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (1992) is an attempt, consistent with the European experience, to further protect and promote the use of these minority languages in private and public life.²³

Reflective of its aim, and as stated in its Preamble, language is not only historically important for its culture, but is critical for Europe's current aim to ensure the norms of democracy and pluralism among its member states:

- 2 Considering that the protection of the historical regional or minority languages of Europe, some of which are in danger of eventual extinction, contributes to the maintenance and development of Europe's cultural wealth and traditions.
- 6 Realising that the protection and promotion of regional or minority languages in the different countries and regions of Europe represent an important contribution to the building of a Europe based on the principles of democracy and cultural diversity within the framework of national sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The Charter's creative provisions allow parties to choose at minimum thirty five undertakings (from Part III, with certain requirements limiting the choice). The Charter "provides for a dynamic process" and is not an end in itself (Trifunovska 2001, 150)

It requires a reporting system which periodically provides an opportunity for the public and State parties to review the progress and respect among the ratifying states as to the protection of minority and regional languages. The Charter, to some extent, reflects that the protection of regional and minority languages continues as a contentious concern. Hopefully its machinery will be more successful than earlier efforts as States are now required to report periodically their progress in protecting these languages.

Via its reporting system, overseen by its Committee of Experts (Article 17), we see a conscientious international effort to protect the languages which have been historically a central concern of European minorities. Once again, the experience of the past and the complexities of the present have encouraged, via the rule of law expressed in a treaty, to protect a core element of minority culture: the traditional languages that have been challenged by majority cultures (Orlin 2009a, 168).

²³ European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, 1992, opened for signature on November 5, 1992 and entered into force on March 1, 1998, ETS No. 148.

6.2 *European Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, 1995*

Considering that a pluralistic and genuinely democratic society should not only respect the ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identity of each person belonging to national minorities, but also create appropriate conditions enabling them to express, preserve and develop this identity. (Preamble, Paragraph 6)

The European Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (1995) is an attempt to protect minorities via an international legal commitment.²⁴ Its intention is to protect minorities from majorities who harbor destructive motives, perhaps rooted in nationalism tied to a language or other ethnocentric view of their language and culture. It “is the first legally binding multilateral document completely devoted to the protection of national minorities” (Trifunovska 2001, 151). Like the Language Charter, it is open to non-members of the Council of Europe States (Article 27). The fact that the Convention doesn’t have a common definition for a “minority” and that the European ratification allows for its ratifiers to self-define the meaning of minority, is a source of criticism of the treaty; adding to the confusion as to a legal definition of “minority”. The ratification of the Convention is rife with reservations that self-define which minorities are to be protected by State-Parties. This very process is ample evidence for the continued difficulty of reaching a single definition of the legal meaning of a minority. Yet, this creative effort to protect European minorities, via an international agreement, should be seen as another and important step in the evolution of human rights law and the protection of minority interests and rights. What is important is that the effort continues with incremental steps taken to further protect minorities and their culture. We must look to the past, to understand successes and failures, to find more effective ways to protect minorities. What is also significant is that we do this within the paradigm of human rights law and not the jingoistic rhetoric of nationalism or ethnocentrism. The debate and the discussions must be framed by the commitment to law and not just by the political rhetoric of majority and minority agendas.

Significantly included in the Convention’s protection of minorities are specific references to the protection of language. Among them is the need for the Parties (to) undertake to recognize that every person belonging to a national minority has the right to:

- Art. 10
 - 1 to use freely and without interference his or her minority language, in private and public, orally and in writing.
 - 2 In areas inhabited by persons belonging to national minorities, traditionally or in substantial numbers to use minority language for administrative purposes.
 - 3 to be informed in a minority language when arrested, to defend oneself and have a right to an interpreter;

²⁴ Opened for signature on February 1, 1995 and entered into force February 1, 1998; ETS No. 157.

- Art. 14

- 1 to learn his or her minority language;
- 2 the recognition of the need to have education “adequate opportunities for being taught the minority language or for receiving instruction in this language;²⁵
- 3 without prejudice to the learning of the official language.”

Article 11 includes the right to use names in the minority language, the right to display signs in that language and the recognition, in areas traditionally inhabited in substantial numbers by minorities, to use traditional names and street signs in the minority language.²⁶

In light of the questions posed as to when a State, via its linguistic policies may violate human rights²⁷, the Convention adds an important prohibition that provides some additional understanding of a State’s obligation to not have an enforced assimilation policy: Article 5(2) “Without prejudice to measures taken in pursuance of their general integration policy, the Parties shall refrain from policies or practices aimed at assimilation of persons belonging to national minorities against their will and shall protect these persons from any action aimed at such assimilation”.

While the ambiguity of the prohibition to forced assimilation, tied to legitimate “integration policies”, may allow for considerable State flexibility in dealing with national minorities, the inclusion of a directive “to refrain from policies” inclined towards assimilation against the will of minority measures provides some clarity that “forced assimilation” is contrary to the human rights norms protected by the Convention. Its implications for language policy may be considerable. Where States take action to discourage use of a minority language or ignore the other requirements of the Convention regarding minority languages, then it may be concluded that its language policies are contrary to their international commitment. This provision

²⁵ It must be noted that the Article requires that language education be “[...] in areas inhabited by persons belonging to national minorities traditionally or in substantial numbers, if there is sufficient demand [...] as far as possible and within the framework of their education systems [...]” Hence minority language education is predicated on the above requirements and is therefore not universally respected. If an individual seeks minority language education and does not live in an area where there is demand by substantial numbers or where it is not a traditional language in the area the treaty could not be relied on.

²⁶ The weakness of the Convention is also exemplified e.g. by the fact that Latvia decided explicitly that it would ratify the Convention but *not* apply Articles 10 and 11. The Statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia reads: “Upon ratifying the Convention, the Saeima also passed two declarations, which state that Latvia considers as binding Part 2 of Article 10 and Part 3 of Article 11 of the Convention regulating specific spheres of the use of national minority languages, provided they do not contradict the Satversme (Constitution of Latvia) and other laws and regulations effective in the Republic of Latvia that define the use of official language.” (source: <http://www.mfa.gov.lv/en/policy/4641/4642/4649/framework>, emphasis added).

²⁷ “[...] where State policy does not protect the right ‘[...] to use their own language [...]’ via action or inaction, and reflects the preference of its majority at the expense of the minority, then concerns are raised as to the protection of human dignity and identification of a minority. Such action may constitute a denial of our human right to self-expression and threaten minorities from their “right to, in community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, [...]” (CCPR, Article 27) (Supra).

does provide some insight as to when language policy is contrary to human rights law and could be constructively used to deter State policies aimed at the destruction of minority languages. It provides guidance as to what steps need to be taken to prevent the demise of a minority language.

6.3 The Helsinki Accords and the subsequent Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Documents

The Helsinki Accords and subsequent Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) documents including the Document of the Copenhagen Meeting from 1990, the Charter of Paris for a New Europe 1990, the Document of the Moscow Meeting 1991 etc., were drafted towards the end of the Cold War, when democracy, pluralism and the rule of law were declared normative principles for all Europe and OSCE members (cf. Buergethal et al. 2002, 205–206). These legally non-binding but political undertakings have arguably established a governmental consensus for OSCE members for the protection of minorities.

The Document of the Copenhagen Meeting (1990), often considered a “European Charter of Minorities” (Benoît-Rohme 1995, 25), reflects in its provisions an apparent political consensus, (no doubt a great contribution in the development of minority rights,) but it must be seen as just another step in the development of an effective process for the protection of minority interests and rights. It makes specific reference to the protection of minority languages:

- 33 The participating States will protect the ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identity of national minorities on their territory and create conditions for the promotion of that identity [...]
- 34 The participating States will endeavor to ensure that persons belonging to national minorities, notwithstanding the need to learn the official language or languages of the State concerned, have adequate opportunities for instruction of their mother tongue or in their mother tongue, as well as, wherever possible and necessary, for its use before public authorities, in conformity with applicable national legislation [...]

Similarly, while the Charter of Paris in 1990 may have called for States to “foster the rich contribution of national minorities to the life of our societies”, clearly minority issues, including language interests, remained and still remain a concern for the future of a human rights culture. Reflective of these issues, the OSCE, in the wake of minority problems associated with the breakup of the former Yugoslavia in 1992, established the High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM) as an organizational effort to prevent future conflicts that may be rooted in minority disputes (Orlin 2009a).

By 1996 the OSCE, recognizing that “minority education rights is a sensitive issue” and, noting “the delicate nature of this issue (as well as) [...] the somewhat vague and general nature of the standards contained in the various international human rights instruments”, saw the need for “the elaboration of a series of recommendations”. The Hague Recommendations Regarding the Education Rights of National

Minorities were drafted in an “[...] attempt to clarify in relatively straight-forward language the content of minority education rights generally applicable in the situations in which the HCNM is involved. The Recommendations are divided into eight sub-headings, which respond to the educational issues that arise in practice.” These Recommendations provide considerable guidance for issues that surround minority education including the spirit of international instruments, measures and resources, decentralization and participation, public and private institutions, minority education at primary and secondary levels, minority education in vocational schools and at the tertiary level and curriculum development. Hopefully, as the Recommendations state, they “may contribute to creating a better understanding of, and approach to issues of minority education rights” for OSCE states.²⁸ These “standards”, albeit dependent on other international instruments, may provide an incentive and be a practical tool in actualizing the protection of minorities and the use of their languages.

Despite this initiative, the emergence of a political climate which calls for nationalistic agendas on the part of majorities continues to be a concern for minority protection, making the OSCE instruments and institutions still relevant, if not even more so, in the relationship among the OSCE member states. Accordingly, in 1998 experts were consulted in a further “attempt to clarify [...] the content of minority language rights”. Their effort resulted in the Oslo Recommendations Regarding the Linguistic Rights of National Minorities. Along with its Explanatory Notes, it was written so that the standards can be interpreted “as to ensure their coherence in application.”

Among the recommendations, it included protective claims for such important linguistic issues as the use of names, religion, community life and NGOs, the media, economic life, administrative authorities and public services, independent national institutions, judicial authorities, and the deprivation of liberty. The “Recommendations” are not only concrete, but along with the “Explanatory Notes” they provide considerable guidance to promote, if not ensure, that the linguistic rights of minorities are protected in a manner consistent with international human rights instruments. Space does not allow for a full review of the recommendations, but a few should be highlighted as reflective of its overall attempt to protect the linguistic rights of national minorities.

As for the protection of “Names”, not only is the right to use personal names in one’s own language considered essential for the protection of human dignity (1), as well as business names (2), but it requires that the State officially recognize the name in the minority language. In addition, where there are “significant numbers of persons belonging to a national minority” and demand, “public authorities [...] [to] make provisions for the display [...] in the minority language of local names, street names”, etc.²⁹

²⁸ See The Hague Recommendations Regarding the Education Rights of National Minorities and the Explanatory Note, Foundation on Inter-Ethnic Relations, Office of the High Commissioner on National Minorities, October, 1996.

²⁹ This author, who served as an attorney for the International Human Rights Law Group, an NGO project funded by the German Marshall Fund from February–June 1992 in Romania, witnessed firsthand the tension that threatened peace and democracy in the city of Cluj-Napoca (in Romanian);

As for the *Media*, the right to establish and maintain a minority-language media is protected as well as access to the use of minority languages on publically funded media (9) along with access to foreign generated media (11).

As for *Administrative Authorities and Public Services*, where there are significant numbers of minority members, there is a right to receive civil documents in both the official language and the minority language (13), along with other rights in participating in governmental affairs.

The list of recommendations is extensive and goes far in ensuring the respect and protection of linguistic rights. Although they appear in the form of recommendations, they are formulated based on the human rights instruments that are presently in force. The Explanatory Note relies on the UDHR's call for the respect of the "innate dignity of all human beings"; noting that "language is one of the most fundamental components of human dignity." The CPPR's Articles 2, 19, 21, 22, 27 (discussed above) are referenced as is the European Convention on Human Rights, Articles 10 and 14, the Framework Convention, along with the OSCE Accords, further demonstrating the growing consensus among international organizations for the protection of minority languages.

Clearly, while the intent of the Oslo Recommendations goes a long way in giving contextual meaning to the prevailing human rights instruments, its success is dependent on State institutions and the commitments and actions of NGOs and other IGOs. For those who seek to protect the rights of minorities, they can now take cognizance of these standards and insist that States take the appropriate action to actually implement its requirements. The Oslo Recommendations Regarding the Linguistic Rights of National Minorities, as one commentator noted, may play an important role in making minority language protection closer to where implementation may become a reality:

The OSCE has embarked on an attempt to fill the gap between the more or less abstract international standards on the linguistic rights of persons belonging to national minorities and their full implementation in practice. [...] The Oslo Recommendation may prove to have contributed to an effective implementation of these standards by lawmakers and by those involved in law-implementation agencies on the ground. (Bakker 2001, 253)

7 ILO Convention No. 169—Convention Concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries (1989)

Recognizing the aspirations of these peoples to exercise control over their institutions, way of life and economic development and to maintain and develop their identities, languages and religions within the framework of the States in which they live. (Preamble, Paragraph 5)

(Footnote 29 continued)

in Hungarian *Kolozsvár*; in German *Klausenburg*), where the local authorities prohibited the display of signs in the Hungarian language.

The ILO Convention No. 169 (ILO 169),³⁰ though ratified by relatively few States,³¹ provides a rather progressive approach to protecting the rights of indigenous peoples broadly defined in its Article 1. As for the protection of language, its Article 28 needs to be considered in light of State linguistic policies and practices. In addition to Paragraph 1, which provides linguistic protection for education in that children “be taught to read and write in their own indigenous language”, it goes on to state “when this is not practicable, the competent authorities shall undertake consultations with these peoples with a view to the adoption of measures to achieve this objective.”

For the purposes of the focus of this book, paragraphs 2 and 3 of ILO 169 have particular significance.

Adequate measures shall be taken to ensure that these peoples have the opportunity to attain fluency in the national language or in one of the official languages of the countries. (Paragraph 2)

Measures shall be taken to preserve and promote the development and practice of the indigenous languages of the peoples concerned. (Paragraph 3)

Hence, we see enshrined within an international instrument, what can be construed as a mandate for linguistic policy when dealing with the minority language rights of indigenous and tribal peoples. Given the linguistic issues surrounding, for example, the use, survival or revival of Saami languages, the ILO 169 provides guidance as to the policies that a State should adopt. Arguably, we see in this Convention what might be perceived as a duty to take active steps to insure that indigenous and tribal languages do not die out. Further, there is an effort to insure that State policies and practices *preserve and promote* those languages.

This commitment begs significant questions for the survival of all minority languages. Despite the recognized importance of the promotion and protection of indigenous and tribal languages, are not other minority languages deserving of similar protection? Why single out indigenous and tribal peoples and their languages for international protection and neglect or ignore minority languages? In addition, because there remains considerable dispute as to what constitutes an indigenous people or a tribal group, with different minorities claiming such status and others not, or not being recognized as ‘indigenous’ by State authority, does the protection of ILO 169 invite serious concerns for the protection of cultures and languages that are equally in need of promotion and protection? Anttonen (2000) outlines the debate concerning the Kvens of Norway and whether they are an indigenous people using an indigenous language or not.

The Kven Organization needs to find historical evidence that the Kvens have lived in the North for a long time; this in turn confers legitimacy on their (linguistic) demands. The movement refers to ILO No. 169 [...] which Norway ratified in 1990 with reference to the Sámi [...]. These arguments have led to increased tension between the Sámi and Kven organizations. (Anttonen 2000, 45–46)

³⁰ Adopted 1989 and came into force on September 5, 1991.

³¹ There are 20 ratifying States as of 2014. Among the European ratifiers are: Denmark (1996), the Netherlands (1998), Norway (1990) and Spain (2007). See <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex>.

Does ILO 169 inappropriately politicize the effort for language protection and/or revival? Should we not seek broader linguistic protection for all minority languages? Should there be distinctions among languages used by indigenous peoples or migrant groups?

8 Conclusion

The nexus between the protection of minority languages and the protection of human rights is far from tenuous. As indicated by this review of the protection of minority language, in the face of nationalism, consistent with a majority's thirst for cultural dominance via its political advantages, there is an undeniable link with the protection of democratic ideals rooted in the recognition of pluralism. Part of an expression of that pluralism is the use of one's own language. Concomitantly, as international legal experience notes, there is the concern that the protection not exceed the appropriate expression of State sovereignty. Where that balance is to be drawn remains in flux and will be dependent on the context and the acceptance of linguistic rights.

Although minority languages are a clear identifying characteristic of minorities and have been a cause for violence and physical attacks, "Language" as Malloy (2009, 512) has noted, "has not been used as a reason for repression and killing as much as a tool of exclusion". Albeit, while this chapter is a less than complete review of the issue, it does support the conclusion of the global and regional acceptance of the protection of minority languages as falling within requirements of State protection of human rights. Language is a concept protected by a variety of international instruments, along with the requirements of monitoring State activities directed at minorities. Language is critical, if not sometimes essential, to the protection of culture and the identity of a people who identify with a culture. Its denial, supported by State action or encouraged by neglect, can result not only in the demise of a language, but can contribute to the denial of human dignity and threaten the existence of a minority culture. The use and protection of minority languages via State action must be assured or else the language could die out and with it an important element of a minority's identity.

As stated by the Council of Europe's Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, the protection of minority languages "represents an important contribution to the building of a Europe based on the principles of democracy and cultural diversity within the framework of national sovereignty and territorial integrity".

Whether State action or inaction, i.e. lack of due diligence, constitutes an international crime, is a matter of debate. As was discussed above, cultural genocide, ethnocide or linguicide does not fall directly within the prohibition of genocide, but can be evidence for the support of a decision of a criminal act (Cassese 2008, 73). Nonetheless, it can be concluded that denial of linguistic rights is a denial of human rights and that the consistent pattern of gross violation of linguistic rights for a people deserves international attention. When faced with the prospect of States directly denying the use of minority languages, or when faced with the indirect policies of

States to destroy minority languages via neglect, then international actors committed to human rights need to strenuously object and take appropriate action, based on the normative values of the treaties they agreed to, in order to correct the violations.

Although, admittedly there are many other serious violations of human rights that are not addressed, (unfortunately, even ongoing genocides), it remains for the international community not to turn a blind eye on the destruction of a people's culture via the destruction of their language. We must be mindful when state's policies lead to *the death of language*, when their action threatens minority cultures. We must be attentive that language death can result in the *death of a people's dignity* and remember that such a result has *implications for democracy and the commitment to Human Rights*.

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Part II
**Case Studies on Cultural Change
and Minority Language Maintenance**

Obstacles and Successes

Comparing Minority Language Activism Among the Sorbs in Germany and the Sámi in Finland

Reetta Toivanen

Abstract This contribution discusses the role of minority-language activists in their efforts to revitalize endangered minority languages. There is a significant gap between most of the potential speakers of minority languages and the group of activists who advocate language maintenance and revitalization measures. The role of minority language advocates and activists is to mitigate between the majority society, which may look only at statistically “proven” numbers of minority language speakers when drafting policies and allocating funding directed towards minority communities, and members of the minority who do not actively express their minority identity. The majority society has to be informed about the variety of reasons why people belonging to minorities have given up their original mother tongue and the role and responsibility of the majority society in that development. On the other hand, members of the minority have to be kept informed and encouraged to give up their fears and shame and be motivated to revitalize their language skills. This contribution seeks to explain, using the cases of the Sorbian and Sámi language communities, the problems related to the demands placed by a dominating majority society on minorities. The main question in this chapter is: who is responsible for language revitalization and maintenance?

Keywords Sorbs · Sámi · Germany · Finland · Revitalization · Activists

1 Introduction

A minority culture is today constantly challenged by expectations arising from the global networks where minority activists work to influence national and international legal and political frameworks. Decisions and guidelines adopted outside the local context to protect and further minority rights must be “re-imported” back to the environment in which the minority language is used and where the culture is lived. The re-importing, localization, or vernacularization (Merry 2006) of international

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law and politics poses a challenge because it also carries with it understandings of minority culture and language which may be completely foreign from the perspective of the minority members themselves (Toivanen 2005).

Today both the United Nations, as an international organization, and the Council of Europe, as a regional organization, have increased the level of grassroots participation in their bodies. This means that members of minorities are increasingly allowed to participate in the development of laws and policies that concern them. However, international minority law places demands on minorities with respect to their identity and forms of representation and eventually their ways of “being”. In this context, certain forms of being are emphasized over other forms of being and the minority elite may find itself caught between the ways in which the “grassroots people” (the people belonging to a minority) wish to live their lives (as minorities) and the ways in which they should want to act in order to be eligible for the legal minority designation (for more on this, see Toivanen 2005; Saugestad 2011). Grassroots participation, or the simple demand that civil society actors be involved in drafting laws and policies, and also in implementing them and in changing linguistic practices, carries with it not only the expectation that members of the minority are able to fulfill these tasks but also that they are willing to do it in a manner expected by the majority (Cowan 2006).

National, ethnic and linguistic minorities in the European Union today are still struggling for the right to define their own identity and co-define, together with state and local authorities, conditions for preserving, revitalizing and developing their own language, religion, culture and—in general terms—their whole identity. The universal human right to one’s own culture and the specific codification of the rights of minorities to use their own language (in community with others), profess their own religion, and maintain and develop their own culture are protected by international treaties, as described by Ted Orlin in the chapter “[The Death of Languages; The Death of Minority Cultures; The Death of a People’s Dignity](#)” of this volume (cf. also De Varennes 1996; Dunbar 2001). However, the realization of these rights represents one of the substantial enduring failures of the international legal system. Due to the problem of implementation (caused by knowledge gaps, ignorance, and arrogance, as I shall later argue) most of today’s minorities do not see their cultural rights adequately respected and realized.

Even in countries and regions which have shown a commitment to international protection of human rights, such as Germany and Finland, the implementation of minority rights continues to be contested in the state and municipal political sphere. There is enough evidence to argue that even though members of the minorities may be well informed about the rights to which they are entitled, the realization of their rights depends—and will always depend—on the level of understanding among members of majorities (Mahler et al. 2009; Toivanen 2014). This is a fact in all matters concerning human rights: they are codified internationally and transposed nationally, but whether they are respected depends on the people forming political constituencies.

This contribution discusses the role of minority language activists in their efforts to revitalize endangered minority languages. Concretely, this chapter tries to determine the problems affecting efforts to revitalize endangered languages in Europe by asking

the question of who is ultimately responsible for language maintenance. Minority activists occupy the role of an intermediary in this field. This chapter will address the role of minority activists who work on two different but interdependent fields when advocating for minority language and culture rights: among the minority community (which includes the potential members of such a community) and majority society. After introducing case studies in the following chapters, namely the Sorbian people in eastern Germany and the Sámi in northern Europe, I will return to the issue of how language ideologies impact on the success of minority language maintenance.

2 The Ham in a Sandwich—Minority Activists

The role of minority language advocates and activists is to mitigate between the majority societies, which may look only at statistically “proven” numbers of minority language speakers when drafting policies and allocating funding directed towards them. Instead of asking why numbers of speakers are decreasing, without understanding that the identity of a person is not only tied to a “minority mother tongue”, governments often report¹ a person’s first language as the only indicator for his or her minority identity. The number of those who claim the status of mother-tongue speaker of minority languages is often much smaller than the number of those who have adopted a positive language identity. “Positive language identity” here means that they stress the symbolic relevance of their mother tongue even though they may not speak it (Skutnabb-Kangas 2000; Vogt and Kreck 2009). Many people who no longer speak a minority language continue to show an interest in learning it or at least seeing their children or grandchildren learning it. In my interviews over the last decade with many Europeans who identify as members of national minorities, I have heard countless times people who do not speak the language of their ancestors nonetheless describing it as a “stolen mother tongue” and stressing that they would “love to learn it” and also “have our children learn what we have lost”.²

Longstanding discrimination against a minority group affects the openness of individuals towards a minority identity and language over generations (Walde 2010; Hose et al. 2010, 428). It can therefore be argued that attitudes in minority and majority society, or better said a change of language ideologies and stereotypes in society as a whole, are one key factor in minority language revitalization. The majority society has to be informed about the reasons that have led minorities to give up their ancestral language and about the role and responsibility of the majority

¹ For example in Finland, a person can register only one mother tongue. Multilingual people tend to choose Finnish because they think it is pragmatic. However, it should be kept in mind that the identification with the non-registered language may be much stronger (Aikio-Puoskari et al. 2007, 15–16).

² I have elsewhere discussed this dilemma of non-speakers of a minority community who somehow feel obliged to mourn a lost language even though other aspects of identification may actually be more important and vital for them, see Toivanen (2007).

society in that development, in particular with regard to what is considered “normal” linguistic behavior and the specific needs of a minority, which are often difficult for members of majority society to understand. On the other hand, members of the minority must be informed and encouraged to give up their fears and shame and get motivated to revitalize their language skills. Working within and outside their community, the activists assume the role of interpreters who try to simultaneously “translate” international and national minority rights standards to the local context as well as communicate the local circumstances to the national and international levels. Looking at the case study of the Sorbian minority in Lusatia (Lausitz; today located within the German *Bundesländer* (i.e. federal states; on the German *Länder*, see also Marten’s chapter “[Parliamentary Structures and Their Impact on Empowering Minority Language Communities](#)” in this volume) of Saxony (Sachsen) and Brandenburg), Germany and the indigenous Sámi communities in Finnish Sápmi³ (part of Finnish Lapland), it will be argued that minority-language activists face severe problems in trying to balance between the authenticity acknowledged by the majority (the state) and the authenticity that is recognized by members of the minority.

This chapter will describe how the main reasons for the failure of revitalization processes are not, as often assumed, a lack of resources and lack of interest on the part of members of minorities. Rather, it is the general lack of knowledge and respect among members of majorities which, in many “silent” ways,⁴ holds minorities back from achieving their cultural rights

3 The Sorbian Minority in Easternmost Germany

In 1995, I traveled to Bautzen for my first fieldwork journey. I asked the passengers at the railway station where the main Sorbian organization, Domowina,⁵ is located. I got responses such as “Who? Did you mean Serbian people?” (Toivanen 2001a). Such responses puzzled me: how could they not know? The Sorbian people have been able to maintain their two codified Slavic languages and some distinct dialects for centuries in the region between the two cities of Cottbus and Bautzen. The city of Bautzen especially features many Sorbian institutions and enterprises (a theater, an upper secondary school, research institute, media, hotel and several restaurants, and dozens of associations mainly organized under the umbrella of Domowina). Nonetheless, when walking through the streets of Bautzen, one hears no Sorbian spoken.

The Sorbian minority is defined as a national minority by the German Federal Republic and it enjoys extensive legal protection. *Założby za serbski lud*, the

³ Sápmi as an area stretches from northern Norway, Sweden and Finland to Russia.

⁴ See on the coercive power of ideologies that keep minorities in less powerful positions (Toivanen 2014).

⁵ <http://www.domowina.de>.

Foundation for the Sorbian People, has been established to secure funding for their cultural existence. At the same time, for most of the people in the region, the existence of this historical minority has remained unknown. In the following, I shall make an attempt to understand this, first giving a brief description of the historical conditions in which the German minority called Sorbs was constituted and the context in which they today continue to maintain a distinct identity.

The Sorbian minority claims to have always lived in the area of Lausitz (Lusatia), in the former German Democratic Republic (GDR), in the south-easternmost part of present-day Germany. The Sorbian sources emphasize that the Sorbs are the first inhabitants of what they consider their homeland, and could be regarded as indigenous people of this area (Mahling 1991, 7).⁶ In interviews, some Sorbian activists have said, partly in jest, that their lands have been occupied by the Germans since the 6th century. Historical sources also underline that the Sorbs inhabited the area before the Germans arrived (Kunze 1995). The minority known today as the Sorbs (in German called either *Sorben* or *Wenden*⁷) was created as a byproduct of the makeup of the German nation when Slavic groups came into contact with later arrivals.

The Sorbs were heavily discriminated against as an ethnic group during the Nazi regime and the Domowina was banned in 1937 (Kunze 1995, 70). After the war and the founding of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) in 1949, protecting the Slavic languages was an important means to ensure neighborly relations, as also the Soviet Union was keen to see the Sorbian language protected (Elle 2010). The Sorbian umbrella organization Domowina was re-established already in 1945. The leadership was chosen by the GDR and only those who were considered good communists would get the posts (Pastor 1997, 39). During the following years, the Sorbian minority got its own theater, school, museum, and other institutions. The demands from the dominant society towards the Sorbian representatives were clear: the Sorbian culture was to be shown as a good example of workers' culture; it was supposed to be underdeveloped in such a way that it would underline the developed socialist culture, and Sorb dissidents who opposed the state ideology were marginalized (Hose et al. 2010). At the same time it should be noted, that the GDR's antifascist ideology did not mean that attacks and assaults on the Sorbian people would not occur; it meant only that it was a taboo to discuss these issues in public (Walde 2010, 385). Those Sorbs who did not agree with the changes distanced themselves from identifying with the minority (Walde 2010).

In the Catholic area of Upper Lausitz the church played a decisive role in contributing to the survival of Sorbian language and culture and as a counterforce to the state ideology. In the area in which Lower Sorbian is spoken, no similar process to support the culture and language took place and the language continued to decline.

⁶ The *Historical Dictionary of Contemporary National Movements* (Minahan 1996, 334) recounts that the Sorbs declared their independence on January 1, 1919, and that their territory was settled by 45 % Sorbs and 55 % Germans as the two "major national groups".

⁷ The Sorbs living in Upper Lusatia, the Upper Sorbs, call themselves *die Sorben* in German, whereas the Sorbs living in Lower Lusatia, the Lower Sorbs, call themselves *die Wenden*.

It can be said that the state ideology of the GDR was a double-edged sword: the minority rights of Sorbian language speakers were codified in the laws of the state, institutions to support the use of Sorbian language and traditions were established, and state funding was secured. But as the leadership of the Sorbian minority was selected among those loyal to the state ideology, the Sorbian culture was forced into a stereotype folk culture (aimed at showing a static relict of a cultural tradition existing before everyone came together into a Marxist-Leninist working class) and the language was set to flourish in this context of cultural and linguistic pressure. Many people felt uncomfortable calling themselves Sorbian (or Wenden) anymore; instead, they wanted to be modern, or as some put it, “We wanted to be normal” (interviews 2009).

There is another factor, common among many language minorities, including among the Sámi that contributed to the language loss. This is the fact that the development of the literary tradition in the Sorbian languages had already earlier paved the way for distancing the speech community from the literary community; many elderly people believed that they could not speak the language properly because it differed from the printed language (interviews 1995; 1997). Accordingly, during the second half of the 20th century, language shift was strengthened when speakers of local dialects realized that their grandchildren did not understand them after receiving schooling in standardized Sorbian languages. The process of modernization taking place during the same period distanced people from their traditional professions and traditional contexts of using the Sorbian language, moving them to places where German dominated and other languages were at best tolerated. Many Sorbs found that their native language did not “fit” the modern working and living environment.

Still today, the greatest number of Sorbs lives in two German *Länder*—Brandenburg and Saxony. According to Sorbian estimates, there are about 60,000 Sorbian people (40,000 Upper and 20,000 Lower Sorbian).⁸ They speak two different Sorbian languages. The language spoken in Brandenburg is more closely related to Polish, and is called Lower Sorbian. The other language, spoken in Saxony, is related to the Czech language and called Upper Sorbian. About 25,000 people have an active knowledge (are mother-tongue speakers) in at least one of the two Sorbian languages (Elle 2010, 314).⁹ Today, all Sorbs speak German (Elle 1995; Spieß 1995).

The Sorbs enjoy extensive legal protection (BLS 2011). Some activists have stated that “there are more laws to promote Sorbian language and culture than people can make use of” (interviews 1995). The core group of activists is small and due to long-lasting discrimination, many people have distanced themselves from their ethnic background (see above). The most important Sorbian organization is Domowina. The goal of this umbrella organization is to function as a cultural basis for Sorbian existence that can be used to fight against assimilation on a linguistic and cultural

⁸ These numbers are based on an ethno-sociological survey from 1987 carried out under the leadership of Ludwig Elle at the former Institute for Sorbian Folk Studies. About 40,000 people identified themselves as mother-tongue speakers (Elle 1992, 19ff.).

⁹ Elle (1992) describes carefully the difficulties of documenting such numbers. The statistics have always been influenced by the circumstances of the census.

level (Elle 1995, 475). There is also a wide variety of smaller Sorbian local associations and clubs that are mainly subordinated to Domowina. The minority identity is experienced primarily through these diverse associations (Hose et al. 2010). Even though cooperation between the Lower and Upper Sorbian organizations is not without conflict, the commonly shared understanding is that the Sorbs constitute one people.

When it comes to language maintenance, and thus language revitalization, they face different challenges: the Upper Sorbian language is less endangered than the Lower Sorbian language. Lower Sorbian activists perceive that eventually, in the near future, there may be no first language speakers left and they worry about preserving their identity should the language be lost (Spieß 1995). Even among language activists, one finds some who stress that the Sorbian identity should not only be defined on the basis of knowing and identifying with the language. In the Catholic areas where Upper Sorbian is still spoken, it is possible to find young people who use Sorbian as their first language. There are also schools in which it is the language of instruction. In recent years there have been many attempts in schools and kindergartens to re-activate the Sorbian languages (Schulz 2010, 516–518).

There are many and multifaceted reasons for language shift among the Sorbian-speaking language groups (cf, e.g. Glaser 2007). If one is the domination by a state language and ideologies tied to a belief that a nation should communicate in one language (the majority one) and another is the changing world connected with changing patterns of language use, then the third can be described as monolingual language attitudes that have dramatically enforced language shift all over the world. I shall come back to this after introducing my second case study, the Sámi in Finland.

4 The Sámi in the Finnish Context

Similarly to the Sorbian situation, if one goes shopping or visits a bank in the home territory of the Sámi people in Finland, one is very lucky if one hears one single word of any of the three Sámi languages spoken in Finland. In that sense it is interesting that, quite contrary to the Sorbian people in Germany, the local people are very much aware that Sámi people exist. If some 20 years back, they were considered a minority in Finland, today it is widely known that Sámi form the indigenous population of Finland (Pääkkönen 2008; Toivanen 2001a). The reason for this is that Sámi activists make claims for the right to achieve self-determination also in matters that concern the use of natural resources. These demands by Sámi representatives and the objections by local Finnish people are one continuing source of conflict.

Archaeological evidence from the first century of the Common Era onwards tells about the productiveness and international scope of the Sámi Iron Age, which lasted until the 16th century. When Johan Turi, a North Sámi artist, wrote in 1910, “[i]t is not known that the Sámi would have come from somewhere. [...] The Sámi did not even know that other people existed” (Turi 1979, 15), he was completely mistaken. This statement does not hold true in light of the current archaeological and linguistic

evidence. The Sámi people have always lived in interaction with other peoples, and the category “Sámi” was never a closed ethnic system (cf. Carpelan 1994).

By the end of the 13th century, the area inhabited by the Sámi was “entirely encircled by ‘foreign powers’” (Aikio et al. 1994, 16). There were many churches around Lapland, and the trading contacts and relationships with various state officials were intensive. Administratively, the Lapland area was already divided between different authorities. The nomadic, hunting and gathering population disappeared slowly from the South, most likely through assimilation as agriculture moved upwards to the North (Pentikäinen 1995). Due to the natural conditions, Lapland was an area where agriculture was not a successful enterprise; instead, hunting and fishing, reindeer husbandry, and a nomadic lifestyle were defined as the “Lappish way of life”. The people practicing this livelihood were called Lapps, though in recent decades the self-descriptive name *Sámi* has been adopted. Some scholars argue that even in the middle of the 19th century, the definition of Sámi was closer to a description of a lifestyle than one of biological descent (Lehtola 1997; Carpelan 1996).

Until recently, there has been a clear state interest to depict the Sámi as a “nature people”, previously also called a “primitive people”. In this view, which leaves no room for land ownership claims, the Sámi are assumed to have “a similar relationship to land as to the air” (Nickul 1984, 48). This assumption facilitated governments’ dispossession of lands from them (Pääkkönen 2008, 136). Scientific studies, however, demonstrate that the ancestors of the Sámi were legal landowners of the areas now owned by the Nordic states. Property rights were never foreign to these ancestors, and land disputes were a regular concern of local courts (Korpijaakko 1989; Vahtola et al. 2006). Although contested by some state officials, it is now considered a fact that there was a distinctive societal structure in Lapland, organized around the *Siida*, the Sámi villages (Semb 2001). The villages formed small social units, and there was cooperation between the *Siidas*. The villages were landowners in the modern sense: they decided who was allowed to fish or hunt in the *Siida* area and whether or not there was space for a newcomer (Pentikäinen 1995).

The administrative Sámi homelands are located in Lapland, the northernmost part of Europe in the area of the Norwegian provinces of Finnmark, Troms, part of Nordland, the northernmost parts of Sweden and Finland, and the Kola Peninsula of Russia. About 45,000 Norwegian, 16,000 Swedish, 10,000 Finnish and 2,000 Russian citizens are Sámi.¹⁰ The number of people who identify as Sámi has grown during the last decade and the trend is presently continuing (Opetus- ja kulttuuriministeriö 2012, 15). The Sámi people are recognized as indigenous peoples in all three Nordic countries.¹¹ There are nine living, yet comparatively very small, Sámi languages. Northern Sámi has the most speakers and is least endangered, and because it is spoken in Sweden, Norway, and Finland, it has gained the status of the pan-Sámi

¹⁰ The numbers are rough estimates.

¹¹ This is true for the Finnish Constitution, section 17(3) and the Norwegian Constitution, section 110(a). The Swedish Constitution does not contain a section on the Sámi but apparently a new proposal would include the protection of Sámi as an indigenous people (see <http://www.galdu.org/web/?odas=4541&giella1=eng> [last visited 10.12.2013]).

lingua franca. In Finland, in addition to Northern Sámi, Skolt Sámi and Inari Sámi are official languages in the northernmost municipalities of Finland. Even in their traditional homelands, the Sámi constitute a minority, and this was already the case at the beginning of the 20th century.

In Finland (as also in Sweden and Norway) the Sámi are officially recognized as the indigenous peoples and the government has bound itself by international agreements and national law to protect their traditional way of life. A reform of the Finnish Constitution in 1995 included fundamental rights for Sámi people to maintain and develop their culture and language (Finnish Constitution 969/95). In the same reform, the government committed itself to “secure the realization of fundamental rights and human rights”. The aim of these changes was to “guarantee the maintenance of the distinctive Sámi culture” (Government’s Bill to Parliament 309/93). The concept of culture was interpreted to include the traditional Sámi livelihoods such as fishing, hunting and reindeer herding. The Sámi Parliament, an elected body, was foreseen as the institution which would develop and implement the right of the Sámi people to cultural autonomy. Article 1 of the Act on the Sámi Parliament stipulates that “the Sámi, as an indigenous people, have a linguistic and cultural autonomy in the Sámi homeland” (Finnish Law 974/1995). This acknowledgment is based on the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966 and its Article 27 protecting minorities, as well as on existing international law on the rights of indigenous peoples.¹² However, the Finnish government has refused to acknowledge the Sámi as a people in the sense of Article 1 of the same convention in fear that this recognition would automatically entitle them to self-determination in issues concerning natural resources. The president of the Finnish Sámi Parliament, Klemetti Näkkäläjärvi (Näkkäläjärvi 2010), has criticized heavily the Government and said that “[t]he opinion of the Finnish Government reflects a deplorable nationalistic tradition based on the idea of one people in one state.”

The Sámi claim these rights and stress the importance of indigenous autonomy (including the right to continue with traditional ways of livelihood). They have a rather strong political institution of their own, the Sámi Parliament, representing the interests of the whole group.¹³ The Sámi Parliament has in its statements made clear that it strives for recognition of Sámi as a distinct *people* and claims the right to be *treated differently*, according the specific needs of the Sámi people. There are several strong Sámi associations and museums which form the key for people to experience and live their identity.

¹² Such as the International Labor Organization’s convention 169 from 1989. Finland has, however, only signed this convention but not been “able” to ratify it. I will return to this debate later in this chapter.

¹³ Even though it should of course be said that the organization is by no means accepted by all Sámi as “the” legitimate representative.

5 Activists and Claims for Recognition

The Sorbian minority shares a long history with German statehood. The founding of the first Sorbian institutions coincided with the awakening of European nationalism and the founding of many other similar institutions and associations across Europe.¹⁴ In this chapter the challenges of representation are addressed and especially the question of translating minority laws to lived practice will be tackled from the perspective of Sorbian and Sámi activists. What are the potential dangers for a minority in close cooperation with state institutions?

During the German Democratic Republic era, the Sorbian people enjoyed some specific advantages because they were defined as a Slavic people who on the one hand had been persecuted by the Nazi regime and on the other hand were a Slavic group with close linguistic ties to socialist neighboring countries (Michalk 2010, 284). The Sorbian agrarian past also fitted well with the ideology of the GDR: their living areas were transformed under rapid industrialization and their homeland quickly turned into a mostly German-speaking one. The protection of folk culture, colorful dancing and singing festivals and handicrafts did not contain political claims that would in any way challenge the existing language ideology of the state. Still, one can say that the allocation of resources to the Sorbian minority during the years of the GDR contributed to the emergence of well-educated activists.

After the reunification of the GDR and the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) in 1990, Sorbian activists consisting of both Domowina personnel as well as of scholars and church activists were fully capable of negotiating on their own behalf and demanding that the same level of protection of their cultural and linguistic rights continue in the newly unified Germany. There was both uncertainty and hope in the air among Sorbian activists and eventually they were successful in keeping most of the Sorbian institutions and ensuring that the financing of their cultural activities was not interrupted despite the change of government. After the unification, they quickly found support among the Federal Union of National Minorities (FUEN), which was active in supporting the claims of various European national minorities. At the same time, they were actively lobbying the drafting process of the treaties between the two republics. It was a relief that the protection of the Sorbian minority was codified in the unification treaty in Article 35, Protocol note Nr. 14.¹⁵ Both German states, Saxony and Brandenburg, also mention the Sorbian minority in their reformed constitutions. However, the funding structures were from the very beginning unsatisfactory, and in difficult economic circumstances there was a constant fear that the funding would run out. This insecurity came to an end when the Foundation for the Sorbian People was finally established in 1998. The first funding structure was agreed for 10 years. The fundamental problem with this structure is that a constant insecurity is established with the temporary agreements: the funding scheme does not underline the fact that

¹⁴ Several school and education associations were founded and standards for languages established.

¹⁵ <http://stiftung.sorben.com/usf/einigungsvertrag.pdf> [last visited 12.10.2013].

the Sorbian people have had a continuous presence in Germany and that in order to guarantee that their human rights are respected, special measures are a necessity both now and in the future. For example, Saxony has closed schools in the Sorbian homeland and thus not taken into consideration that due to their minority status, there should be special protection for such village schools where the Sorbian language can best be advanced.

The Wendish People's Party (Serbska Ludowa Strona) was founded in 2005 in Cottbus, Brandenburg. Interestingly, the party has been criticized by some Sorbian people, who maintain that Sorbs should not have their own political representation but Sorbian claims should be expressed through the existing party politics (interviews 2005 and 2008). This may be one of the key reasons for why the number of Sorbian speakers, despite the positive legal and institutional structures, continues to decline. Too many members of the ethnic community have the attitude that someone else is responsible for the maintenance and revitalization of Sorbian language, culture and identity (see also Marten in this publication).

Western Germany and its political elite and administrative staff which came to dominate in the area of Lausitz were not only unaware of what minority protection should be, they also were to some extent critical as to whether one small population should enjoy such rights which they called "benefits", especially because money was scarce. The fiscal politics of the new Germany entered Lausitz and the activists found themselves in a situation in which they were told that maintaining the Sorbian language and culture is too expensive. The cutting of expenses impacted schools with a small number of pupils without any sensitivity to minority concerns, which reflects purely a lack of awareness of the importance of positive measures for a minority's survival. Activists, who had expected that education in the Sorbian language and modernization of Sorbian identity would be improved in the new system, were disappointed: extractive industries continued to destroy the Sorbian homelands and cost-saving plans foresaw the closure of Sorbian institutes such as theaters and museums.

Hose et al. (2010) show that hundreds of local associations and clubs have, despite the grim financial outlook, continued to actively care for the Sorbian language and culture. This is a sign of an awakening Sorbian civil society, since only associations which are organized under Domowina are eligible for funding. Domowina as a "house of activism" has had its own problems: due to the politics of the GDR it had become a house of socialism as dictated by the GDR government. Purging the house of people connected to the old regime proved as difficult as in any East German establishment. The activists had not only been divided by two German states, but also by language lines and political views. They also had difficulties agreeing on how to deal with the past and how to form claims for the future. The folkloristic genre had become dear to many, whereas those asking for modern rights for a modern minority people were accused of departing too far from the original and authentic culture (Toivanen 2001a).

After World War II, the Sámi who had been evacuated to southern parts of Finland returned to their homeland to discover that many parts had been destroyed and razed to the ground. Additionally, the Skolt Sámi people from the Kola Peninsula were

resettled in the Inari area after Finland had lost their territory to the Soviet Union (on Skolt Sámi, see also Siegl and Rießler's chapter "[Uneven Steps to Literacy](#)" in this volume). Even at the end of the 1950s, it was commonly believed that Sámi culture and language would naturally die out due to modernization and because of this, no special measures were needed. As it became clear that the living conditions of the Sámi were much weaker than that of other Finns in the country, the state began to distribute financial assistance for housing in the area where Sámi live. As a consequence, the formerly semi-nomadic Sámi were settled in modern homes. At the same time, the educational level of the Sámi was improved. Education for all was interpreted as the same education in the same language for those who did not have a command of Finnish (Lehtola 1997). The era of assimilation was tightly connected to a language ideology that privileged Finnish above local Sámi languages. The Sámi traditional livelihoods were also regulated step by step by national legislation, altering the Sámi people's ability to continue with traditional reindeer herding: many began to keep their reindeer stationary and feed them, especially in the winter months (Pääkkönen 2008).

As a result of this modernization of the Sámi, most of the people lost their language, thousands moved to southern cities to look for education and work, and the connection to traditional livelihoods became a leisure activity for many who could only return to their homeland during holidays. Simultaneously, however, the international movement of indigenous people saw the strengthening of cooperation between the Nordic Sámi, and encouraged the Finnish Sámi to ask for protection as an indigenous people.

The new wave of initiatives was now closely connected to international developments and also research indicating the importance of recognition of minority cultures and languages. In the 1990s, the Sámi were legally entitled to learn Sámi languages, and in 1995 they were awarded cultural autonomy in their home region. This cultural autonomy was meant to provide measures that would rescue the three Sámi languages traditionally spoken in Finland. In the beginning of 1996, a Sámi parliament¹⁶ was set up and this was also to decide who their electorate is (on the Norwegian Sámi parliament see Marten's chapter "[Parliamentary Structures and Their Impact on Empowering Minority Language Communities](#)" in this volume).

The question of self-determination was vehemently rejected by the Finnish state and so was (and is) also the question of whether the Sámi should profit from the natural resources and extractive industries in their homeland. The Sámi were, from the state's perspective, now entitled to call themselves indigenous, arrange their own cultural matters and allocate state subsidies in the line with their interests. Even though no political or economic power was in sight, the Finnish inhabitants in Lapland were not happy about the new situation because they were afraid that the Sámi might have rights to their lands (Pääkkönen 2008; Sarivaara 2012). This new politics of emancipation in Finland led to some controversies. Firstly, many people who wanted to claim a Sámi identity were rejected by the Sámi Parliament with

¹⁶ <http://www.samediggi.fi>.

the argument they had not expressed Sámi identity before (Pääkkönen 2008, 94ff.). Secondly, people with no Sámi identity claims started to oppose Sámi rights, fearing that minority rights might consist of additional rights for Sámi and exclude the local Finns. Thirdly, many Sámi had moved away from the homeland and were unable to claim the same level of language rights as those who had stayed.

The Sámi activists are today fighting on several fronts: against local prejudices, against locals who wish to have their share of possible future natural resources, against the state allocating too little self-determination to Sámi representative bodies, and against the state-owned forestry industry and mining business eradicating their traditional livelihoods.

6 Concrete Examples of Language Activism Today and Obstacles to Them

Sorbian languages have been taught in the schools of the Lausitz since the first school was established in the region in the 16th century. The first Sorbian elementary school opened its doors in 1540/42 in Bautzen (Schulz 2010, 505). From 1920 to 1937 there was even an association for Sorbian-speaking teachers. This all came to an abrupt end in 1938, when all Sorbian cultural activities were forbidden. After World War II, there was only a short interval before Sorbian language teaching continued. There was even an order from the occupying Russian administration that bilingual schools should exist in the Sorbian home territory. One problem was that the area had become even more German after the war; not only had industrialization changed the demographic landscape but also a vast amount of German refugees were resettled in the area—and they openly rejected learning Sorbian.

Other problems, besides the lack of teachers, were a shortage of school materials and curricula. Upper Sorbian teachers were sent to teach Lower Sorbian pupils and this negatively impacted the degree of Lower Sorbian pupils' knowledge of that language. In the 1950s it was decided that it was better to learn all natural sciences in German instead of Sorbian, and Sorbian languages were marginalized in the public opinion as a backwards language of farmers. Many families decided that they did not want to “harm their children's future” (interviews in 1995 Upper Lausitz) and rejected the Sorbian language completely.

After the unification of the two German states, the situation of Lower Sorbian was already so bad that it could only be taught as a second or foreign language. As explained above, the two Sorbian languages, Upper and Lower Sorbian, are spoken in quite different circumstances. The Lower Sorbian language needs severe revitalization measures, and there are very few native teachers for it. The Upper Sorbian language is much better off, as most of the teachers are native speakers and speakers have natural contexts for language use (Norberg 2010).

In today's Germany, education matters are the responsibility of the German states, not a federal matter. This means that Upper and Lower Sorbian have to struggle

in two different political entities. In addition, there are naturally speakers of both Sorbian languages who live outside the defined home territory. The language revitalization measures between the two states differ from each other. In both cases, a language revitalization concept called WITAJ is in use. There are two interdependent organizing bodies for the WITAJ language immersion program: the Sorbian School Association and the WITAJ Language Center. The Sorbian School Association was founded in 1991. In 1998 it set up the first Lower Sorbian kindergarten in Sielow in order to counter the fact that there were no Lower Sorbian mother-tongue speakers in the area. Domowina, the umbrella organization of Sorbian associations, founded in 2001 a department called the WITAJ Language Center. It has its central office in Bautzen and a separate department for Lower Sorbian in Cottbus. The Sorbian school association is responsible for 60 % of all children learning with the immersion method.

In the case of Lower Sorbian, all teachers are non-native speakers, but according to the WITAJ concept, they should use only the Lower Sorbian language. However, in speaking with some parents in my fieldwork in 2009, I was told that in some kindergartens the teachers also speak German in order to be understood better by the children. At the moment there are about 1,090 children in 32 kindergartens learning the Sorbian language (Schulz 2010, 498). About 400 children in Saxony and 120 in Brandenburg attend one of the 18 WITAJ kindergartens (Schulz 2010, 499). The WITAJ method means, ideally, that the children are immersed in a Sorbian-language sphere. The parents and other people can continue to speak German (or their native language) and the kindergartens function in Sorbian. WITAJ groups in kindergartens are also quite popular: about 320 children get a partial immersion in the Sorbian language in these groups (Schulz 2010, 499).

In reality, there are difficulties. Norberg (2010) lists reasons for failures, especially in Lower Sorbian institutions. Very few children have someone outside of the kindergarten with a command of the Sorbian language, some teachers are not fluent enough in Sorbian so that they could use exclusively Sorbian, and fiscal politics in Brandenburg make it sometimes impossible to provide all-day groups if the number of children is not sufficiently high. In such cases the children attend bigger kindergartens and learn in a separate Sorbian group, the problem being that they are in too much contact with German-speaking children during the day. In addition, Norberg states that there are no positive measures for teachers who have learned Sorbian and teach in WITAJ groups: the same law applies to the matter of how many children must be in one group (Norberg 2010, 88). There are no additional teachers who could substitute if one teacher falls ill. However, one important addition which is a common practice in language nests (see Olthuis et al. 2013), has been to invite active native speakers to visit the facilities.

At the same time, the success of the WITAJ concept is obvious. The activists have managed to communicate to the parents how beneficial bilingualism is for the mental development of the children—and overcome an ideology that claims that bilingualism poses a risk to mental development. Studies have shown that the children, who attend the bilingual kindergarten and also continue with Sorbian classes in school, have better German abilities than the average (Budar et al. 2008; Schulz 2010, 499).

In spite of scientific evidence on the advantages of bilingualism in the Sorbian case—and also as research data from around the world has shown—many parents decide to discontinue Sorbian teaching after kindergarten or elementary school, because they fear that learning Sorbian would require too much from their children (Norberg 2010, 91). In discussions with parents, they said that they fear that learning Sorbian would take time away from other, more important subjects such as English and mathematics. I also heard during fieldwork claims from parents that, while it is nice that the kids had contact with the Sorbian language, it is rather useless and there is no reason to continue with it in the upper school classes.

However, the number of students taking these lessons has slightly increased over the years: Budar (2008) counts 1,051 pupils for 1994/5 and 1,869 for 2008/9. The schools have, despite the laws in both states (Saxony and Brandenburg) which regulate the existence of Sorbian-language education, struggled over the years with financial difficulties, a declining number of pupils, fewer and fewer parents or grandparents who would speak Sorbian to their children, and dominating attitudes that Sorbian is only a luxury that can only be afforded in times of a financial boom (Michalk 2010; Walde 2010). The political decision-making has not really understood that protecting a minority language means also taking special measures: the same school laws regulating e.g. the minimum number of students in a class or school should not apply to the Sorbian population. At the same time, the public atmosphere in the Sorbian homeland is increasingly hostile against Sorbs: the German majority has little tolerance even for hearing the Sorbian language used in public (Walde 2010, 406).

The language activists of both Sorbian languages are united in their effort to establish structures that would not only maintain the Sorbian languages but also revitalize them. In both language groups, the greatest difficulty is to convince people to learn the language and use it when the societal majority consensus stresses that supporting Sorbian languages is a luxury that cannot be afforded. The ideology of the superiority of the German language lives on strongly not only among the older generation, but also among young people who must even today be afraid when using the Sorbian languages in public. These attitudes are grotesquely summarized in a graffiti that I saw near a Sorbian secondary school saying “Speak German or get gassed”.

However, the Lower and Upper Sorbian language activists work in different situations: Lower Sorbian is radically more endangered than Upper Sorbian. Due to the German federal system, they also work with different school laws, authorities, and political settings. The challenge for these language activists is to be able to create positive spheres and spaces where the Sorbian languages are needed. It would be important to secure guarantees that Sorbian be taught even where there are only a few students, in order to ensure that everyone choosing to learn Sorbian at schools has a subjective right to it. At the same time, a law giving benefits to municipal officials with a command of Sorbian would motivate students to learn the language. The right to use one’s own mother tongue is indeed underdeveloped in the German context.

In Finland, three Sámi languages are recognized by law. All these languages are listed in the UNESCO Red Book on endangered languages: North Sámi is classified

as endangered, and Inari and Skolt Sámi as seriously endangered languages. As explained earlier in this chapter, North Sámi has the advantage that it is spoken in all Nordic countries, and in Norway it has quite a high level of protection and promotion whereas Inari Sámi is only spoken in the municipality of Inari, where the language of the resettled Skolt Sámi is also spoken.¹⁷

Lapland, being the northernmost region in Europe, was, at the turn of the 20th century, lagging behind in the so-called modernization process: the nomadic and half-nomadic life of Sámi meant that children visited school irregularly, mainly organized by churches during the winter months. Some Sámi languages had a writing system already in the 17th and 18th centuries but even the biggest language, North Sámi, which is used in Norway, Sweden and Finland, got a universal, official orthography only in 1979. The Inari Sámi orthography was developed around 100 years ago, but the first Skolt Sámi book using a modern orthography was published only in 1972 (Lehtola 1997).

When the Law on Compulsory Education entered into force in 1946 in Finland, Sámi parents were obligated to send their children to boarding schools. Boarding schools almost managed to wipe out all Sámi languages: the children spent nine months a year away from home in an environment in which speaking Sámi was forbidden. In my interviews, men 50 to 60 years old openly wept when they told of their experiences in these schools (Toivanen 2001a). They had been forbidden to speak their mother tongue (the only language they knew) even with their siblings.

With the Language Act (1992), it became possible for the first time to register one of the Sámi languages as one's mother tongue.¹⁸ In 2009 only 1,789 persons had done this (Opetus- ja kulttuuriministeriö 2012, 16). It is not a reliable indicator on mother-tongue speakers, as many people have simply not wanted to change their previous registration. Due to the fact that only the youngest generation has had the opportunity to learn Sámi at school, most Sámi speakers are not able to fluently read or write Sámi. This, at least according to my discussions, is one reason not to register Sámi as one's mother tongue.

In 2011, in the Sámi home territory, 114 children attended Sámi language daycare, 87 of them in North Sámi daycare centers, 23 in Inari Sámi and four in Skolt Sámi language nests (Opetus- ja kulttuuriministeriö 2012, 26). The staff amounted to 28 persons. In the cities of Rovaniemi, Oulu and Helsinki some children visit a daycare which offers education in Sámi. The fact is that 70 % of Sámi children are presently born outside the home territory; it is an urgent matter to organize and offer daycare and language nests in Sámi languages in other parts of Finland as well, especially in the three aforementioned cities (Länsman 2008). According to the assessment of an expert group set up by the Ministry for Education and Culture, the challenge for now and the future is exactly this: Sámi children live throughout the country and possess varying skills in Sámi languages. Diversity should also be reflected in the organizing

¹⁷ Skolt Sámi is nearly extinct in Russia and already extinct in Norway (Salminen and Tapani 1993); see also the chapter “[Uneven Steps to Literacy](#)”.

¹⁸ Earlier this was possible by using the category of “other” and adding to that one of the Sámi languages, for more see Aikio-Puoskari (2002).

of the teaching (Opetus- ja kulttuuriministeriö 2012, 27). It is neither in compliance with the law nor helpful to offer North Sámi to Inari or Skolt children, because the languages are different.

Basic education in elementary and upper secondary school should, according to the Basic Education Act¹⁹, be offered in Sámi to all children who have Sámi as their mother tongue. For all others, there should be education in the chosen Sámi language (North, Inari, Skolt) as a foreign language. Education can also be partly offered in a Sámi language and partly in Finnish. According to the Act on Upper Secondary Schools²⁰ education can also be offered in Sámi languages.

During the 2011/12 school year, in the Sámi home territory, 13 children received education in Inari Sámi and 33 elementary school children and two upper secondary school children learned it as a subject. The situation for Skolt Sámi is less bright: four children received part of their education in Skolt and 17 children, out of which four were in upper secondary school, learned Skolt as a subject. In the year 2012, the first Skolt Sámi student in history wrote his mother-tongue matriculation test in Skolt Sámi.

Even though it is considered a major step forward that the Sámi Parliament has its own department for education, responsible for materials and curricula, it has suffered from a lack of resources in the years since its inception. It was only recently that Inari Sámi got schoolbooks for upper secondary school, while Skolt Sámi pupils must still depend on the creativity of their teachers and work with copied materials. In 2010, Inari and North Sámi elementary school children finally got new books with modern orthography, while the Skolt Sámi teachers and children are still waiting for the new reader. Many children, even in the Sámi homeland, face long periods during their 12-year education when there is no teacher available or not enough children to establish a group with Sámi as the language of instruction, which means that there are interruptions that negatively impact their learning.

Outside the home territory there are no schools offering education in Sámi but, instead, in a few schools it is offered as additional mother tongue²¹: Due to the regulation that at least four children must request such instruction and the teaching must be organized during the school day, the right to one's mother tongue is not realized among Sámi outside the homeland. The teachers are also badly paid for their work.²² It is no wonder therefore, that only 46 elementary school and two upper secondary school pupils²³ outside the home territory learned Sámi in the year 2011 (Opetus- ja kulttuuriministeriö 2012, 32).

¹⁹ Perusopetuslaki 21.8.1998/628, Art 10.

²⁰ Lukiolaki 21.8.1998/629.

²¹ Actually, the concept of education in "one's own mother tongue" is used in Finland for those belonging to language minorities. They learn Finnish in school as a native language and in addition they have the right to learn (normally after the regular school day) for two hours a week their true mother tongue. In Finland, pupils of Sámi or Roma decent do not normally speak their mother tongue fluently, so that in practice this instruction resembles foreign language teaching.

²² 21 Eur/h (Opetus- ja kulttuuriministeriö, 2012), 32.

²³ This is organized as e-learning.

Language activists in the Sámi region, similar to the Sorbian activists, are on the one hand fighting for the same cause, namely better structural and financial resources for Sámi, but they are also struggling in three different language contexts. North Sámi speakers benefit from the fact that the language is also spoken in Norway and Sweden. On the Norwegian side, there are newspapers, radio programs and television news broadcasts in North Sámi which are helpful for the revitalization of the language in Finland. Inari and Skolt Sámi, with not even 300 speakers, are fighting a lonely battle, all the more so because there are only very few whose Inari or Skolt Sámi is good enough for teaching or creating learning materials in these languages.²⁴ Within Nordic Sámi cooperation North Sámi is used as lingua franca, which means that most activists have learned North Sámi to at least some level. Skolt Sámi can be considered in that sense as the most disadvantaged group, as only a few decades ago they had to leave everything behind in Russia and were resettled in a new territory in Finland which ignored the collective element of their culture. They were also bullied not only by the Finns but also by other Sámi because of their different religion and culture. Since then, the unemployment rate has been very high among Skolt Sámi because no work is available in the remote places near the Russian border where they were settled. Almost all young people leave the villages, and very few ever return. Improving self-esteem and increasing understanding of the value of their own language and culture are the major challenges for Skolt activists. There is a separate law envisioning the protection of the Skolt Sámi and offering them specific loans for self-employment. The law cannot help without a strong political will to compensate the Skolt people for what they lost when they moved to Finland: the entire basis of their reindeer economy. This certainly is not a matter of welfare benefits but instead, activists are hoping for a Skolt cultural center and museum that would foster tourism but also interest among Skolt to “return to their culture”.

Inari Sámi activists sometimes blame themselves for being too good in adapting to new circumstances: the Inari people are the real natives of the Inari area. When North Sámi reindeer herders started to enter their lands, and later Finnish settlers and finally the Skolt Sámi were resettled in the Inari area, they just made space for everyone. It seemed as if there would be no problem for the Inari Sámi, because no protest was heard. Most Inari Sámi quickly shifted to speaking Finnish and young people left to the big cities to study and work. In an interview with one of main Inari language activists back in 1996, he feared that his children would be the last speakers of Inari (interviews in Toivanen 2001a). But what happened instead is that, with his lead, the number of Inari Sámi speakers has increased by dozens and two language nests are raising children to be fluent in Inari Sámi. There are also Finnish children in the group and most of them start with very little knowledge of Inari Sámi. Inari Sámi has too meager a presence in media and radio,²⁵ but it benefits from an active association and a healthy group of activists who have decided that the language will

²⁴ See the project to revitalize the Inari Sámi language with Marja-Liisa Olthuis as the project leader: <http://casle.fi/index.php> [last visited 10.12. 2013].

²⁵ Matti Morottaja has a 5-minute program every week on language maintenance.

not perish but flourish: Marja-Liisa Olthuis defended her dissertation in 2007 in the Inari Sámi language at the University of Oulu. Language activists can be optimistic but at the same time, the situation is fragile and uncertain. Revitalizing Inari with the idea that everybody is welcome to learn the language collides with the ideology of the Sámi Parliament and Finnish law which postulates that only registered Sámi have the right to be taught in Sámi. To be registered, one has to prove one's Sámi descent. The future will see a debate on how much it makes sense in a case of an endangered language community to close by law the category of Sámi in order to prevent hostile new members in the electorate (Sarivaara 2012).

7 Discussion

The chosen case studies on Sorbian and Sámi language minorities differ from each other in many significant ways. The Sorbian minority originally lived in a vast area in Germany and has slowly been reduced to their present territories near the Polish and Czech border. Their literature and education system have a long history supported by strong and important elites, especially through the strong connection between the Catholic Church and the Upper Sorbian language community. Their way of life has for centuries been little different from other ethnicities in Central Europe but linguistically, especially due to their highly educated elites, they have managed to fight the supremacy of German and related Slavic languages. As Sorbian families were mostly farmers when industrialization came to the Lausitz, they were marginalized as backwards. The language and culture were stigmatized as provincial and German skills became a necessity for further education and professional advancement. Spaces and arenas for using the Sorbian languages dwindled and Sorbian was increasingly something to be spoken only at home.

The approximately 40 years of the GDR regime show that it matters under which language ideology support and protection of a language takes place: the government was strongly involved in directing the details of what Sorbian identity was supposed to be (namely Marxist-Leninist) and by these means the government managed in an apparently benign way to distance many people from the culture. In the unified Germany, the Sorbian question is also protected under a certain ideological setting which influences the way in which activists can do their work and the circumstances under which Sorbian revitalization can take place. Language questions are constantly dealt with as an either/or scenario: either you speak a “foreign” language and will always have a language deficit or you learn German only and become fluent in German. Multilingualism is seen as a threat to good skills in German. The fact is that all language minorities (e.g. Frisian, Sinti and Roma) face enormous hurdles in trying to maintain and revitalize their language communities and that in German officialdom these languages are still considered less worthy. The general discourse is about the German language and the necessity to give everyone the fair chance to learn the language considered “normal” in that country. At the same time, the political atmosphere is not openly against minority languages but benevolently supports the

languages as much as they are forced to by international and European law regulating the rights of minorities. In the subtext, however, the general German attitude is: why on earth should we artificially keep these old languages alive?

The Sámi in Finland are, from a historical perspective, in a very different situation. The right to learn Sámi languages at school came first in the 1970s and it was legally recognized as a subject in school and also as an official mother tongue in Finland in 1990. The history of education in Sámi is obviously much shorter than for the Sorbian languages. There is also no long literary tradition in any of the Sámi languages, which has facilitated the marginalization of Sámi languages as if they were not practical and suitable for use in the modern world. The language ideology in Finland is on the one hand tied to an official policy of pro-multilingualism (bilingualism) because Finland has two official state languages—Finnish and Swedish. However, for a long time, nobody considered the Sámi languages worthy of any recognition. The bilingualism debate can be characterized as a tension between the two larger language groups and there has not been space for understanding the concept of minority rights for other groups. It was not until immigrants (in the case of Finland, mainly refugees and asylum seekers) arrived in the 1980s and the question of native-language teaching for them came up, that the initiative for laws providing teaching in all three Sámi languages was successful.

The situation in Finnish Sápmi is precarious because modernization and the land use tied to this kind of modernization has hampered the traditional livelihood to the extent that, as already stated, over half of Sámi children today are born outside the territory where the Sámi enjoy special rights. Language activists can do a lot for creating spaces for language use—and the fact that in the constitutional reform Sámi languages were guaranteed as a constitutional right has to a great extent increased professions and posts where Sámi language skills are required, because many authorities have to be able to offer services in all Sámi languages. This means that there are also good economic reasons for young people to learn Sámi languages, because there is a reliable guarantee of jobs for those who can also read and write Sámi.

However, the extractive industries in Finnish Lapland distance people more and more from what can be called the indigenous way of life, and in that sense they pose the danger that the Sámi are, in the Finnish discourse, reduced to a language minority. The language ideology in Finland is an ideology of sameness in many languages: that the Finns speak Finnish or Swedish or Sámi (or English or Somali) is not the problem, but they should—according to the ideology—behave like good Finns. The Sámi way of life is experienced as a threat to the unified culture because it challenges the economic interests of the majority by questioning the role of forestry and mining in traditional Sámi lands (Joona 2012; Kuokkanen 2007, 144).

The prevailing attitude of the majority population in Germany towards minority language speakers such as Sorbs can generally be summed up with such concepts as ignorance, misunderstanding and arguments that the costs of minority protection are too high (and Germans cannot afford them any more). When contrasting the historical circumstances and the actual situation of the Sorbs living in unified Germany today, and the assumptions (prejudices) about them existing even among Germans living in the same neighborhoods, the argument of this chapter is underlined: Germany (as a

political entity) is merely interested in tolerating the deviancy or anomaly represented by a cultural and language minority and not truly recognizing it as a normal part of regional and national German culture.

When looking at the efforts of Sorbian language activists to maintain and develop their own culture and language, it becomes clear that we must distinguish at least three different (but even today intermingled) phases of minority treatment by the majority as explained above. First, the Sorbian people had to overcome repression and discrimination. In the second phase they had to fight strong cultural and language assimilation and today, their main challenge is actually a form of cooperation which benignly supports the Sorbian endeavor but also silently subsumes it under a hegemonic thinking of what kind of space and power can be redistributed to a minority.

In a very similar way, Sámi language activists were first marginalized in their own lands, put under pressure to assimilate by the majority and their distinctive languages and cultures were considered something that would vanish over time. In the second phase, the Sámi were accorded rights and support, but only in a form and content that suited the ideology of the Finnish state (the majority). In the third phase, they today fight for the right to be different and try to overcome the institutionalized form of discrimination by finding ways to make demands that serve the interest of the Sámi people.

Of course, finding one set of interests and goals that would be shared by all activists of a single language community—as already indicated, one language or speech community is always in fact a rather heterogeneous group of people—is difficult if not impossible. The question remains, why should a people speaking a minority language represent itself in a unanimous way? In that sense one could argue that one of the main obstacles for the minority activists is to secure the right to be a heterogeneous people with the right to determinate its own future.

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Fallen Ill in Political Draughts

The Komi-Permyak Language

Indrek Jääts

Abstract In order to better understand the current state of the Komi-Permyak language, one must examine the factors that have affected it. In other words, the issue needs to be looked at from a historical perspective. The present chapter provides an overview of the change in Komi-Permyak's social status since the end of the 19th century, and analyzes the situation that the language currently finds itself in. The observation dwells on state authorities' policies on Komi-Permyak, and the Komi-Permyaks' feelings about their own language. These two factors have definitely become intertwined, yet language policy is of primary relevance.

Keywords Komi-Permyak language · Ethnic identity · Nationalities policy · Russia · Soviet Union

1 Introduction

The number of Komi-Permyaks living in Russia has dropped from 147,000 to 94,000 during the period of 1989–2010. The numbers reflecting the decline of the Komi-Permyak language are not so clear because of changes in census methods, but it is certainly a language in danger. The main reason behind these sad tendencies is the weakness of Komi-Permyak ethnic identity adjoining with ethnic nihilism. Many Komi-Permyaks, especially the urban people, are ashamed of their ethnic background and refuse to pass on their mother tongue to the next generation. Such attitudes have roots deep in history; they were shaped by nationalities and language policies of different regimes (Tsarist, Soviet, and Post-Soviet Russia). Pushing out the Komi-Permyak as a language of instruction started during the 1960s and by now it is taught only as one among the subjects at some schools in the countryside. Its official status is rather uncertain and its functioning as a literary language and language of public life is extremely limited. The ethnically aware fraction of small-size Komi-Permyak intelligentsia has tried to raise the ethnic self-esteem of their countrymen and to suggest them pride for their language and culture after the collapse of the Soviet

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Union, but their success has been quite limited. State power has been suspicious towards their activities and many of them are tired, disappointed and renounced by now. However, the situation is not entirely hopeless yet. The language is still transmitted from generation to generation in several villages, and there are a few active young Komi-Permyaks appreciating the language and culture of their ancestors. The state power has financed some ethnic activities (e.g. the Komi-Permyak newspaper) recently, but does not give up its ambition to control everything. Yet, there is no sign of a critical turn away from the assimilation process which has been lasting for decades, and the Komi-Permyaks and their language are still facing the danger of extinction during the coming generations.

Interviews with Komi-Permyaks, materials from the local press, policy documents, and census data are used as primary sources for the article. The author has visited the Komi-Permyak area on three occasions (2002, 2008, and 2012). He has made a documentary *The Komi-Permyak Autumn* (2009), dedicated to the current situation and the language issues of this ethnic minority.

2 A Peasant Vernacular Under Tsarist Rule

At the end of the 19th century, the Komi-Permyaks were a typical “non-dominant ethnic group” (Hroch 2000). At the time, they were a peasant people, relatively small in population, who lacked their own written culture and social elite.¹ In rare cases a Komi-Permyak of peasant origin may have obtained a higher social status by way of education, but at the same time this also meant assimilation (Russification). The territory of the Komi-Permyaks (the quondam *Perm’ Velikaya*) had been incorporated into Russia as early as the 16th century, and since then, the Komi-Permyaks have experienced the severe and multi-faceted impact of Russia (including Russian peasant colonization). At the end of the 19th century, the Komi-Permyaks lived in relative poverty and somewhat lagged behind their Russian neighbors in terms of socio-political development. The Komi-Permyaks were overwhelmingly illiterate.² The Permyaks’ penury evoked a disdainful attitude towards them among the local, overwhelmingly Russian officials, intelligentsia and even among Russian peasants. The relationship between the Komi-Permyaks and the Russians had evolved into a totally asymmetrical one. The Komi-Permyak language, folklore and traditions abounded with Russian loans. They had partly adopted the surrounding Russian population’s prejudicial and supercilious attitude towards their own ethnic group, language and culture, and thus, their ethnic self-esteem was rather low

¹ There were 104,691 Komi-Permyaks in Russia in 1897 according to census data. Only 0.3 % of them lived in towns. 99.8 % of Komi-Permyaks were peasants by estate (*soslovie*) and 97.9 % derived their main income from agriculture (Bauer et al. 1991, Vol. B, Tables 001, 043, 047).

² Only 7.7 % of the Komi-Permyaks over the age of 10 were able to read (in Russian) in 1897 and only 7 (0.01 %) of them were educated at a level higher than primary. The corresponding figures for Komi (Zyrians) were 17.9 % and 382 (0.36 %); for Russians 29.3 % and 934,852 (2.28 %) (Bauer et al. 1991, Vol. B, Table 041).

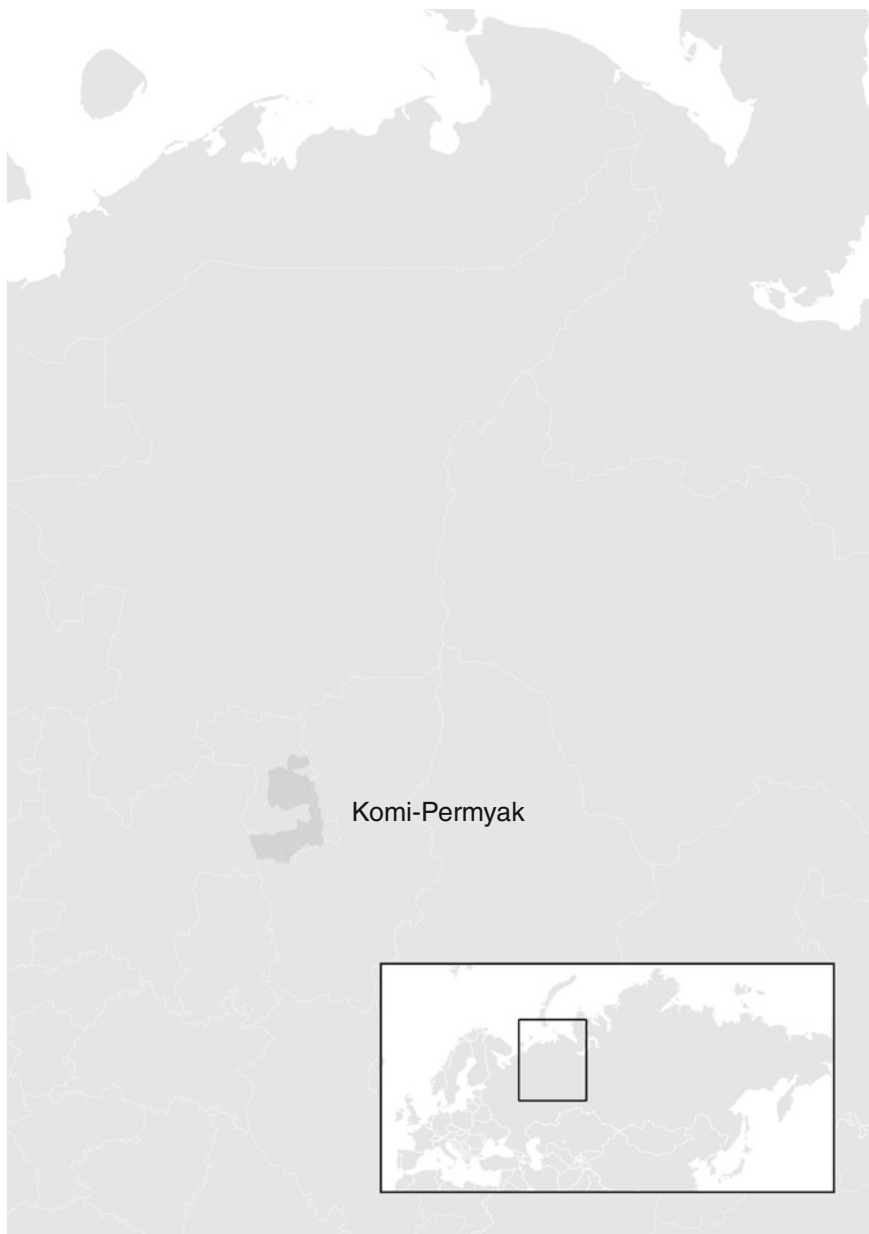


Fig. 1 Map showing the current geographic distribution of the Komi-Permyak language

(Derjabin and Šabaev 1997, 52). The Russian ethnographer Ivan Smirnov, who studied the Komi-Permyaks at the end of the 19th century, writes that in areas with a

mixed population, Russian peasants served as a role model for the Komi-Permyaks in every respect; everything Russian had a specific value in their eyes, and even everyday matters such as gait or clothing details were considered worthy of imitation. Russification, radiating outwards from the Russian-speaking factory settlements of Maikor and Požva, primarily concerned the centers of the Komi-Permyak rural municipalities (*volost*). The Permyaks there wanted to be seen as Russians. Only to the direct categorical question “Are you a Permyak?” would they answer grudgingly “There is no hiding, I am a Permyak.” Proficiency in Russian was already relatively widespread among the Komi-Permyaks during that period, especially among men (Smirnov 1891, 173,176). At the end of the 19th century, concurrently with the gradual development of school networks, the Russification of the Komi-Permyaks was promoted by Russian-language schools. Local dialects were sometimes used at schools as well, during the first years of education, as children usually did not know any Russian when beginning their schooling. Schooling then continued in Russian (Lallukka 2010, 85–86).

Before the 1917 revolution, about 30 different titles, mainly clerical literature and some textbooks, were published in two different Komi-Permyak dialects using the Cyrillic alphabet (Kon’šin and Nikitina 2008, 163; Sagidova 1997, 12–20).

In conclusion, one can say that despite some academic attention (e.g. from Nikolaj Rogov) and interest from missionaries (including the Il’minskii system), the Komi-Permyak language remained, until the end of the Tsarist era, simply one of the many languages spoken by peasants. There was no Komi-Permyak literary standard and the language lacked any official status. The Russian public held the view that the Komi-Permyaks would soon be Russified. This was considered both natural and desirable (Lallukka 2010, 56–63).

3 A Fluttering Takeoff—Increase in the Social Status of Komi-Permyak in the 1920s and 1930s

Soon after the Bolsheviks seized power in October 1917, Soviet Russia began to build up a system of territorial autonomy throughout the country. Nationalistically-minded Komi-Zyrian communists began to demand the establishment of an autonomous Komi unit. They had assumed the idea of the Tsarist-era Komi-Zyrian intellectuals (namely Georgij Lytkin and others) of a unified Komi nation encompassing all of the Komi groups (including the Komi-Permyaks), and of a joint Komi language encompassing all of the different Komi dialects. Thus according to them, the Komi autonomy that would be established was supposed to include the territory of the Komi-Permyaks, and the small Komi-Permyak intelligentsia generally agreed with this. However, the administration of Perm, the provincial center, was overwhelmingly composed of Russians and was firmly against transferring the settlements of the Komi-Permyaks to Komi autonomy, and finally, Moscow also took their side. In 1921, the Autonomous Komi (Zyrian) *Oblast* (Province, Region) was formed (for

detailed information, see Jääts 2009), but the land of the Komi-Permyaks remained outside of its borders. Nonetheless, the Komi-Zyrian communists did not give up their demand of unifying all the Komi areas, but they ultimately failed to achieve it. The Bolshevik central authority did not accept the Komi-Zyrian communists' idea of a single Komi nation and an autonomous unit comprising all Komi groups. Perhaps Moscow feared that an unduly large and independent Komi autonomous territory might be inclined towards separatism. The lack of road connections and economic ties between the Zyrian and Permyak areas was emphasized as the main obstacle in uniting these two regions. As a kind of compromise, the decision of the central authorities envisaged the establishment of a Komi-Permyak National *Okrug* (district) in February 1925. As such, this was the first precedent of its kind (for details, see Jääts 2012). Within the peculiar hierarchical system of national territorial autonomies, established in the Soviet Union during the 1920s and 1930s, the extent of autonomy—of the autonomous units at different levels—was quite dissimilar. The place of each ethnic group in this system was determined by its number and alleged level of socio-political development. It was claimed that smaller and less-developed peoples were not ready for more extensive autonomy and could not realize this goal (due to a lack of qualified administrative personnel from the minority ethnicity). The autonomy attributed to the Komi-Permyaks (their national *okrug*) was significantly smaller than in the case of the autonomous *oblast'* that was regarded as appropriate for the Komi-Zyrians, not to speak of the Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republics (ASSR) or Soviet Socialist Republics (SSR) that larger and more modernized peoples could enjoy. The Komi-Permyak Autonomous *Okrug* was simply a local sub-unit of the newly created Ural *Oblast'*, with some ethnic color to it. The *okrug* had limited autonomy in cultural and educational issues, and was totally subordinate to *oblast'* authorities in other issues. The *okrug* lacked resources to develop local economic life and infrastructure (industry, railway), and the *oblast'* authorities did not contribute much to the development of the economy of the *okrug*. Thus, the Komi-Permyak Autonomous *Okrug* became the economic periphery of the Ural industrial region. Its role was to provide agricultural products and forest material.

Irrespective of the limits of achieved autonomy, the nationalistically minded communist elite of the Komi-Permyaks were initially enthusiastic about it and attempted to eliminate the “backwardness” of the Komi-Permyaks as quickly as possible. The Komi-Zyrian and Komi-Permyak dialects are relatively close and, to a large extent, mutually intelligible. A common written language could have been quite possible. However, Bolshevik Moscow continued to consider the Permyaks an individual ethnic unit and their dialects as a separate language. Thus, pursuant to the Soviet nationalities policy of the time, a literary language of their own was created for the Komi-Permyaks in the 1920s. The creators of the new standard were the Komi-Permyak intellectuals (teachers, cultural employees). In the beginning the so-called Molodtsov alphabet, based mainly on Cyrillic and borrowed from the Komi-Zyrians, was used. During the second half of the 1920s, the number of books that the Komi-Permyaks managed to publish was between 2 and 5 per year, mainly textbooks. The Komi-Permyak ethnic elite considered the establishment of a native-language school network one of their primary tasks. Gradually, the Komi-Permyak language began to

spread as the language of elementary education and by the late 1930s, the majority of Komi-Permyak children already obtained elementary education in their mother tongue (Lallukka 1999, 54).

Likewise, journalism in the Komi-Permyak language also came into being. Ten bilingual (Russian and Komi-Permyak) newspapers (i.e. *rajon* papers, the *okrug* newspaper and the urban newspaper) were issued in the *okrug* during the 1920s and 1930s. The *okrug* newspaper *Göris* ('The Plowman') and the newspaper of Kochevo *rajon* (a district smaller than an *okrug*) were issued in Komi-Permyak only (Aksënova n.d.; Solncev and Michal'čenko 2000, 224). All this was in accordance with the contemporary Soviet policy on nationalities and languages called *korenizacija* (indigenization). Local administration was also to be de-Russified, according to the prevailing communist approach.

At the beginning of 1927, an informal commission for Komization was formed in the *okrug*, headed by Feodor Tarakanov. Its main task was to introduce Komi-Permyak as the second state language in local administrative bodies. The Ural *oblast'* was against it, believing that such a low-level autonomy did not deserve its own local state language. The local executive authority and the *okrug*'s party committee were reluctant, probably afraid of the reaction of the *oblast'*. However, the decision prepared by the commission, "On the leading role of the Komi-Permyak language", was adopted by the local party organization in November 1927. According to this document, there were to be two official languages—Komi-Permyak and Russian—within the *okrug*. As a response to this, the authorities of the Ural *oblast'* arranged a purge of the party in late 1928. A number of leading communists, including members of the Komization commission, but also top officials opposing its views, were accused of "national chauvinism" and incompetence and were forced to leave the *okrug*. Russians from elsewhere were appointed to their positions. The Komization process was stopped (Kon'sin and Derjabin 1992; Kon'sin 2006, 199–200, 206–209).

At the beginning of 1930, however, Komization was launched again, this time upon the initiative of the central committee of the Russian Communist Party, still following their line of *korenizacija*. The authorities of the Ural *Oblast'* were forced to restore the Komization commission, and the *okrug* top leadership was again replaced. In the course of further Komization, the Komi-Permyak language became the main language of public administration in all *okrug* authorities, and a command of Komi-Permyak, both spoken and written, was made compulsory for Permyak officials, and advisable for the others. Decisions were made under pressure from Moscow and Komization took the form of a sped-up campaign. The reality, however, often remained far behind, as there were not enough educated officials with a good command of written Komi-Permyak. When the policy of Moscow changed in the late 1930s, and the pressure from above disappeared, the *oblast'* authorities gave up the idea of Komization and it was stopped again (Kon'sin and Derjabin 1992; Lallukka 1999, 55–56; 2010, 92–93).

Successful Komization and the spread and reinforcement of the Komi-Permyak written language among the people was impeded by the Latinization campaign launched by the central government at the beginning of the 1930s. Due to the external pressure, the Molodtsov alphabet used so far had to be discarded and

replaced with a Latin one. People who had just recently obtained literacy in Komi-Permyak had to retrain for the new alphabet. School textbooks and other printed materials issued in the Molodtsov alphabet became useless and thousands of books were burnt. Teachers who had the courage to confront Latinization were accused of bourgeois nationalism and were dismissed from their posts (Kon'shin and Derjabin 1992; Lallukka 1999, 56).

4 Abrupt Setbacks and Steady Decline: 1937–1989

In 1937, the small Komi-Permyak intelligentsia was hit by political repressions. Altogether, more than 100 intellectuals, mainly teachers, became the victims of these repressions. Among those who perished were the most outstanding Komi-Permyak writers, Mikhail Likhachov and Andrei Zubov. As a rule, they were all accused of counter-revolutionary action, nationalism and separatism (Lallukka 1999, 56–57). The Komi-Permyak intelligentsia and cultural development were struck a blow from which they have not recovered to this day, according to some opinions. It was a real national trauma. Nationalism became a bad word, a means of intimidation. The Komi-Permyaks were terrified and they ceased to have the courage to speak up for their language and cultural development (Kon'shin and Derjabin 1992). This also denoted the beginning of the decades-long decline of the social status of the Komi-Permyak language.

By 1938, Moscow had set aside its dreams of global revolution and focused on “building socialism in one country”. Central authorities now stressed the role of the Russian nation and Russian language in the Soviet Union. All Soviet peoples were forced to consolidate around the Russians. Starting in 1938, the Russian language was an obligatory subject in all Soviet schools. In connection with the new policy, the Latin alphabet was seen as promoting divisions among Soviet nationalities. This, in turn brought about a new reform of orthography, conducted in the form of yet another campaign. This time, the Komi-Permyaks had to switch to Cyrillic. In order to better represent Komi-Permyak in writing, two new letters *i* and *ö* were added to the alphabet. Again, people had to retrain, and a number of printed editions, issued in the Latin alphabet, became wastepaper (Lallukka 1999, 56; Solncev and Michal'čenko 2000, 221).

One of the persistent problems affecting the Komi-Permyaks, which also largely determined the social status of their language and their ethnic self-esteem, was their relatively poor position in the hierarchy of Soviet national territorial autonomies. The Finno-Ugric neighbors of the Komi-Permyaks had indeed made progress in this regard. The Votyak Autonomous *Oblast'* had become the Udmurt Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (ASSR) already in 1934, and the Komi (Zyrian) Autonomous *Oblast'* was made into the Komi Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic in 1936. The Komi-Permyaks had to be content with their national *okrug*. They perceived themselves as a small, insignificant and undeveloped people and this had a detrimental effect on their ethnic feelings of self-worth. The ASSRs had their own

constitution, legislative body, budget and government, whereas the highest local authority of the national *okrug* (as of 1977, autonomous *okrug*) was the soviet of working people's deputies, subordinated to the *oblast'*-level soviet of the same kind, and having a rather limited purview.

The population of the *okrug* increased during the 1950s, in connection with the development of the forestry sector and the concurrent inflow of a Russian-speaking labor force. After the forest resources were exhausted, part of the incoming workforce also left as the economy and the infrastructure in the *okrug* remained relatively underdeveloped and the local standard of living was comparatively low. During the period 1959–1989, the population of the *okrug* decreased from 234,200 to 158,500 (Kon'shin 2007, 58). The more ambitious Komi-Permyaks too began to leave the *okrug*. This was part of the general modernization and urbanization process. The problem was that the only city in the *okrug*, Kudymkar, was relatively small, having only about 30,000 inhabitants. It was primarily an administrative center, with no major industrial enterprises or educational institutions. Kudymkar was not attractive for the many rural people who headed to towns seeking a better life and further education opportunities. Instead, people went farther away, to Perm, Sverdlovsk, Moscow and other cities. Thus, they also left their ethnic and linguistic environment. During the period 1959–1989, the number of Komi-Permyaks living in the *okrug* decreased from 126,700 to 95,400 (Kon'shin 2007, 58) and, simultaneously, the percentage of the urban population among the Komi-Permyaks increased from 14 to 39.8 %. By 1989, only 64.8 % of Komi-Permyaks were living in the *okrug* (Nacional'nyj sostav 1991, 28–77). The rest had moved elsewhere, most of them to Perm *oblast'* and Sverdlovsk *oblast'*, and also to other areas of Russia, Kazakhstan and the Crimea.

The proportion of Komi-Permyaks within the population of the *okrug* was 77 % in 1926 and had dropped to 54.1 % by 1959. Over the following 30 years, the proportion of Komi-Permyaks even went up a little (to 60.2 %), as the Russians who had moved in were now more eager to leave the *okrug* than the Komi-Permyaks (Kon'shin 2007, 58).

Despite the relatively rapid urbanization after World War II, the Komi-Permyaks who had remained in the *okrug* were primarily a rural people. Traditionally, the Komi-Permyaks lived in relatively small villages, which could be relatively distant from each other. Such a settlement pattern was not appropriate for the arrangement of collective and state farms (*kolchoz* and *sovchoz*), and not compatible with the policy of the 1960s and 1970s of converging rural and urban life. The state could not afford to modernize scattered small villages and build relevant infrastructure (roads, schools, service institutions) and so this was considered inexpedient. The solution was seen in consolidating the population into larger central settlements. This was again done in the form of campaigns. In 1959, there were 1,280 rural settlements in the *okrug*; by 2002 the relevant figure had dropped to 706 (Kon'shin 2007, 59). As a rule, small villages had been ethnically homogeneous. The only language of everyday life therein was Komi-Permyak. Larger central settlements, however, were generally multi-ethnic, and the language of inter-ethnic communication was Russian. Likewise, mixed marriages, favored in official rhetoric as a sign of conversion and friendship of peoples, were more frequent in multi-ethnic settlements (let alone cities). As a rule,

the language that mixed families chose was Russian, of much greater prestige than Komi-Permyak, and children grew up as speakers of Russian. All this contributed to the (linguistic) assimilation of the Komi-Permyaks.

The share of those Komi-Permyaks who, during the census, had claimed Komi-Permyak as their mother tongue declined during 1959–1989 from 87.8 to 71.1 % (Itogi 1963, Table 53 ; Nacional'nyj sostav 1991, 28–33). In reality, linguistic assimilation could be even more extensive as those Komi-Permyaks who had already switched to Russian in their everyday life and more or less forgotten Komi-Permyak, could still claim that their “mother tongue” was Komi-Permyak simply because of the peculiarities of the Soviet nationalities policy and census practice. Soviet people tended to understand the question about their “mother tongue” as another question about their ethnicity (*nacional'nost'*), which was fixed in their internal passports. “Mother tongue” was understood in the census context as merely a symbol of ethnic identity or as the language of one's childhood home, not the primary language of one's everyday life in the present (cf. Tiškov 2003, 209–222).

The educational reform conducted during Khrushchev's era, in 1958–1959, was a retreat from the principle that a child needs to obtain at least primary education in his or her mother tongue. The reform stipulated that the language of instruction in schools was now to be decided by the parents. What happened in the case of smaller ethnic groups, who had a low status in the hierarchy of Soviet national autonomies, and among whom bilingualism was already widespread, was that their mother tongue was gradually pushed out of schools and Russian became the language of instruction (Silver 1974; Kreindler 1982; Anderson and Silver 1984).

The keywords of the nationalities policy during the Khrushchev era were the mutual conversion (*sbliženie*) and later merger (*slijanie*) of Soviet peoples. During the time of Brezhnev, a new idea of the *soveckij narod* (‘Soviet nation’) with Russian as the common language was launched.

The changeover of schools (including elementary schools) that had Komi-Permyak as a language of instruction to Russian commenced in the mid 1960s (Neroznak 2002, 178; Malcev 2000, 148–147). By the beginning of the 1970s, Komi-Permyak as a language of instruction was only maintained in grades 1–3, and by the middle of the 1980s, Komi-Permyak ceased to function as a language of instruction in schools. On the one hand, this had to do with the nationalities policy of the authorities, but on the other hand, it was the consequence of choices made by Komi-Permyak parents. Russian was seen as the language of social advancement and a large number of people preferred to put their children in Russian-language classes, even if the children could not speak any Russian before entering school, so that they would acquire fluent Russian (Lallukka 1999, 58). Likewise, many Komi-Permyak parents, especially those living in Kudymkar or outside the *okrug*, decided to communicate with their children at home in Russian, not in Komi-Permyak. For many, the Komi-Permyak language was associated with the past and something to get rid of, while Russian was connected with modernity and the future.

Likewise, the role of the Komi-Permyak language in printed media also began to decline in the 1950s. The *okrug* newspaper *Göris* began to be published in Russian already in 1951. Still, some *rajon* newspapers in the Komi-Permyak language con-

tinued to exist until the end of the 1960s (Malcev 2000, 147; Neroznak 2002, 178; Aksënova n.d.).

5 A New Beginning? 1989–2012

The processes (*glasnost*, *perestroika*, various socio-political and national movements) that shook the entire Soviet Union at the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, were also reflected in the Komi-Permyak Autonomous *Okrug*. A society for preserving the Komi-Permyak language and culture, Jugör ('Lutsh') was founded in 1989. The local press began to publish articles by Komi-Permyak intellectuals that dealt with Komi-Permyak history in a new, national spirit and sought opportunities for the rebirth of Komi-Permyak language and culture (cf. Kon'shin and Derjabin 1992). All kinds of meetings, debates and conferences were held where nationalistically-minded intellectuals could discuss matters that they had so far kept silent about. Still, all this was limited to a relatively narrow circle of people, while the majority of the Komi-Permyaks remained passive, and moreover, some of them even had a hostile attitude towards national endeavors ("nationalism"), discredited during the Soviet period.

In March 1992, the Komi-Permyak Autonomous *Okrug*, together with every other autonomous *okrug*, became a subject of the Russian Federation with expanded autonomy. Now, the *okrug* had its own legislative body, budget, government and direct representation in Moscow. At the same time, the *okrug* still remained a part of the Perm *Oblast'*. Such a schizophrenic situation in constitutional law caused problems, and attempts were made to solve them through various bipartite and tripartite agreements. In the economic sense, the *okrug* remained weak. The demand for forest material decreased abruptly, in connection with the collapse of the Soviet economy, and the agricultural sector entered a deep crisis. The budget of the *okrug* consisted overwhelmingly of subsidies received from Moscow, and the relatively low living standard at the time dropped even further. The income of inhabitants of the *okrug* in 2004 was approximately 3 times smaller than the Russian average. Local salaries were about half the size of the salaries in Perm *Oblast'* (Kon'shin 2007, 56–61).

5.1 Demography

During the period 1989–2010, the number of Komi-Permyaks living in Russia dropped from 147,269 to 94,456 (regarding the data of 2010, see FSGS 2010, volume 4, Table 1; for the data of 1989, see Nacional'nyj sostav 1991, 28–33). The reasons for this were, on one hand, the demographic crisis that had hit post-Soviet Russia as a whole, and on the other hand, the process of assimilation.

The population of the *okrug* had declined from 158,500 to 136,100 and the number of Komi-Permyaks living in the *okrug* from 95,400 to 80,300 during the period

1989–2002.³ The percentage of the Komi-Permyaks in the population of the *okrug* remained relatively stable, from 60.2 to 59 % (cf. Nacional’nyj sostav 1991, 28–77; FSGS 2004, volume 4, Table 3). Such a large proportion of the titular ethnic group within the population of an autonomous unit is rare in Russia. The Komi-Permyaks form the majority population in the countryside of the *okrug* (except in the villages of the Jurla *rajon* and Gainy *rajon* where Russians predominate). It is noteworthy that in Kudymkar (population 30,162), the only city in the *okrug*, Komi-Permyaks constitute about 53 % of the population. Indeed, this is also a rare indicator among the non-Russians of Russia. To this day, the Komi-Permyaks have remained a rural people first of all and are experiencing all the intrinsic problems characteristic of rural Russia, namely poverty, social depression and alcoholism.⁴

The Komi-Permyaks’ level of education is relatively poor. According to the data of 2010, only 10.4 % of Komi-Permyaks have a higher education. The relevant indicator among the Russians was 24.3⁵ (FSGS 2010, volume 4, Table 13). Among the Komi-Permyaks, the number of those studying at an institution of higher education was 68 per 10,000 inhabitants. The respective all-Russian average was 448 (Kon’sin 2007, 56–61). This means that the Komi-Permyak intelligentsia is relatively small and few are from the younger generations. Furthermore, a large portion of educated Komi-Permyaks live outside the *okrug*.

5.2 *Ethnic Identity*

The attitudes of the Komi-Permyaks with regard to their language are closely connected to their ethnic identity. The language is the main ethnic marker for the Komi-Permyaks, the most significant collective social feature distinguishing them from Russians. There are no specific ways of life, religious beliefs or racial peculiarities distinguishing Komi-Permyaks from Russians. This means that the Komi-Permyaks as an ethnic unit will probably disappear if the Komi-Permyak language dies out. On the other hand, it means that assimilation (Russification) is relatively easy for the Komi-Permyaks: just forget your language and nothing stops you from assimilating!

³ The Komi-Permyak *okrug* had a population of 114,839 in 2012 according to the Russian Federal State Statistics Service.

⁴ The share of urban population has even slightly decreased after 1989 and was 36.8 % in 2010 (cf. Volume 4, Tab 1 in FSGS 2010). It seems that assimilation of the Komi-Permyaks is faster in towns.

⁵ The data refers to people 15 years of age and older. Higher education means completed higher education and degree studies (*poslevuzovskaja*).

The ethnic identity of the Komi-Permyaks is relatively weak. They tend to adopt negative stereotypes that Russians have about them, and are not too willing to identify themselves with their ethnic group. This is particularly true in the case of more ambitious urban residents and younger people. A large proportion of the Komi-Permyaks find a way out by considering themselves as partially Russians (justifying this by e.g. having some Russians in the family as is quite common due to the relatively long-term and widespread habit of ethnically mixed marriages), or emphasizing that they are citizens of Russia (*rossijane*) (Šabaev and Konakov 1997, 104).

The ethnic identity of the Komi-Permyaks is very closely related to rural life, yet this sector has been experiencing severe recession in Russia after the collapse of the Soviet Union, and its prestige is rather low. The majority of Komi-Permyaks living in Kudymkar were born in villages, and the Komi-Permyak language and identity become relevant for them only if they visit their home village (Šabaev and Konakov 1997, 104). Being Komi-Permyak and speaking the language is not relevant for the urban environment, according to their understanding, and are left behind in one's home village along with rubber boots and oilcloth.

Negative ethnic self-stereotypes, widespread among the Komi-Permyaks (including even educated people) who have left the *okrug*, depict the Komi-Permyaks primarily as uneducated bumpkins, drunkards who cannot cope with their lives and suffer in poverty. Those who have left do not want to identify themselves with such people and when talking about Komi-Permyaks, the pronoun "they" is used (Šabaev and Konakov 1997, 104–105).

90 % of the Komi-Permyaks have relatives outside the *okrug*, and those who have moved elsewhere have a relatively substantial impact on the ones who have stayed put. As a rule, the living standard of the people who have moved away is higher and they act as mediators between the (Russian) center and the (Komi-Permyak) periphery (Šabaev and Derjabin 1997, 106–107).

In their new locations, the Komi-Permyaks do not function as a diaspora. For instance, in Perm, where there are thousands of them, Komi-Permyaks have not set up their own schools or ethnic organizations as many other ethnic groups have done. They do not communicate on ethnic grounds, but instead they are ashamed of their ethnicity and try to hide it.

The Komi-Permyaks' relationship with the Russians is still totally asymmetrical. The Komi-Permyaks regard themselves as a provincial people and act accordingly. For them, the Russian language is a window to the big world, and everything which is Russian is prestigious and associated with wealth and success, mediated by glossy magazines, the film and music industries, or television. The majority of the Komi-Permyaks are oriented toward the Russian professional and mass culture as, in their opinion, their own little ethnic culture has little to offer. At present, the Komi-Permyaks are only on the verge of discovering how to render value to an ancestral culture and ecological way of life, in their contemporary western meaning. However, these values would probably never attract the majority of Komi-Permyaks.

A fraction of the Komi-Permyak intelligentsia, more or less ethnically aware, has tried to do something for raising Komi-Permyaks' ethnic self-esteem and for preserving and developing their language, but their success has remained limited.

It is still rather common that the children of the Komi-Permyak cultural and political elite do not speak the Komi-Permyak language. It seems that a large part of the national elite tends toward assimilation (Lobanova 2006).

5.3 *The Legal Status of the Language*

The expansion of the political autonomy of the Komi-Permyak Autonomous *Okrug* did not bring about a substantial improvement in the social status of the Komi-Permyak language. It would appear that the local, largely ethnically Komi-Permyak political elite were not greatly interested in linguistic or cultural issues. In June 1992, a proposal was made to the congress of the peoples deputies of the *okrug* from all levels, to once again grant the Komi-Permyak language official status, but this was not supported by the delegates, even though the majority of them were Komi-Permyaks. Pursuant to the Constitution of the Russian Federation (Article 68), valid since 1993, the official language in Russia is the Russian language. Only republics (e.g. the Komi Republic, Republic of Udmurtia, or Republic of Mari El) are entitled to establish their own official languages that can be used together with Russian. Nevertheless, the Komi-Permyak language did indeed obtain a certain official status as the language of the *okrug*'s titular ethnic group (*titul'nyi jazyk* 'titular language'). As the Charter (*Ustav*) of the Komi-Permyak Autonomous *Okrug*, adopted in December 1994, stipulates:

The official language within the territory of the Komi-Permyak Autonomous *Okrug* is the Russian language. In official communication it is permitted to use also the Komi-Permyak language side by side with the Russian language. (cit. Solncev and Michal'čenko 2000, 222; cf. also Neroznak 2002, 177)

Several autonomous *okrugs* have been abolished in Russia on the initiative of central authorities in the new millennium. These *okrugs*, subjects of the Russian Federation, were formerly parts of other subjects (i.e. *oblast'* and *kraj*), their economies were weak and their budget heavily dependent on subsidies from Moscow. The Komi-Permyak Autonomous *Okrug* was the first to lose its political autonomy (its own local parliament, budget and direct representation in Moscow) and was joined with Perm *Oblast'* (2005) after a referendum conducted in 2003. Komi-Permyaks voted for unification mainly because they hoped to improve the local economy by joining the relatively wealthy Perm *Oblast'*. They were not especially concerned about the fate of their language or culture. Besides, Perm as well as Moscow had promised that the preservation of Komi-Permyak language and culture was guaranteed. Indeed, according to Article 42 of the Charter (*Ustav*) of the Perm *Kraj* (a subject of the Russian Federation born after the merger of the Komi-Permyak AO and Perm *Oblast'*), the Komi-Permyak language retained principally the same rights as it had before unification. The Komi-Permyak language could be used in official communication, alongside Russian (*Ustav Permskogo kraja*). However, the Komi-Permyaks no longer have practically any legislative power to protect and develop

their language. Their area—still an *okrug*, but no longer autonomous—has only 2 seats out of 60 in the regional parliament of the Perm *Kraj*. The local executive—the head of the *okrug*—is at the same time a member of the cabinet of ministers of the *kraj*.

5.4 *Fields of Use*

There are two main styles in the Komi-Permyak language—the everyday spoken language and the literary language (Neroznak 2002, 178). The fact is that the Komi-Permyak language has remained, first and foremost, a spoken language and its use as a written language is extremely limited. Russian is overwhelmingly used in written contexts instead. Active Komi-Permyak literacy is not widespread. There are more people who can read in Komi-Permyak, but many of them still prefer to read in Russian, as they are simply more used to it. Indeed, there is not much to read in Komi-Permyak. The amount of printed material is very scarce, for there is no relevant demand, and there is no demand because there is no reading habit—there is no habit as there is nothing to read. At the same time, a command of the Russian language is quite general—the Russian-language schools have ensured this.

The main language of public life in the Komi-Permyak *okrug* is Russian. The Komi-Permyak language is used sparingly in local administration (at the level of the *okrug* and *rajon*), and only as a spoken language, but not when speaking publicly. In courts, interpretation into Komi-Permyak is provided, if necessary, at least theoretically. In the agricultural sphere, the Komi-Permyak language is used quite widely, but in forestry, the dominant language is Russian as workers are usually multi-ethnic. In trade and advertising, product descriptions and manuals, the Komi-Permyak language is used very rarely. Likewise, Komi-Permyak is practically not used in the Orthodox Church, though a couple of enthusiasts have translated some ecclesiastical literature into Komi-Permyak (Solncev and Michal'čenko 2000, 222–228; Aksënova n.d.).

Today, Komi-Permyak is used as the language of communication only in some rural kindergartens. As a subject, the language is studied in the so-called ethnic (*nacional'nye*) schools from grades 1 to 11 (Solncev and Michal'čenko 2000, 223–225, 230).

During the academic year 1993/1994, there were 196 public schools in the *okrug*, 88 of them so-called ethnic schools where the Komi-Permyak language was taught as a subject. Altogether, 6,950 children learned Komi-Permyak, i.e. 27 % of the pupils in the *okrug*. As Komi-Permyaks form around 60 % of the population in the *okrug*, one can state that approximately half of the Komi-Permyak pupils studied their mother tongue at school (Lallukka 1999, 58–59). The share of the schoolchildren learning Komi-Permyak did increase slightly during the late 1990s, but began to decline again later. The reason is that small rural schools, where Komi-Permyak was taught, have been closed down in large numbers. This probably does not imply a policy targeted directly against teaching the Komi-Permyak language; rather, the authorities simply wish to optimize the school network, make it more efficient. In the Komi-Permyak

okrug, such a process nonetheless has a certain ethnic tinge to it, but the authorities have so far ignored this.

According to the data of 2007, the number of schools remaining in the *okrug* was 99, with 15,529 pupils. The number of so-called ethnic schools was 38, with 3,525 students, i.e. 22.7 % of the pupils in the *okrug*. Out of 148 kindergartens, 53 were ethnic ones, attended by 845 children, i.e. 14.3 % of preschool-age children. In Kudymkar, the capital city, there are no kindergartens or public schools where Komi-Permyak is taught. The teachers of the Komi-Permyak language for elementary and secondary schools are trained in the Kudymkar Pedagogical College, as well as at the Perm State Pedagogical University (Kon'shin and Nikitina 2008, 172–173; Aksënova n.d.).

It is still quite common among the Komi-Permyaks, particularly in Kudymkar, that parents try to speak to their children only in Russian, even if they themselves communicate with each other in Komi-Permyak.

With us, you know, our mother and father communicated with each other in Komi-Permyak, but with the children they spoke Russian. They didn't scold us when we sometimes said some words in Komi-Permyak, they just didn't communicate with us in Komi-Permyak. Nonetheless, we, the children, know a little Komi-Permyak.⁶

The prestige of the Komi-Permyak language is low, a command of this language is considered useless at best, or even harmful—the Komi-Permyak accent tends to be seen as a social disability and parents are afraid that even a slightly weaker command of Russian would impede their children's further educational and career opportunities.

In the past, and even still today, people used to say that one needed Komi-Permyak only as far as Rakšino,⁷ that in real life it is only a hindrance, an obstacle in passing the national standardized exams. This was even discussed in newspapers quite recently.⁸

Even in the so-called ethnic schools, instruction in one's mother tongue takes place only on a voluntary basis.

If the parents do not want this, their child does not have to learn the language and is exempted from Komi-Permyak classes. Naturally, this also depends on how educated the parent is, whether s/he understands the importance of the language.⁹

Thus, in the regional centers of Jusva and Kočëvo, the teaching of Komi-Permyak has already been abolished. Alevtina Lobanova, the head of the Institute of the Komi-Permyak language, history, and traditional culture refers to occasions when parents came to school and demonstratively threw down, tore up or stepped on Komi-Permyak language textbooks, and shouted that they do not need this language, that

⁶ Kolčurina, Svetlana (Interview with the tutor of the youth organization *Roza vetrov* on September 9, 2008).

⁷ Rakšino is a village at the southern border of the Komi-Permyak territory.

⁸ Klimov, Vasilij (Interview with a Komi-Permyak author on September 15, 2008).

⁹ Ermakova, Tat'jana (Interview with a teacher of the Komi-Permyak language at Ošyb secondary school on September 13, 2008).

their children would not start learning it, and wanted this subject removed from the curriculum (Lobanova 2006).

The state of Komi-Permyak printed media is rather sad. At the beginning of 2007, 2 *okrug*-wide newspapers (the daily *Parma* and the weekly *Parma-Novosti*) were issued along with five *rajon* newspapers. All of these publications were in Russian. In addition, the *okrug* is covered by the federal and regional Russian-language press. Twice a month, a Komi-Permyak page *Komi govk* ('The Komi Echo') was published as a supplement to *Parma* (the former *Po leninskomu puti/Göris*'). Materials in the Komi-Permyak language have sometimes also been published in *rajon* papers (e.g. Kudymkar *rajon* newspaper *Invenskij kraj*).¹⁰ A Komi-Permyak and Russian-language bilingual children's magazine, *Sil'kan* ('Bellflower') has been issued since 1993, but has constantly struggled with financial difficulties.¹¹ The magazines *In'va* and *Bitširok*, have been published irregularly. A newspaper in Komi-Permyak, *Kama kytšyn* ('Upper Kama') began to be issued in 2010, financed by the *kraj* government. A Komi-Permyak newspaper will hopefully disseminate reading habits in the language and have a positive impact on Komi-Permyak's prestige. A new bilingual (Komi-Permyak and Russian) magazine *Sizimok* was also initiated in 2010 with *kraj* support to popularize the Komi-Permyak language and culture among children.

The position of the Komi-Permyak language in the local broadcast media has significantly improved following the collapse of the Soviet Union. A local television station was established in autumn 1995. Programs in Komi-Permyak have been broadcast since the spring of 1996 and initially formed 10 % of the entire broadcast volume. The total amount of Komi-Permyak radio programs in 1995 was approximately 40 hours (45 minutes a week, approximately 11 % of local programming). The archive of the local state-owned television and radio company (now the department of the Perm GTRK) contains sound recordings and film tapes in the Komi-Permyak language, which once in a while are aired (Solncev and Michal'čenko 2000, 225–226; Aksénova n.d.).

In 2007, the local department of the Perm GTRK produced 262 hours of television programs and 296 hours of radio broadcasts. About a third of these programs were in the Komi-Permyak language (Kon'šin and Nikitina 2008, 180). The obstacles in increasing the share of Komi-Permyak programs are the lack of funding, limited staff with a proper command of the language and a lack of Komi-Permyak neologisms for many modern phenomena. On weekdays, Komi-Permyak programs air for 6 minutes in the morning and 25 minutes in the evening, mainly local news and cultural programs. Local officials of Komi-Permyak origin, who can speak the language in their everyday life, refuse to give interviews in the Komi-Permyak language as they are not able to talk about their official affairs in Komi-Permyak; they lack the necessary vocabulary. Thus, they explain their subject matters in Russian, the way

¹⁰ Kon'šina, Elena (Interview with the editor-in-chief of *Invenskij kraj*, the newspaper of Kudymkar *rajon* on September 10, 2008); Kon'šin and Nikitina (cf. also 2008, 180–181), Neroznak (2002, 178), and Aksénova (n.d.).

¹¹ Voilokova, Ljudmila (Interview with the editor-in-chief of children's magazine *Sil'kan* on September 10, 2008).

they are accustomed to. For the time being, there are no funds for subtitling in the Komi-Permyak language.¹² There is no actual need for the subtitles as the majority of the audience would understand Russian perfectly well, but Komi-Permyak subtitles would help to create reading habits in this language and raise its prestige. Now, the local news program in Komi-Permyak actually looks very much like Russian. A positive sign is that the private radio companies broadcasting in the region have started to pay some attention to their Komi-Permyak-speaking audience. Naturally, the inhabitants of the Komi-Permyak *Okrug* do have the possibility of listening to and watching the various nationwide and regional Russian radio and television stations.

The total number of titles in the Komi-Permyak language is approximately 450, mainly textbooks and propagandistic literature from the Soviet era, but also around 90 books of poetry, 50 plays, seven novels, plus several folklore collections (Solncev and Michal'čenko 2000, 222–224).

In recent years, the local publishing house has annually put out 2–3 titles in Komi-Permyak (or bilingual, Komi-Permyak and Russian). For instance, in 2007, the Komi-Permyak state publishing house issued 9 publications, including 1 in Komi-Permyak and 3 bilingual ones (Kon'šin and Nikitina 2008, 179). The publication of books is commissioned and paid for by the *okrug* or *kraj* government. Nonetheless, there is a wide selection of books in Russian. In any event, the overwhelming majority prefers to read in Russian. The fact that Komi-Permyak is not functioning as a written language has already been discussed above. A professional theater, founded in Kudymkar already in 1931, is still operating, despite problems with the new building that have gone on for years. Since its foundation, more than 650 productions have been staged, including approximately 20 in the Komi-Permyak language (Solncev and Michal'čenko 2000, 226; Aksënova n.d.). The Komi-Permyaks are fairly proud of their theater, and one would think that there would be an audience for a larger number of Komi-Permyak productions, as a poor command of written Komi-Permyak would not be an obstacle in watching the performance. Still, the scarcity of Komi-Permyak playwrights, as well as actors with good command of Komi-Permyak remains a problem.

6 Concluding Remarks

The main obstacle in preserving and developing the Komi-Permyak language is the weakness of the Komi-Permyaks' ethnic identity, even their ethnic nihilism, and the related belittling attitude towards their own language. This is the result of various historical factors, and to a large extent that of the nationalities policy of the state. The homeland of the Komi-Permyaks has been a relatively poor area for centuries, lagging behind its neighbors socially and economically. It is a classical example of a periphery ethnically different from the center. The local people haven't found much

¹² Kleščin, Evgenij (Interview with the deputy director of the Perm branch of the State Tele-Radio Company on September 15, 2008).

to be proud of. Many ambitious and educated persons of Komi-Permyak origin have managed to leave this backwater, assimilating voluntarily. This has been relatively easy as the language is the main characteristic distinguishing Komi-Permyaks from Russians. The Komi-Permyaks' own ethnic elite (teachers, officials, etc.) evolved relatively late and remained few. They undertook a serious endeavor to improve the socioeconomic situation of their people in the 1920s and 1930s. A certain "national awakening" occurred, but the process was oppressed by the limited autonomy they received. Their relatively poor standing in the hierarchy of Soviet national autonomies lowered the Komi-Permyaks' ethnic self-esteem. Heavy repressions devastating the Komi-Permyak national intelligentsia in the late 1930s created an atmosphere of fear which to this day is not forgotten.

Present-day Komi-Permyak intellectuals may have a possibility to enhance the self-image of the Komi-Permyaks, and increase the prestige of being a Komi-Permyak and speaking the language. However, this necessitates earnest intention and self-sacrificing work, perhaps even a readiness to antagonize the representatives of power in Perm and Moscow. In general, the Komi-Permyak intelligentsia is weak and has, to a great extent, relinquished the idea of preserving their ethnic group and language, although there are some exceptions. Thus, a citizens' movement, Komi-Permiatskii Narod was registered in 2000, aiming at contributing to the preservation and development of the Komi-Permyak language and culture (Kon'shin and Nikitina 2008, 181–182). At the same time, it can be said that local ethnic organizations have become somewhat stagnant. Their members are disappointed and tired, and are afraid to have a louder say for the protection of their language and culture as they are scared of repercussions from the authorities (mainly losing their job).

However, the situation of the Komi-Permyaks and their language is not so bad at all when one compares it with the Votians, Izhorians, Vepsians, Karelians or the "small-numbered indigenous people of the North". Tens of thousands of Komi-Permyaks are still living compactly in their villages in the north-western corner of Perm *Kraj*. There are thousands of children who speak Komi-Permyak as their first language, and this language is even taught at local schools to some degree. A literary language exists and a certain amount of Komi-Permyak literature has accumulated over the decades. It is not too late yet to work for preservation and development of the Komi-Permyak language, but one cannot wait either. Today one cannot hope that a language will persist spontaneously for generations, like in Tsarist times. The role of language in society has been changed in the process of modernization. In the era of general literacy, compulsory education, mass media and mass culture, language plays a different role than before.

However, not every language.

It is delightful that there are young Komi-Permyaks who are ready to do something for their people and language, and who seem to be relatively free of the fear that constrains the older generations.¹³ It is also a pleasing sign that the Komi-Permyak language is finding its way to local youth culture. Several bands have started to

¹³ Choroševa, Elena (Interview with a young activist on September 16, 2008); Vyčikin, Vitalij (Interview with a young activist on September 16, 2008).

perform songs in Komi-Permyak, and though for the time being this is merely a curiosity, it is an exception from the rule that songs are always in Russian.

No one has played such youth rock in the Komi-Permyak language. Maybe older people also used to have some rock songs in Komi-Permyak? Whether young people have done anything? ...not much. These songs are better accepted than the Russian ones. It is interesting and unusual for the audience. They like it better than in Russian. While many of them don't understand what the songs are about, they are pleased.¹⁴

One possibility to reinterpret being a Komi-Permyak and the local rural life in positive way is, in my opinion, to spread the ideas of green consciousness, ecological lifestyle, organic agriculture, etc, which are widely disseminated in the West. To a great extent, the Komi-Permyaks already have all this, but they simply do not know how to render value to these things in the contemporary sense. Targeted grants could be used to support the development of Komi-Permyak media and literature (including plays).

External interest in how the Komi-Permyaks and their language are faring is also important, as are the diverse contacts that the Komi-Permyaks have with the wider world. Outside interest would raise prestige of the Komi-Permyak language and force the central and local authorities of Russia to pay more attention to this people and contribute to the development of their culture and language. Indeed, Russia wishes to leave an impression to the world of being a civilized multi-ethnic country where the preservation and development of minority languages and cultures is guaranteed by law.¹⁵

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¹⁴ Interview with students of the Kudymkar branch of the Udmurt State University on September 17, 2008.

¹⁵ See Articles 19/2, 26/2, 29/2, 68/3 in the Russian Constitution (*Konstitucija Rossijskoj Federacii*) from 1992.

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Finnic Minorities of Ingria

The Current Sociolinguistic Situation and Its Background

Natalia Kuznetsova, Elena Markus and Mehmet Muslimov

Abstract The chapter discusses Finnic languages spoken in Ingria (Votic, Ingrian and Ingrian Finnish), gives a detailed overview of the current language situation, and analyses the processes that have caused a language and identity shift. There are many common features in the history of these languages, and they greatly influenced each other through intensive language contacts. Nonetheless, the current situation shows individual characteristics for each language. The paper addresses the following issues for each of the three languages: the dialectal structure and historical language contacts; contemporary language situation (the number and geographical distribution of the speakers, their age, gender, mobility, contacts with other languages and attitudes towards the native language); historical background of the present situation; and prospects for the near future and recent language maintenance and revitalization efforts.

Keywords Finnic languages of Ingria · Sociolinguistic situation · Ethnic history

1 Introduction

The chapter discusses Finnic languages spoken in Ingria, gives a detailed overview of the current sociolinguistic situation, and analyses the processes that caused the language and identity shift.

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Fig. 1 Map of the Finnic languages spoken in Ingria

Ingria is a historical territory with the western border along the river Narva (*Narova*)¹ and the lake Peipus (*Čudskoje*), the northern border along the Gulf of Finland and the Rajajoki (*Sestra*) river; the eastern border is the lake Laatokka (*Ladoga*) and river Lavajoki (*Lava*), and the southern border more or less corresponds to the southern borders of the Jaama (*Kingisepp*), Volossova (*Volosovo*), Hatsina (*Gatčina*) and Tusina (*Tosno*) districts of the Leningrad region.

At present, Ingria is home to four Finnic ethnic groups: Votes, Ingrians, Ingrian Finns and Estonians. A convenient way to distinguish between their languages is by comparing the verb ‘to speak’, as it has different stems in each language: *pajatta-* in Votic, *läkkää-* in Ingrian, *haasta-/huasta-*, *laati-/luati-/loati-* or *uhhoo-* in Ingrian Finnish and *rääki-* in Estonian. This distinction generally corresponds to the traditional classification based on linguistic criteria.² Votic and Ingrian are considered

¹ For geographical objects, original Finnic names are given first and Russian names follow in parentheses when the place is mentioned for the first time. When later mentioned, only Finnic variants are given. If the Finnic name coincides with the Russian one, it is not doubled in parentheses. There are no universal standards for Finnic hydronyms and toponyms in Ingria. Below we generally follow the Finnish variants of names given in the maps of Ingria by Mustonen (1933), and Randefelt (1992). For the names not indicated in these maps we give variants found in other sources or recorded from the speakers of the corresponding languages.

² A classification based, for example, on endonyms or exonyms of Finnic people in Ingria in some cases gives different results (Muslimov 2005, 41–71). The ethnic identity of a person in this area does not always correspond to the language that (s)he speaks (some examples will be mentioned below).

separate languages (for a different view on Ingrian, see for example Kettunen 1957). Ingrian Finnish is understood as a group of Finnish dialects on the territory of Ingria. Estonians living in Ingria speak a variety of standard Estonian.

There are many common features in the history of these languages in the 20th century, and they greatly influenced each other through intensive language contacts. However, the current sociolinguistic situation shows individual characteristics for each language. This is why it is interesting to compare all the Finnic languages of Ingria in a single overview. Unfortunately, we do not have enough material on the current state of Estonian in Ingria,³ thus only Votic, Ingrian and Ingrian Finnish will be discussed in detail below. We look specifically on dialectal structure and historical language contacts, on the contemporary sociolinguistic situations and their historical background as well as on recent language maintenance and revitalization efforts and prospects for the near future.

2 Dialectal Structure and Historical Contacts

The current dialectal diversity of Finnic languages in Ingria is to a large extent the result of multiple language contacts. In this section we give an overview of the main dialects and indicate the sources of interdialectal influence. The recent influence of standard Finnish and Estonian on the languages discussed will be analyzed in the next section.

2.1 Votic

Votic was traditionally divided into four dialects: Kreevin, Eastern Votic, Western Votic, and Kukkusi Votic.

Kreevin

Kreevin is the dialect of the Votes who were relocated to the territory of contemporary Latvia as prisoners of war under the Livonian Order in the 15th century. The last speakers of this dialect died in the middle of the 19th century (Winkler 1997, 30).

³ On the history of this group see a fundamental work by Musaev (2009). In 2012–2013, Mehmet Muslimov together with V. S. Kuleshov examined the present state of Estonian varieties in Ingria. Estonian has almost disappeared from this territory; Muslimov and Kuleshov found only a dozen semi-speakers and a couple of more or less fluent speakers. These Estonians were born in Western and Central Ingria, in the pre-war parishes of Kattila, Novasolkka, Moloskovitsa, Kupanitsa, Serepetta and Koprina. Also, mixed Estonian and Ingrian Finnish speakers were found in the villages of Tikanpesä (*Tikopis'*) and Brömbeli (*Br'umbel'*) near Jaama.

Eastern Votic

Eastern Votic was spoken in the villages of Itčäpäivä (*Icipino*), Mahu (*Podmoš'je*), Iivanaisi (*Ivanovskoe*), Kliimettina (*Klimotino*), Koslova (*Gostilovo*), and Kaprio (*Kopor'je*). The last speaker of this dialect died in 1976 (Ernits 2005, 87). Eastern Votic was influenced by the Hevaha dialect of Ingrian.

Western Votic

Western Votic was a traditional name for all Votic varieties other than those listed above. All Western Votic varieties are located in the Kingisepp district of the Leningrad region.

In fact, Western Votic can hardly be considered a single dialect, because central Votic varieties [spoken in the villages around Kattila (*Kotly*)] demonstrate many differences from the Lower Luga varieties (spoken in the villages of Joenperä (*Krakol'je*), Liivakylä (*Peski*), Luutsa (*Lužicy*), and Rajo (*Mežniki*) in the so-called *Vaipooli* region). We opt for splitting Western Votic into two dialects: Central Votic and Lower Luga Votic; the same opinion was expressed by Ernits (2005, 77–79). Lower Luga Votic was very much influenced by Lower Luga Ingrian (practically all Lower Luga villages used to have mixed Ingrian and Votic populations). Central Votic was influenced by the local Ingrian Finnish varieties (Muslimov 2003). At present Central Votic is extinct, but there are several speakers of Lower Luga Votic.

The Kukkusi dialect

The Kukkusi dialect is spoken in a single village, Kukkusi (*Kurovicy*), located on the eastern bank of the Luga river in proximity to several Ingrian villages. It is a mixed language, with Ingrian vocabulary and phonetics and substrate Votic grammatical markers (Suhonen 1985; Muslimov 2005; Markus and Rozhanskiy 2012). Thus, it is difficult to qualify it as a Votic or an Ingrian dialect. We mention it among other Votic dialects following Ariste (1948) and some other works.⁴ Several scholars starting already from Adler (1996) declared the Kukkusi dialect extinct. However, at least three speakers of this variety were alive in 2006.

2.2 Ingrian

Ingrian has traditionally been divided into four dialects: Oredeži, Hevaha, Soikkola, and Lower Luga (Porkka 1885; Laanest 1966).

⁴ At the same time (Laanest 1966), the Kukkusi variety is treated as a dialect of Ingrian. The verb 'to speak' has the stem *läkkää-* in Kukkusi.

The Oredeži dialect

The Oredeži dialect was located to the west of the Ortesjoki (*Oredež*) river in the Hatsina district of the Leningrad region. It is nowadays extinct.⁵ It was not influenced by Ingrian Finnish dialects and exhibited a number of features unattested in other Ingrian varieties (Laanest 1960).

The Hevaha dialect

The Hevaha dialect encompassed the villages along the Hevaha (*Kovaši*) river and along the Gulf of Finland from Uustia (*Sosnovyj Bor*) to Kaarosta (*Oranienbaum*). Several dozen Hevaha Ingrian speakers are mentioned in Laanest (1993, 62) and Krjučkova (2003, 167). However, in 2002, Muslimov failed to find any competent speakers of this dialect.⁶

The Soikkola dialect

The Soikkola dialect is spoken on the Soikkola (*Sojkinskij*) peninsula and along the Sista river in the Kingisepp district of the Leningrad region. The Soikkola varieties are still alive, while Sista varieties are almost extinct. Soikkola Ingrian is slightly influenced by Soikkola Ingrian Finnish on the north and by Votic and Lower Luga Ingrian on the south (Kuznecova 2009).

The Lower Luga dialect

The Lower Luga dialect is spoken in the villages along the lower course of the Luga River and is still alive. Lower Luga Ingrian shows very high level of intradialectal variation due to numerous influences from different directions: Soikkola Ingrian from the north-east, Votic from the east, Finnish from the north-west and west and Estonian from the south (Muslimov 2005; Kuznecova 2009). Due to its innovative character compared to other Ingrian dialects, some researchers did not recognize Lower Luga dialect as a part of the Ingrian language at all (Porkka 1885, 17–24; Sovijärvi 1944, 185).

Additionally, a mixed Finnish/Ingrian variety is spoken on the Kurkola (*Kurgolovskij*) peninsula. Its speakers were born in the villages of Hamala (*Hamolovo*) and Kurkola (*Kurgolovo*).

⁵ This has been checked recently by Mehmet Muslimov and D. V. Sidorkevič, who visited the villages of Oseresna (*Ozerešno*), Olhovitsa (*Ol'chovec*), and Novinka. The Oredeži dialect was already moribund in the 1960s (Laanest 1993, 62).

⁶ Muslimov discovered about nine semi-speakers of the Hevana dialect, and the language of the only fluent speaker was strongly influenced by standard Finnish.

2.3 Ingrian Finnish

Ingrian Finnish has considerably more speakers than Votic and Ingrian. However, it is even less studied, and its dialectal structure is still not precisely established. Two main ethnic groups of Ingrian Finns, *äyrämöiset* and *savakot*, have been distinguished since early scholarship (Sjögren 1883; von Köppen 1849). However, this distinction was made mainly on the basis of ethnographic features and was criticized by many scholars (cf. Leppik 1975, 6; Dubrovina 1962, 117–120). On the basis of linguistic isoglosses, Porkka (1885) further distinguished a Kurkola dialect (in the Narvusi parish). Since 2001, Mehmet Muslimov has been conducting a thorough dialectal study of Ingrian Finnish, and here we follow the dialectal classification presented in Muslimov (2009).

Ingrian Finnish is traditionally divided into four big areas. Three of them (in Northern, Eastern, and Central Ingria) did not have contacts with other local Finnic languages. They form continuous homogeneous areas of Finnish varieties, and the dialectal diversity is not very high there. We will briefly mention the dialectal division for these three areas, and then describe the fourth area (Western Ingria) in greater detail.

In Northern Ingria

In Northern Ingria the following dialects can be distinguished: (1) Keltto (Keltto and Rääpyvä parishes); (2) Haapakangas (Haapakangas parish); (3) Toksova (Lempaala, Toksova, Vuole); (4) Miikkulainen (Miikkulainen parish); and (5) Valkeasaari (Valkeasaari and Lahti parishes).

In Eastern Ingria

In Eastern Ingria there is only a single dialect, the Järvisaari dialect (Järvisaari and Markkova parishes).

In Central Ingria

In Central Ingria the following dialects are distinguished: (1) Siverskaja (the Siiverska (*Siverskaja*) village with some adjacent villages in the southern part of Koprina parish); (2) western Hatsina (Spankkova, Skuoritsa, Kolppana, the major part of Kupanitsa parish, the north-western part of Koprina parish); (3) Hietämäki (Hietämäki parish); and (4) eastern Hatsina (Tuutari, Inkere, Liissilä, and Venjoki parishes the northern part of Koprina parish). The territory of the Ropsu parish hosts varieties that are transitional between the dialects of Central and Western Ingria.

Western Ingria

Western Ingria does not form a homogeneous area. The Finnish population here is not very numerous and lives in small enclaves surrounded by Votes, Ingrians and Estonians. Ingrian Finnish in Western Ingria underwent strong contact-driven influences

from these languages and varies greatly among enclaves. Votic substrate vocabulary is found in all of the local Finnish varieties, apart from the parishes of Kaprio and Tyrö. The following dialects are distinguished on the territory of Western Ingria.

1. The Lower Luga dialect (Narvusi parish) had intensive contacts with Lower Luga Ingrian, especially in the southern part of the area (along the Luga and Rosona rivers). Estonian also influenced the southern part of the Lower Luga dialect, especially the subdialect specific to the village of Suokylä (Muslimov 2002). In the northern part (the Kurkola peninsula) Finnish occupies a compact area, and its positions are stronger than those of Ingrian.
2. The Kattila dialect (Kattila parish) was much influenced by Votic and to some extent by Estonian and Soikkola Ingrian of the Sista river area.
3. The Novasolkka dialect (Kikkeritsa (*Kikericy*) and Killi villages in Novasolkka parish) was influenced by Votic from the neighboring village of Kerstova (*Kerstovo*) and local Estonian.
4. The Moloskovitsa dialect (Moloskovitsa parish and north-west of Kupanitsa parish) is least influenced by other Finnic languages. It forms the eastern border of the area where Votic substrate vocabulary is spread (see also Muslimov 2014).
5. The Soikkola dialect (Vääräoja (*Krivoruč'je*) village in the north of Soikkola parish) had highly intensive contacts with the surrounding Soikkola Ingrian, see Nirvi (1971, 1978).
6. The Kaprio dialect (Kaprio parish) was very much affected by Hevaha Ingrian; there were mixed Finnish/Ingrian villages in that area (Laanest 1966).
7. Varieties of the Tyrö parish are very diverse due to close contacts with Hevaha Ingrian from the west and central Ingrian Finnish influence from the east. The more one goes to the west, the more Ingrian traits are found in the subdialects. Preliminarily, we distinguish eastern Tyrö and western Tyrö with the border between them in Kaarosta.

The neighboring Serepetta parish hosts heterogeneous varieties and forms a transitional zone between Central and Western Ingria areas.

It should be mentioned that all of the languages discussed here had long-lasting contacts with Russian. Votic and Ingrian have been in contact with Russian since at least the 11th century (Ränk 1960; Dubrovina 1962; Kettunen 1915, 1–5; Laanest 1966, 9–10). Ingrian Finnish has had contacts with Russian since the 17th century (Leppik 1975; Teinonen and Virtanen 1999, 27, 35–42). Russian influence is mainly reflected in lexical borrowings and syntactic patterns, but it has not affected the dialectal structure of the languages.

3 Present Situation

All of the languages discussed are on the verge of extinction. After World War II, the ethnic identity of the Finnic groups in Ingria has been shifting radically to a Russian one, and Russian influence on the structure of the corresponding languages also rose drastically. Under such circumstances, the number of speakers can be estimated

only conventionally. First, the number of semi-speakers is gradually approaching the number of fully competent speakers, and furthermore begins to prevail. Second, the ethnic population figures differ greatly from the number of speakers. Third, a growing number of speakers remain beyond the reach of researchers, who do their fieldwork within the traditional habitat of an ethnic group, because of progressive emigration (elderly people move to their relatives, younger people move to bigger cities or, in case of Ingria, to Estonia and Finland). Fourth, one cannot rely on speakers' evaluation of their neighbors' language competence, as they do not communicate in their native language regularly. One can often hear estimates like "She was born in our village, so she should speak the language" (in fact, the person has forgotten almost everything), or "She speaks our language, I talk to her" (in fact, the person is able to understand and respond in simple phrases). On the other hand, there are people who live in the outskirts and do not communicate with other inhabitants of their village, but nonetheless remember the language well. We also faced situations when a person actively spoke his or her language as long as (s)he communicated with a neighbor or a relative in it, but stopped speaking it after the death of the communication partner. Consequently, after three to five years a competent speaker turned into a semi-speaker.⁷ The opposite situation is also possible: working as a language consultant a person can revive their knowledge of a language which (s)he had not used for a long time.

For these and some other reasons, we have evaluated speakers' competence ourselves and used a reduced version of the scale presented in Vachtin (2001). In Muslimov (2005, 331) five levels of language competence were distinguished:

1. a person can communicate in a Finnic language without code-switching;
2. a person can produce phrases in a native language, but code-switching in conversation is inevitable;
3. a person understands nearly everything and can produce words and simple phrases;
4. a person understands simple phrases and words and can produce only a few of them;
5. a person does not know the language.

Types 1 and 2 are counted further as "speakers", while types 3 and 4 are considered as "semi-speakers".

3.1 Votic

The data about the number of speakers in each village for 2006 are presented in Table 2 according to the following principles. We calculated separately the number of "proven" speakers (that were definitely alive in 2006), the number of "unproven" speakers (we are not sure if they were still alive in 2006 or what level

⁷ The same phenomenon was described e.g. in Ariste (1957) (the period between visits was 14 years) and also mentioned in Heinsoo (1991, 450).

Table 1 Votic population change

Year	Ethnic Votes	Speakers	Sources
1848	5,148		von Köppen (1867)
1915		1,000	Kettunen (1915)
1926	~700–800		Census 1926 ^a
1927	>500		Lensu (1930)
1939	500–700		Setälä and Posti (1939)
1942 ^b	667		Nevalainen and Hannes (1991, 268)
1947		100	Ariste (1948)
1959 ^c		~50	Ariste (1960)
1966		<100	Adler (1996)
1980		~20	Ariste (1981)
1991	61		Heinsoo (1991)
1995	55		Heinsoo (1995)
2001	~30		Muslimov (2005)
2002	73 ^d	774	Census 2002 (FSGS 2007a; Agranat 2007, 7–8) ^e
2004	~20		Heinsoo (2004)
2006		<10	our data

^a Musaev (2004, 178) quotes various sources indicating from 694 to 844 people.

^b Different figures are given in other sources for 1942: about 200 in Ariste (1957, 300–400) in Ariste (1970), <500 in Mägiste (1959, 400–500) in Ränk (1960).

^c Different figures are given in Mägiste (1959) (~20) and Ariste (1957) (~25).

^d For the whole of Russian Federation, incl. 11 in Leningrad region.

^e The figures from the 2002 census on Votic go against any common sense and have already been put under doubt (cf. Agranat 2007, 7–8; Ernits 2008). See also the comment on the data on Ingrian speakers in the 2002 census in Table 6

Table 2 The distribution of Votic speakers among the villages in 2006

Settlement (Finnish name)	Settlement (Russian name)	Speakers (proven)	Speakers (unproven)	Semi- speakers
Joenperä	Krakol'je	3		2
Kukkusi	Kurovicy	3		
Luutsa	Lužicy	4	1	2
Ust'-Luga	Ust'-Luga	1	1	1
Total		11	2	5

of language competence they demonstrated at that time), and the number of known semi-speakers.⁸ The speakers were classified according to their current place of residence (which does not always coincide with their dialectal background), while speakers who live in towns and come to their villages only in summer were counted

⁸ The data on semi-speakers should be considered as a lower bound, because a thorough investigation has never been conducted.

as inhabitants of the respective villages. Note that the table does not include those speakers who live in towns permanently. In order not to count bilingual speakers or those speaking a mixed code (in this case Votic/Ingrian) twice, they are tentatively treated either as Votic speakers (in Table 2) or as Ingrian speakers (in Table 3).

Table 3 The distribution of Ingrian speakers among their settlements (Soikkola dialectal area) in 2006

Settlement (Finnish name)	Settlement (Russian name)	Speakers (proven)	Speakers (unproven)	Semi- speakers
<i>Soikkola peninsula</i>				
Tammikontu	Dubki	2	2	
Savimäki	Glinki	4	2	3
Mättäsi	Gorki	4	2	3
Saarove	Jugantovo	7	2	
Koskina	Koškino	2	1	
Koskisenkylä	Koskolovo			1
Kraasna Korkka	Krasnaja Gorka	2		
Loka	Logi	3	4	
Makkylä	Mišino	1	2	2
Venakontsa	Pahomovka	3	2	1
Ruutsia	Ručji		1	
Säätinä	Slobodka	5	1	2
Otsave	Smenkovo	1		
Harkkola	Staroje Garkolovo	1	4	1
Voloitsa	Val'anicy	3	1	3
Viistina	Vistino	13	8	2
Metsäkylä	Zales'je	2		4
<i>Sista river area</i>				
Suuri-Raikkova	Bol'šoje Rajkovo			3
Somero	Bol'šoje Stremlenie			2
Ilmola	Il'movo			5
Koppana	Kopanicy			2
Pieni Raikkova	Maloje Rajkovo			2
Pieni Somero	Maloje Stremlenie			2
Muiskula	Myškino			2
Niisnova	Nežnovo	1	1	1
Paavela	Pavlovo			2
Pätsinä	P'atčina			2
Taatsoi	Semejskoje			3
Keski-Raikkova	Srednee Rajkovo			2
Nurmisto	Urmizno			3
Total		54	33	53

3.1.1 Language Use in Communication

At present, Votic is almost never used as a means of communication. As Table 2 shows, there is no compact area of settlement of Votic speakers. All speakers live at a certain distance from each other and do not communicate regularly. On their occasional meetings they speak Russian. Also, none of the Votic speakers today can speak the language inside their families: their parents have died, their spouses are not Votes, and younger generations do not speak Votic (viz. Heinsoo 1991, 452). Some five to ten years ago it was still possible to point to situations when the elder generation spoke Votic and was answered by the middle generation in Ingrian (Ariste 1981; Muslimov 2005, 341), but by now the elder generation in such families has already passed away. Contemporary Votes occasionally speak Votic to their children (the children answer in Russian) and sometimes teach them traditional folklore. Until recently, Votic was also used as a secret language when the elder generation did not want their children to understand what they were saying.

The only typical situation for Votes to speak their language is in interviews with linguists doing research on Votic. Some Estonian and Russian linguists used to speak Votic with Votes⁹; other researchers interview them in Finnish, Estonian or Russian (cf. examples of communication with Finnish researchers in Turunen 1997).

In recent years, one more domain for Votic has emerged. Votic is used during the annual festivities in the village of Luutsa (see below) as a language of formal speeches delivered by some native speakers.

3.1.2 Age and Gender

Already in 2006 the average age of Votic speakers was around 80. The youngest speaker was born in 1935. Seven out of 11 speakers (64 %) were female.

3.1.3 Language Attitudes

Until very recently, Votic has had the lowest status among Finnic languages in Ingria. “If a Russian comes—everyone starts speaking Russian, if an Ingrian comes—everyone starts speaking Ingrian, if a Vote comes—everyone goes silent” (Vote, male, born 1921). Even before the total shift to the Russian, Votes from the Vaipooli region used to shift to Ingrian, while Votes from the Kattila region shifted to Finnish (see below).

Contemporary Votes from the Vaipooli region have preserved the name *vad'd'a* (‘Votic’) and *vad'd'alaizōd* (‘Votes’) in their native language, but in Russian they often call themselves *ižory* (‘Ingrians’) and their language *ižorskij* (‘Ingrian’).¹⁰ We

⁹ For example, Ariste and Adler, nowadays Heinsoo, Muslimov.

¹⁰ The ethnic Votes from the Kattila region who were interviewed used the name *čud'* in speaking about their ancestors (as opposed to *čuchna* when speaking about the local Ingrian Finns).

have met native Votes who claimed that “we have heard about the *vad'd'a*, but we have never met them.” Votes were always registered as Russians in their Soviet passports.

Only in the last couple of decades Votic identity has risen noticeably, mostly due to permanent interest and attention from linguists¹¹ and the work of local activists. T. E. Efimova made two attempts to establish a Votic museum,¹² and since 2000 she has organized annual Votic festivities on the anniversary of the founding of the village of Luutsa (*Lužickaja skladčina*). A similar festival took place in the 1980s and 1990s in Kukkusi village. The Luutsa festival has become especially popular among the local people and has had a positive effect on Votic national and linguistic identity. The local school founded the children’s folk band *Linnud* that sings in Votic. There are also professional bands and singers performing in Votic (e.g. the band *Bestiarium* from St. Petersburg).

Due to this recent surge in Votic identity, Votic has become more popular than Ingrian in the Vaipooli region. Some of the mixed speakers have even started to shift back from Ingrian into Votic. A Joenperä Ingrian semi-speaker (female, born 1934) said about her bilingual neighbor, “Before she *läkäz* (‘spoke Ingrian’) more, but now she *pajatõb* (‘speaks Votic’) more and more.”

Our observations show that contemporary Votes do not have any extreme opinions about their language. They neither consider it unique or special, nor treat it as bad, useless or wrong.

3.1.4 Mobility and Language Contacts

The few contemporary Votic speakers live mostly in their native places. Six people live in their native villages,¹³ two people live most of the time in large towns but come regularly to their native villages, and one speaker was born in Liivakylä but lives in Joenperä. Therefore, the present geographical distribution of the speakers more or less corresponds to the historical dialectal structure.

A major part of Votes have communicated with Finns (mostly in their childhood when they were deported to Finland, see below), and with Estonians. However the influence of those languages on the language of contemporary Votes is tiny. Estonian influence was presumably stronger in the Kattila region (Ariste 1998). Communication with Ingrians (in Vaipooli) and Ingrian Finns (in the Kattila region) was remarkably more intensive. Votes from the Vaipooli region attended schools in Ingrian in the

¹¹ Heinsoo mentions that due to the systematic work that Estonian linguists have carried out with Votes since 1947 and efforts to raise the prestige of Votic language and identity, some of their informants have already started to call themselves Votes in Russian (Heinsoo 1991, 450; Heinsoo 1995, 177).

¹² Both times it burned down. Recently, the third museum has been built by the authorities. Efimova, in turn, left the village altogether three years ago.

¹³ We do not consider cases when a person moved from Liivakylä to Luutsa (they both now form a single village of Luutsa), as the two villages do not demonstrate considerable differences.

1930s (see below).¹⁴ However, Votic speakers used to switch to Ingrian or Finnish completely rather than to adjust their Votic to it. Thus, present-day Votic speakers come only from purely Votic families, who consistently spoke their language among each other and to their children, and the influence of Ingrian on the structure of their language is quite small.¹⁵ For the same reasons, there are very few systematic changes in Votic that were caused by Russian influence.

3.2 *Ingrian*

The figures on the number of speakers in each village are presented in Tables 3 and 4 according to the same principles as in Table 2. Additionally, several Ingrians were found in non-Ingrian (Finnish and eastern Votic) villages of Western Ingria (ten proven speakers, three unproven speakers and four semi-speakers as for 2006).

3.2.1 Language Use in Communication

Ingrian is generally not the language of everyday communication, though it is spoken on more occasions than Votic. There is a rather compact group of settlements on the Soikkola peninsula with about three to four speakers in each village. Villages in the Lower Luga area are more scattered and there are about two to three speakers in each place. In the entire Sista river area, only one competent speaker was attested in 2006. On the Soikkola peninsula and in the Lower Luga area, we have attested spontaneous conversations in Ingrian between neighbors and friends. Occasionally people who understand the language but do not speak it fluently (usually the younger generation) also participate in these conversations, but they answer in Russian. Sometimes Ingrian is also used (mostly with relatives) as a secret language which younger generations do not understand.

The structure of families is also more diverse here than in the case of Votic. Among 67 Ingrian speakers interviewed, 33 were married to Ingrians, 23 to Russians, Ukrainians or Belorussians, four to Finns, two to Estonians, two to Votes, and there were individual cases of Ingrians married to a Veps, a Karelian, and a Tatar.¹⁶ In

¹⁴ Ethnic Votes in the Kattila region attended schools in Russian.

¹⁵ At the same time there still exist mixed Votic/Ingrian and Votic/Finnish idiolects (see below), as well as Votic/Ingrian code-switching (for more details, cf. Ariste 1981; Turunen 1997; Heinsoo 1991; Muslimov 2003, 2005). The result of historical contacts with Ingrian in the Kukkusi dialect was mentioned above.

¹⁶ In 2001, the situation was the following: out of 87 competent Ingrian speakers, 44 were married to Ingrians, 21 to Russians, six to Finns, three to Ukrainians, four to Belorussians, two to Votes, three to Estonians, and other speakers were married to a Veps, a Karelian, a Tatar, and a German. Since 2001, we have also collected information on the marriages of 19 Ingrian semi-speakers of the same generation. Among competent speakers 49 % of marriages were to non-Ingrians, while among semi-speakers there were 74 % such marriages.

Table 4 The distribution of contemporary Ingrian speakers among their settlements (Lower Luga dialectal area)

Settlement (Finnish name)	Settlement (Russian name)	Speakers (proven)	Speakers (unproven)	Semi- speakers
Suuri-Narvusi	Bol'šoje Kuz'omkino	5	3	5
Pol'ana	Dal'n'aja Pol'ana	1		
Vyötermaa	F'odorovka	1		1
Tiensuu	Izvoz	2	1	2
Kallivieri	Kallivere	3		
Haavikko	Kejkino	3	2	4
Karstala	Korostel'			1
Joenperä	Krakol'je	3	3	2
Kurkola	Kurgolovo	3		3
Kukkusi	Kurovicy	1	1	1
Pärspää	Lipovo	2	3	1
Luutsa	Lužicy	2		1
Mannakka	Mannovka		1	
Rajo	Mežniki	1		1
Uusi-Narvusi	Novoje Kuzëmkinno	2		
Kotko	Orly	4	1	1
Laukaansuu	Ostrov	2		
Vanha Ropsu	Ropša	5		
Ust'-Luga	Ust'-Luga	2		
Vanhakylä	Vanak'ul'a	6		
Väikylä	Venek'ul'a	2		3
Sutela	Volkovo	3		
Total		57	15	26

2006, there were five families where both spouses were still alive and spoke Ingrian to some extent. In three families the language of communication was Russian, in one family it was both Ingrian and Russian, and only in one family the main language of communication was Ingrian. Also, in one family an Ingrian wife and her Ingrian Finnish husband regularly spoke to each other in their native languages.

At least around 15 % of modern speakers are more or less close relatives: siblings (8 families of two to three siblings) or aunts/uncles and nieces/nephews (at least two families). Many of them regularly talk in Ingrian to each other. The youngest speaker of Ingrian (see below) comes from a family where three generations regularly speak to each other in Ingrian.

It appears then that, sometimes Ingrian is still the main language of communication with relatives and neighbors, but such cases are rare. There are many speakers who

have not used the language for a long time, especially if they live alone in their village and have no relatives or neighbors to talk to.

In Suuri Narvusi (*Bol’šoje Kuz’omkino*) village, Ingrian is used by the Ingrians attending the local Lutheran church¹⁷ when they talk to each other or to the Finnish pastor. Ingrian speakers also talk in Ingrian to Estonian, Finnish and Russian linguists who visit their villages. Some speakers living in Estonia in winter also claimed to speak Ingrian when they meet other Ingrians in the local branches of Inkerin Liitto.¹⁸ We know only one recent occasion when Ingrian was used during an official event—in 1994, a memorial plaque for the victims of Stalin’s terror was unveiled in Suuri Narvusi cemetery, and a few Ingrians delivered speeches in their language.

3.2.2 Age and Gender

The majority of Ingrian speakers were born in the 1930s or earlier. The average age of fluent speakers is above 80 years old. However, there are few younger speakers as well. The youngest competent speaker of Soikkola Ingrian was born in 1980, and her mother (born in 1962) also speaks Ingrian fluently. The youngest known fluent speaker of Lower Luga Ingrian¹⁹ was born in 1935.

In 2006, only six percent of Soikkola Ingrian speakers were male,²⁰ while among speakers of the Lower Luga dialect males made up 22 %.²¹

3.2.3 Language Attitudes

Among Ingrians, attitudes towards their language are rather diverse. Approximately half of the Soikkola speakers who answered the question “Would you like your children to speak Ingrian?” were positive about it and regretted that they had not taught Ingrian to their children. The other half had the opposite opinion, which varied from a very negative attitude (some claimed that Ingrian was really a burden) to indifference (“Nobody needs this language, what’s the point of learning it?”). As the main reason for a negative attitude, speakers usually mention the bad treatment the Ingrians received after the war.

¹⁷ Until recently, this church has been the only one in the area, which is why some Orthodox Ingrians also used to attend it.

¹⁸ An NGO representing Ingrian Finns in Finland, Russia, Estonia and Sweden.

¹⁹ In fact, he speaks a mixed Ingrian/Finnish idiolect.

²⁰ Cf. also the figures given in Nikolaev (2002, 84–85) for 1999 (for the Soikkola dialect only): 83 speakers (13 men and 70 women, among them six Ingrian couples). He compares these numbers (16 % of men) with the data from Köppen (48 % of men) and notes that these are the consequences of World War II.

²¹ The difference between the Soikkola and Lower Luga areas in this respect is striking, but we do not have any sound explanation for it. It should be noted that the percentage of men is also high for Votic speakers living in the Lower Luga area. In 2006, men were approx. 25 % of the Ingrian Finns of the Lower Luga area, while in the Hatsina area this percentage was a bit lower at 22 %.

Recent ideas about revitalizing the language often meet distrust and rejection. Many people say, “We have preserved our language in spite of all the difficulties, so why we should teach those who did not want it before?” As in the case of many other minority languages, the most enthusiastic people who want to revive Ingrian now are usually those who do not know the language but want “to go back to their roots”, or even those who are not Ingrians at all.²² Fluent speakers often feel rather skeptical about such “hobbyists”, saying “If she had wanted, she would have learned the language long ago. Why is she so keen on it now?” The attitude of Ingrians towards the Ingrian Community (*Ižorskaja obščina*)²³ organization founded in 2005 provides a good illustration in this respect. Among the members of the Ingrian Community there are people of different nationalities, but the number of fluent Ingrian speakers is very small. Many speakers of Ingrian do not wish to join this community, and one reason given is that “there are almost no real Ingrians there”.²⁴

There are no cultural events connected directly with the Ingrian language. Local children’s (*Rybačka*) and professional (*Šoikulan Laulut*) folk bands perform some songs in Ingrian during the annual Fisher’s Day and Lähä celebrations. In the village of Viistina (*Vistino*) there is also an Ingrian museum.

Among the 39 Ingrian speakers who answered the question about their mother tongue, 23 people claimed Ingrian, six claimed Russian, and ten claimed both languages. All the speakers interviewed were registered as Russians in their former Soviet passports.

3.2.4 Mobility and Language Contacts

Table 6 reflects the correlation between the speakers’ place of birth and their current place of residence (data are given for 2006).²⁵ We distinguish five types of current place of residence.

1. the native village (“same variety”);
2. a different village belonging to the same group of subdialects (“close variety”);
3. a village belonging to a different group of subdialects within the same dialect (“distant variety”);
4. a village belonging to another dialect of the same language (“other dialect”; in this case it is either the Lower Luga or Soikkola dialect, respectively);

²² For example, librarians living in the villages of Mättähä (*Gorki*) and Suuri Narvusi, history teachers in Loka (*Logi*) and Suuri Narvusi, and the former head of the Ingrian museum in Viistina.

²³ The Community deals with social rather than with language issues, and the revitalization of the Ingrian language remains beyond its main goals.

²⁴ Among 28 Soikkola Ingrians interviewed, only ten persons were members of the Ingrian Community in 2006. Lower Luga Ingrians had not even heard about the Ingrian Community at all.

²⁵ Speakers who used to live permanently or during the summer in a village, but moved to towns after 2006, were counted as residents of the respective villages.

5. a village in Ingria where a different Finnic language is or was spoken (“other Finnic language”).²⁶

The Soikkola and Lower Luga areas do not greatly differ in this respect—the majority of people are living in their native villages or neighboring ones. The main motivations for moving to a neighboring or a distant village within the same dialectal area were marriage (for women) or the destruction of a native village. Migrations between the Soikkola and the Lower Luga areas used to be very marginal. At the same time, a certain amount of Soikkola Ingrians who were not allowed to return home after the post-war deportations remained in the Kattila parish. Therefore, the percentage of Soikkola Ingrians who moved to other dialectal areas in Ingria is considerably higher than that of the Lower Luga Ingrians. Lower Luga Ingrians from the Vaipooli region had multiple contacts with Votes. However, as Votic identity used to be very low, sometimes Ingrians cannot confirm these contacts—they do not know or understand the name *vad'd'a* (“I have heard this name, but I do not know who they are”). There are quite a few examples when one of the parents of an Ingrian speaker was a Vote (“My mother was from Joenperä and spoke with the sound *č*.”²⁷), but the speaker claims that (s)he is a pure Ingrian.

Most Ingrian speakers had contacts with the Finnish language at the time of the deportation to Finland during World War II. Some of them learned Finnish there, and the majority of Ingrian school-age children attended school in Finland. Many people also communicated with Finns after the war. However, a noticeable influence of Finnish on Ingrian is only observed in the mixed Ingrian/Finnish villages of the Lower Luga area.

Table 5 Local migrations of Ingrian speakers

Residence or place of birth		Same variety	Close variety	Distant variety	Other dialect	Other Finnic language	Total number of speakers
Soikkola area	Absolute	28	12	7	1	9	57
	Percent	49	21	12	2	16	
Lower Luga area	Absolute	32	16	8	1	1	58
	Percent	55	28	14	2	2	
Total		60	28	15	2	10	115

The total number of speakers in this table includes: (a) Ingrians living in the Soikkola area as for 2006 (see Table 3), except for six persons who were not considered as we did not have information on their exact place of birth; (b) Ingrians living in the Lower Luga area (see Table 4); (c) ten Ingrians living in the non-Ingrian villages of Ingria and mentioned after Table 4

²⁶ In this case it means either Ingrian Finnish or Kattila Votic villages. We have left out Ingrians living in towns or Russian villages, as our data here is too scarce.

²⁷ The consonantal shift from **k* to *č* before front vowels is one of the most prominent features of Votic compared to Ingrian (apart from the Kreevin and Kukkusi dialects where the shift did not take place).

Table 6 Ingrian population change

Year	Ethnic Ingrians	Speakers	Sources
1848	17,800 (St. Petersburg government) and 689 (Karelia)		von Köppen (1867)
1897		13,725 ^a (St. Petersburg government) and 4 (Novgorod government)	Census 1897 (Ernits 2007)
1917	20,000 (territory not indicated exactly)		Mustonen (1933), Inkeri (1991, 410)
1926	16,137 ^b (USSR, including 16,030 in Leningrad region)		Census 1926 (Ernits 2007; Musaev 2004, 348)
1942	8,729 (occupied territory) and ~4,000 (Oranienbaum bridgehead)		Nevalainen and Hannes (1991, 410), Kurs (1990, 1493)
1959	1,062 (USSR)	369 (USSR)	Census 1959 (Ernits 2007; Musaev 2004, 348; Laanest 1998)
1979	748 (USSR, including 315 in Leningrad region)	244 (USSR)	Census 1979 (Ernits 2007; Musaev 2004, 348)
1989	820 (USSR, including 276 in Leningrad region)	302 (USSR)	Census 1989 (Ernits 2007; Musaev 2004, 348; Laanest 1998)
2001	176 (Russian Federation)		Kon'kova (2001)
2002	327 ^c (Russian Federation, including 177 in Leningrad region, 51 in St. Petersburg)	362 ^d (Russian Federation, incl. 262 in Leningrad region)	Census 2002 (FSGS 2007a, b; Ernits 2007)
2006		~150 (Leningrad region)	our estimate

^a In some sources (e.g. Krjučkova 2003), the number 21,700 is given, but these figures are criticized in Ernits (2007, 15).

^b A figure of 26,137 is also given in some sources (e.g. Kurs 1990, 1487), and it is also criticized in Ernits (2007, 15).

^c The 2002 census describes the number of Ingrians only in the Russian Federation. However, many Ingrians now also live in Estonia. Ernits (2007, 18) indicates 62 Ingrians in Estonia as of the year 2000. The same paper presents data from a recent Ukrainian census that reports 812 (!) Ingrians on the territory of Ukraine.

^d The census counted not only native speakers but everyone who can speak the language. However, in the present situation both numbers should be very similar.

The majority of Ingrians had contacts with the Estonian language. Banned from returning to their villages after the war, many Ingrians (especially from the Lower Luga area) moved temporarily or permanently to Estonia, so Estonian influence can be observed in the language of some speakers. The villages along the Rosona (*Rosson'*) river [including Vanakylä (*Vanak'ul'a*), Kallivere, Väikylä (*Venek'ul'a*), and Saarkylä (*Sark'ul'a*)] were part of Estonia in 1920–1940. Ingrians who lived there as children attended schools in Estonian or/and in Russian and are often fluent in Estonian.

Ingrians from the Soikkola peninsula and the Lower Luga area who attended primary school in Ingrian in the 1930s can read and sometimes even write in Ingrian. People who studied a foreign language at school (in most cases this was German) are able at least to read Ingrian texts written in the Roman alphabet.

3.3 Ingrian Finnish

Tables 7 and 8 present the data on the Ingrian Finnish population as for 2006. All numbers are rough as they vary greatly across sources. This variation is mainly caused by the fact that Ingrian Finns were sometimes counted together with other Finns or

Table 7 Ingrian Finnish population change

Year	Ethnic Ingrian Finns	Speakers	Sources
1848	70,000–80,000 (St. Petersburg government)		von Köppen (1867), Musaev (2004, 25)
1897		~130,000 (St. Petersburg government)	Census 1897 (Ingrians 1999, 85; Musaev 2004, 26; Kurs 1990, 1491)
1917	~140,000 (Russia, incl. ~125,000 in Petrograd region)		Haltsonen et al. (1969, 359), Nevalainen and Hannes (1991, 410), Kurs (1990, 1491)
1920	~125,000 (Russia, incl. ~107,000 in Petrograd region, ~7,000 in Petrograd) and ~11,000 (Finland, Estonia)		Musaev (2004, 174), Teinonen and Virtanen (1999, 87)
1926	~120,000–125,000 (USSR, incl. ~110,000 in Leningrad region, ~2,500 in Petrograd) and ~1,100 (Estonia)		Census 1926 (Inkerin 1969; Krijukov 1987, 127; Ingrians 1999, 28; Musaev 2004, 177)

(continued)

Table 7 (continued)

Year	Ethnic Ingrian Finns	Speakers	Sources
1941–1942	~67,000 (sent from occupied territory to Finland) and ~49,000 (sent away from besieged territory)		Nevalainen and Hannes (1991, 410); Musaev (2004, 290–291)
1947	~10,000 (Leningrad region)		Musaev (2004, 325)
1959	~93,000 (USSR, incl. ~20,000 in Leningrad region, ~3,000 in Leningrad, ~28,000 in Karelia, ~170,00 in Estonia, ~25,000 in other parts of Russia) + ~8,000 in Finland and other countries	~55,000 (USSR) ^a	Census 1959 (Kurs 1990; Lallukka 1982, 86; Nevalainen and Hannes 1991, 410; Krjukov 1987, 129; Musaev 2004, 342)
1970	~85,000 (USSR, incl. ~20,000 in Leningrad region, ~4,000 in Leningrad, ~22,000 in Karelia, ~19,000 in Estonia, ~16,000 in other parts of Russia)	~43,000 (USSR)	Lallukka (1982, 86), Krjukov (1987, 129), Musaev (2004, 342)
1979	~77,000 (USSR, incl. ~22,000 in Leningrad region, ~6,000–7,000 in Leningrad, 20,000 in Karelia, ~18,000 in Estonia)	~31,000 (USSR)	Census 1979 (Kurs 1990, 1494; Lallukka 1982, 86; Inkeri 1991, 410; Krjukov 1987, 129; Musaev 2004, 342)

even with other Finnic ethnic groups (Votes or Ingrians), and the calculations were made for different territories.

Tables 9 and 10 summarize the number of Ingrian Finnish speakers living in the villages of Ingria, and provide comments on the sociolinguistic situation in each dialect. Sometimes different parts of a dialectal area manifest different sociolinguistic situations (in terms of the quantity and competence of speakers and the influence of standard Finnish and Estonian). In these cases a dialectal area is divided into several parts according to sociolinguistic criteria. In other cases several adjacent and linguistically and sociolinguistically close dialectal areas are united into one sociolinguistic area.

We do not have reliable data for regions where the language has been better preserved, therefore only an approximate number of fluent speakers is given, and the number of semi-speakers is not calculated (in this case, a question mark is used in the table).

Table 8 Ingrian Finnish population change

Year	Ethnic Ingrian Finns	Speakers	Sources
1989	~67,000 (USSR, incl. ~12,000 in Leningrad region, ~5,000 in Leningrad, ~18,000 in Karelia, ~17,000 in Estonia, ~4,000 in other parts of USSR (esp. Latvia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan) and ~5,000–6,000 in Finland and ~8,000 in Sweden)	~23,000 (USSR, incl. ~5,000 in Leningrad region, ~1,000 in Leningrad, ~5,000 in Estonia, ~8,000 in Karelia)	Census 1989 (Lallukka 2006; Nevalainen and Hannes 1991, 288–292, 410; Kurs 1990, 1495; Musaev 2004, 342–347)
2002	~34,000 (Russian Federation, incl. ~8,000 in Leningrad region, ~4,000 in St. Petersburg, ~14,000 in Karelia)	~50,000 (Russian Federation, including ~8,000 in Leningrad region, ~11,000 in St. Petersburg)	Lallukka (2006), FSGS (2007a, b) ^b
2005	20,000 (“the territory of the historical Ingria”, but unclear whether St. Petersburg is included)		Data from Inkerin Liitto ^c
2006	>1,000 (Leningrad region, rural population)		Our data

^a Almost none of the censuses distinguished the speakers of Ingrian Finnish from the speakers of standard Finnish (except for the census of 1926, where Ingrian Finns are counted separately as “Leningrad Finns”).

^b See also <http://www.inkeri.ru/h\12.shtm>.

^c See <http://www.etnosite.ru/obsh/76/10612.html>.

Under contact influence we mean the very recent influence of standard Finnish and Estonian on the Ingrian Finnish dialects due to the war and post-war contacts with Finns and Estonians and migrations to these two countries. These recent contacts create code-mixing and code-switching effects in the speech of modern Ingrian Finns and differ in this respect from the historical contacts with the neighboring local Finnic languages considered in the first section.

3.3.1 Language Use in Communication

For Ingrian Finnish the situation varies depending on the level of language preservation in a particular area. Several basic types can be distinguished.

1. The best language preservation: first of all, the vicinity of Hatsina, followed by Hietämäki and Järvisaari parishes and the Kurkola peninsula. Finnish is mainly used by the elder generation, but often also by the middle generation, and it is also spoken among neighbors.

Table 9 The distribution of Finnish speakers among their settlements in 2006 according to their place of birth

Dialects	Geographic areas with homogeneous language situation	Comments	Speakers Contact		
			Fluent	Semi	Influence
<i>Northern Ingria</i>					
(1) Keltto, (2) Haapakangas, (3) Toksova	Keltto, Haapakangas, Toksova; possibly Rääpyvä, Vuole, ^a Lempaala parishes	Language well preserved, despite mass migration to Finland; Finnish nursing home in Keltto (<i>Koltusi</i>)	~100	?	moderate FI
(1) Miikkulainen, (2) Valkeasaari	Miikkulainen, Valkeasaari, Lahti parishes	Language practically extinct; no speakers in Lahti and Miikkulainen; mass migration to Finland	2	6	very strong FI
<i>Eastern Ingria</i>					
Järvisaari	Järvisaari parish	Good language preservation	~15	~ 5	weak FI
Järvisaari	Markkova parish	Destroyed during WW II (practically no speakers inside their native parish)	~10	?	moderate FI
<i>Central Ingria</i>					
Siverskaja	Siverskaja (S of Koprina parish)	Similar to W-Hatsina region, but worse preservation	~10	~ 5	moderate FI
(1) W-Hatsina, (2) Hietämäki, (3) E-Hatsina (apart from E-most part); (4) transitional Ropsu variety	Hatsina parish and vicinity (Skuoritsa, Spankkova, Kolppana, Kupanitsa, N of Koprina, Hietämäki, Ropsu, Venjoki, Tuutari parishes)	Best language preservation, nearly all villages with between 1–5 speakers; many speakers in Hatsina town and Iunuskoi (<i>Bol'shaja Ivanovka</i>); Finnish nursing homes in Kikkeri (<i>Kikerino</i>), Taaitsa (<i>Tajcy</i>), Tervola (<i>Tervolovo</i>)	~300	?	moderate FI

Note, that in the tables above we have indicated how many Votic and Ingrian speakers lived in a certain village. For Ingrian Finns we can only indicate how many speakers were born in a certain dialectal area (Abbreviations: *E* East(ern), *N* North(ern), *S* South(ern), *W* West(ern), *EE* Estonian, *FI* Finnish)

We do not have exhaustive data, but there still exist families where both spouses are Finns²⁸ or there are siblings regularly communicating in Ingrian Finnish. The

²⁸ It used to be extremely untypical for Lutheran Ingrian Finns to marry Orthodox Russians, Ingrians or Votes, but after World War II such mixed marriages became widespread (Teinonen and Virtanen 1999, 46, 108–109).

Table 10 The distribution of Finnish speakers among their settlements in 2006 according to their place of birth (cont.)

Dialects	Geographic areas with homogeneous language situation	Comments	Speakers		Contact
			Fluent	Semi	Influence
E-most Hatsina	Inkere, Liissilä parishes	Severely destroyed during WW II (few speakers inside their native parish)	~25	?	weak F
<i>Western Ingria</i>					
Lower Luga	Kurkola peninsula (N of Narvusi parish)	Compact language island, relatively well preserved	~30	?	moderate FI, weak EE
	Luga and Rosona (S of Narvusi parish)	Population scattered and mixed with Ingrians	~15	?	moderate FI, moderate EE
Kattila	Kattila parish	Practically extinct	2	?	very weak FI
Novasolkka	Novasolkka parish	Practically extinct	2	1	moderate FI
Moloskovitsa	Moloskovitsa parish	Language is well preserved, except for W (especially S-W) regions	~30	~ 30	weak FI
Soikkola	Soikkola peninsula (Soikkola parish)	Practically extinct; few semi-speakers scattered across villages		5	strong FI
Kaprio	Kaprio parish	Few fluent speakers	6	3	moderate FI
(1) E Tyrö, (2) W Tyrö, (3) transitional Serepetta variety	Tyrö, Serepetta parishes	Practically extinct; few speakers in Finnish nursing home in Tyrö (<i>Martyškino</i>); mass migration to Finland	14	11	very strong FI
Total			~560		

^a Our data on Rääpyvä, Vuole, Lempaala, and Miikkulainen parishes is still incomplete; the outline of the sociolinguistic situation is thus very preliminary in this case.

percentage of such families among both Ingrian Finns and Ingrians seems to be more or less equal. There are also single families (we definitely know about one; there are possibly at least two more) where three generations speak the dialect to each other. The youngest known speaker of Ingrian Finnish comes from this family. A widespread situation is when an elder person speaks the dialect (or a mix of the dialect and standard Finnish), and younger relatives answer in standard Finnish or in Russian.

Besides this, Finnish is spoken in the church.²⁹ Church services are conducted in standard Finnish and Russian, but people coming to the church usually speak the dialect among each other (the services are mostly attended by the elder generation). Sometimes Ingrian Finns serve as interpreters between Finnish pastors and people not knowing Finnish. Finnish pastors also often bring religious periodicals in standard Finnish while attending to people at home (see also Teinonen and Virtanen 1999, 43, 113).

2. Language use is similar to the situation with Ingrian—primarily in the regions where Finnish population is more scattered and mixed with other ethnic groups (the southern part of the Lower Luga dialect) or where language loss started earlier than in the case of the previous situation (Piesövitsa (*Peževicy*) village in Moloskovitsa parish, Kaprio, Keltto, Haapakangas and Toksova parishes, and the vicinity of the village of Siiverska). Only the elder generation speaks the language.
3. Language use is similar to the situation with Votic—primarily Kattila, Novasolkka, Tyrö, Serepetta, Markkova, Valkeasaari, Lahti, Inkere, Liissilä, Moloskovitsa parishes. Only isolated individual speakers can be found, and the language is spoken only with researchers and Finnish-speaking tourists or pastors coming to the village.
4. A person speaks standard Finnish and knows the dialect only passively. Such speakers are typical of the Tyrö parish, but there are also many of them in other villages all over Ingria.

In many parts of Ingria (especially in the north in the coastal area and along the border with Finland), Ingrian Finns used to watch television and listen to the radio in standard Finnish. However, after Finland switched to digital television and radio transmission, Finnish mass media became inaccessible for Ingrian Finns.

Some Ingrian Finns living in towns, Finland or Estonia during the winter claimed to speak Ingrian Finnish while attending meetings of the local branches of Inkerin Liitto in the respective places.

Ingrian Finnish is also used during the annual Ingrian festivities such as *Juhanus* (see below), though mainly in private conversations rather than in official speeches, as the latter are usually conducted in standard Finnish or in Russian.

3.3.2 Age and Gender

Age varies among the different regions of the Ingrian Finnish area and depends on the level of language preservation. The majority of speakers were born in the 1930s. In 2006, among the 48 Ingrian Finnish speakers in the Lower Luga area the average age was 78, and among the 147 speakers in the vicinity of Hatsina it was 75, cf. also (Teinonen and Virtanen 1999, 46). In the areas where the language is the least safe (Soikkola and Kattila parishes, part of Tyrö parish and south-western

²⁹ There are 16 Lutheran churches in Ingria and home divine services in Konnu (*Konnovo*), Viipiä (*Vyb'je*), Sääskelä (*Sjas'kelevo*), Hynnisen Siiverska (*Novosiverskaja*).

part of Moloskovitsa parish) the last generation of fluent speakers was born in the 1910s. In the safest areas (central Ingria, Narvusi, Järvisaari, and Keltto parishes) there are quite many native speakers born in the 1940s and some even in the 1950s. The youngest fluent speaker of Ingrian Finnish known to us was born in 1957. The majority of speakers are female (for example, females made up 75 % of the above-mentioned speakers in the Lower Luga area, and 78 % in the vicinity of Hatsina).

3.3.3 Language Attitudes

A clearly positive attitude towards Ingrian Finnish is typical for speakers, Ingrian Finns differ from Ingrians and Votes in this respect. They often call Finnish the best and the most beautiful language (though they might mean both the dialect and standard Finnish). Being prestigious for Ingrian Finns, standard Finnish also raises the prestige of their own dialects. Unlike Ingrians or Votes, Ingrian Finns usually identified themselves as Finns rather than Russians in recent censuses and were often registered as Finns in their Soviet passports. Three main types of language attitudes have been discovered among the Ingrian Finns.

1. The first variant is mainly spread in the northern parts of Ingria—on the Kurkola peninsula, in Tyrö, Soikkola, Valkeasaari, Lahti parishes, where a strong influence from standard Finnish is observed. Ingrian Finns are generally loyal to their dialect, but standard Finnish is often more prestigious. Sometimes speakers call the local dialect an “impure language” and try to speak as closely to the standard variant as possible, cf. also (Teinonen and Virtanen 1999, 43).
2. The second variant is more widespread in southern parts of Ingria, where standard Finnish is not so well-known, particularly in the vicinity of Hatsina. Usually Ingrian Finns are more loyal to their dialect than to standard Finnish.
3. The third variant is typical for areas where Finnish was mixed with Ingrian or Votic, namely in the southern Lower Luga area along the Rosona river and in the Kattila parish. The speakers are quite loyal to their local varieties, but their Finnish identity is not so distinct here. For example, Finns in the Rosona region call their own language not only *ingermanlandskij*³⁰ (‘of Ingria’) in Russian, but also *ižorskij* (‘Ingrian’).

Juhannus (Midsummer Eve) has been celebrated annually starting from 1989³¹ in various Finnish villages of Ingria and plays a significant role in modern Ingrian Finnish culture. There are also smaller festivities like *Laskiainen* (Mardi Gras) in Toksova (*Toksovo*) village or the commemoration of victims of Stalin’s terror at the cemetery between the villages of Hakaja (*Gakkovo*) and Kirjamo (*Kirjamo*; second-to-last Saturday of July). There are many amateur and professional folk

³⁰ This appellation for their language is typical for Ingrian Finns.

³¹ *Juhannus* had been also celebrated before the revolution, but this tradition was stopped in 1928 (Musaev 2004, 358).

bands performing in Ingrian Finnish, such as *Pietarin Kuoro*, *Korpi*, *Talomerkit*, and *Röntyskä*.

3.3.4 Mobility and Language Contacts

Only the general trends for population mobility will be given here. We distinguish three main types of areas:

1. Areas with a low level of migration, both in and out (zero to five speakers relocated): the Narvusi, Keltto, Kattila, Novasolkka, Moloskovitsa, Valkeasaari, Lahti, Kaprio, Järvisaari, and Tyrö parishes.
2. Areas with frequent migration between neighboring parishes: Hatsina vicinity—Hietämäki region and the Toksova—Lempaala—Vuole—Haapakangas region.
3. Areas with frequent emigration to relatively distant areas: the Inkere, Liissilä, Markkova parishes (villages were totally or partially destroyed during the war) and the Miikkulainen parish [no speakers from this parish were found on the territory of Ingria at all; the closest informant was discovered in Kiviniemi (*Losevo*)].

Besides these, in some parishes (see Tables 9 and 10) there are nursing homes organized by the Finnish government specifically for elderly Ingrian Finns, where speakers from different areas can be found.

In general, “many Ingrian Finns who have returned to Ingria from deportations and prison camps have settled down to live as close to their original home as possible” (Teinonen and Virtanen 1999, 44). Thus, just as with Votic and Ingrian, in spite of all the historical turmoil of the 20th century, the old dialectal structure of Ingrian Finnish is still roughly preserved in the villages of Ingria. The most blurred picture is found on the border with Finland in Northern Ingria (forced deportations were the most intensive and long-lasting in that area) and in the south-eastern part of Ingria (where many villages were destroyed).

The influence of standard Finnish on the Ingrian Finnish dialects had significantly increased probably already by the end of the 19th century, and before 1937 the majority of Ingrian Finnish children received a school education in standard Finnish and had access to Finnish cultural life (see below). As a result, “the oldest generation of Ingrian Finns includes many speakers whose normal everyday way of speaking is quite close to standard Finnish” (Teinonen and Virtanen 1999, 41–42). Such speakers are especially widespread in the Northern Ingria (see Tables 9 and 10 for more details). Since 1937, the “contacts between Ingrian-Finnish and standard Finnish were terminated almost completely for decades. Therefore, the speech of the Finnish speakers born in the 1930s and the 1940s may at times show more signs of dialectal variation than that of the oldest generation” (cf. also Teinonen and Virtanen 1999, 43; Lehto 1996, 129, 182). Thus, ironically, the politics of the Soviet Union was not only destructive for the Ingrian Finnish dialects, but also prolonged their life for several decades by isolating them from the influence of standard Finnish.

During the deportation to Finland (see below), Ingrian Finns again came in contact with standard Finnish, and their children attended Finnish schools there. Since the

1990s standard Finnish in spoken and written forms has made its way back to Ingria, and nowadays it again affects many Ingrian Finnish idiolects (especially of speakers born in the 1950s and 1960s; see also Teinonen and Virtanen 1999, 43–44).

Modern Ingrian Finns from the Lower Luga area had intensive contacts with standard Estonian (see Tables 9 and 10), especially in the villages of the Rosona river basin that belonged to Estonia in 1920–1940. However, unlike local Ingrians, Ingrian Finnish children were educated in standard Finnish. There were intensive migrations of Ingrian Finns to Estonia after the war (see below and Tables 9 and 10).

Nowadays, the strongest influence of standard Finnish and Estonian is reflected in the native dialects of those Ingrian Finns who spend considerable time in the respective countries during the winter or have moved there permanently (see e.g. Lehto 1996, 180; Teinonen and Virtanen 1999, 33–34).

Many Ingrian Finns had contacts with Karelians after the war (see below), but we do not know cases when Karelian would have influenced Ingrian Finnish.

Contemporary Ingrian Finnish speakers from the Kattila and Novasolkka parishes experienced direct contacts with the Votic language. By now Votic has completely disappeared from that region, but mixed Finnish/Votic idiolects can still be found there as a result of mixed marriages (Muslimov 2003), and local Finns can usually indicate where *čud'* had lived. On the western bank of the Luga river in the southern part of the Lower Luga area, contacts with Ingrian were particularly strong. Mixed marriages among Ingrians and Finns were widespread there already in the 1920s and 1930s, and nowadays mixed Finnish/Ingrian idiolects form a continuum in the Rosona river basin, in the villages of Vanakylä, Vyötermaa (*F'odorovka*), Suuri Narvusi, and the adjacent ones.

4 Historical Background of the Present Situation

The numbers listed above clearly indicate that the situation has changed radically since the middle of the 19th century, when the languages in question were still in a healthy state. In this section we will consider the historical background of the present situation.

The time period up to the 1920s can be called non-forced Russification. When Ingria became a Russian territory (1708), an influx of Russian speakers began. This was partly encouraged by the state, although the state policy was not very consistent.³² The influence of Russian on local languages constantly increased during this time.

However, the three ethnic groups had different destinies. The Russification of the Votic and Ingrian people was facilitated by the fact that both groups were Orthodox and could easily marry Russians. The Finnish population, however, were Lutherans;

³² Musaev (Musaev 2004, 23–24, 55–56) notes that Peter the Great actively encouraged the Russian population to settle in Ingria. Also, at the turn of the 19th century the Russian government aimed at the Russification of national minorities, especially through the medium of education.

they greatly outnumbered the Votic and Ingrian populations and had strong support from Finland in all cultural and religious spheres. Under the influence of Finland and Estonia, an Ingrian national movement for independence emerged at the end of the 19th century (see Nevalainen 1996 for details). However, the support it gained from Finland, Estonia and the Russian White Guard was not strong and consistent enough, and there was virtually no possibility that Russia would abandon St. Petersburg together with Ingria. The movement therefore made no tangible achievements.³³

In general, the Civil War in Russia (1918–1922) led to a decrease in the Finnish population in Ingria, as some of the population emigrated and some were killed in the war. At the same time, new migrants were coming to Ingria from Finland, thus the Finnish population suffered no significant decrease in the first quarter of the 20th century and even slightly increased.

Obviously, the Votic and Ingrian populations could not increase by migration. Since the middle of the 19th century, the Votic population was constantly decreasing, while the Ingrian population remained more or less stable until the 1930s. As already mentioned, Votic ethnic identity was not strong enough. The shift to the Russian language and a Russian identity went faster with Votes than with other ethnic groups. As the Votic linguist Dimitri Tsvetkov wrote in 1922:

Already now most people have lost their mother tongue and switched to the powerful and beautiful Russian language, so for the young generation *vad' d'olaisijõ tšeeeli* is almost like Chinese. The language is on a fast and steady course to extinction. (Tsvetkov 2008, 4)

In 1927, the ethnographer and anthropologist Dimitri Zolotarev published similar observations about Votes:

It was quite difficult to find any data on the Votes, who had lost not only their peculiar characteristics, but even the name of the ethnic group. Sporadically the name *vadja* is still preserved. (Zolotarev 1927)

Besides Russification, the Votic population in the Lower Luga area has been gradually shifting their language and identity to Ingrian since at least the beginning of the 20th century (Kettunen 1915, 4; Tsvetkov 1925, 43; Turunen 1997; Heinsoo 1995, 176–177). Votes had the same religion as Ingrians and did not have any significant cultural differences from them. In the same article Zolotarev noted: “The difference between Votic and Ingrian people is preserved only in their language” (Zolotarev 1927 cf. also Heinsoo 1991, 449; 1995, 177). Tsvetkov pointed out in 1925 that after the revolution, Votes were putting “Ingrian” as the answer to the question about their ethnicity in Soviet questionnaires and “Russian” to the question about their nationality (Tsvetkov 1925, 43–44). Probably due to this identity shift, Votic was not included in the population censuses from 1926 until 2002. It did not become a written language and was not taught at schools.

Some informants claim that Votic was more difficult for Ingrians than vice versa: “Soikkola people cannot twist their tongue this way. We can speak like them but they cannot [speak like us]” (Vote, male, born 1921). The same idea was expressed,

³³ In 1919–1920, however, there existed an Ingrian “ministate” on the territory around Kirjasalo in Northern Ingria (Musaev 2004, 172).

for example, in Agranat and Ivan (1997, 64), but criticized by Muslimov (2005, 357–358). In this case it would remain unclear why Ingrians were able to learn Estonian and Finnish (as sometimes happened), but they could not learn Votic. Besides, a similar disparity in the learning of the neighboring language was attested in the area of Votic and Finnish contacts in Kattila parish.³⁴ As a Finnish woman from Korovaisi (*Karavaevo*) village (born 1911) noted: “*čuchnat* spoke less to *čud’* [in Votic], it’s rather *čud’* who were more capable of speaking a non-native language [Finnish]”. Thus, the language prestige still seems to be a more important reason for such disparities than purely linguistic grounds.

Marriages between Votes and Ingrians were quite typical. A Votic husband spoke Ingrian with his Ingrian wife, and gradually the elder generation of the family started speaking Ingrian as well (Tsvetkov 1925, 43). We know several people who had one Votic and one either Ingrian or Finnish parent, and almost all of them speak Ingrian or Finnish. As a result, for example, the village of Rajo in the Lower Luga area, which was originally Votic, became completely Ingrian in the last generation of speakers. In the vicinity of Kattila, only Finnish-speaking people are now found in the former Votic villages.

The underlying reasons for the assimilation of Votes are still not clear. It was probably facilitated by the fact that already in the middle of the 19th century, the Ingrians outnumbered Votes by three times, and Ingrian Finns by more than ten times. Unlike Ingrians and Finns, Votes did not inhabit naturally isolated pieces of land (like the Soikkola or Kurkola peninsulas). By the beginning of the 20th century, all Votic settlements were in contact with surrounding Ingrians, Finns, or Estonians (cf. also Lensu 1930, 201–202; Heinsoo 1995, 177).

The period of the 1920s and 1930s was controversial for the Finnic people in Ingria, as it was for all minorities in the Soviet Union. In the general framework of the “*korenizacija*” policy, a cultural autonomy was granted to the ethnic groups of Ingria according to the Tartu peace treaty in 1920 (Musaev 2004, 161–162). Schools teaching in standard Finnish quickly spread in Ingria from the beginning of the 20th century, and after 1920 a considerable amount of new schools were opened.³⁵ At that time, the majority of Ingrian Finnish children were getting their education in Finnish.³⁶ Besides, there were also possibilities to get a higher education, to read newspapers and books, to listen to the radio, and to attend church services in Finnish (Musaev 2004, 183–197).

Ingrian and Votic people were in a less favorable position. The Orthodox religion was persecuted already in the 1920s, and many churches were destroyed. Ingrians and Votes had the same cultural and educational rights as Finns, but they had no written standard languages, so no school teaching could be started immediately in

³⁴ In Ariste (1960, 206) a shift from Votic not only to Ingrian, but also to Finnish is mentioned.

³⁵ For the 1927–1928 school year, Musaev (2004, 182) indicates 261 Finnish and 75 Estonian primary and secondary schools in the Leningrad region.

³⁶ According to our data, Ingrian Finns attending school at that time studied from one up to seven years in Finnish.

1920. At first, it was decided that Finnish would be taught in Ingrian schools,³⁷ but later a group under the leadership of V.I. Junus initiated the development of standard Ingrian and published several textbooks (Selickaja 1965, 302). A number of schools in Western Ingria (attended both by Ingrians and Votes) taught Ingrian in 1930s,³⁸ and Ingrian language teachers were trained at the Estonian-Finnish-Ingrian pedagogical college (Mirenkov 2000). Teaching Ingrian at school further increased the social status of Ingrian as compared to Votic.

Ingria experienced all of the Soviet repressions of the 1930s. The first wave came with collectivization. Although formally there were very few kulaks in the Leningrad region,³⁹ there was a massive “dekulakization”, especially in the villages of the Ingrian Finns: 8,604 “kulak” families were deported in 1930–1931 from the Leningrad region, and many of them were part of the native Finnic population (Musaev 2004, 220).

A new wave of repressions began in 1932 with mop-up operations in the border areas with Finland and Estonia. The repressions applied first of all to the Finnish population in Northern Ingria, but also the Estonian and Ingrian population in the Lower Luga area (Patanen and Vladimir 1997). Altogether about 20,000 people were deported in 1932. In 1935–1936, 26,000–27,000 Ingrian Finns and about 20,000 Estonians were deported to Central Asia and Siberia, and also to the Vologda, Tikhvin, Arkhangel’sk regions (Musaev 2004, 256–260) and the Hatsina district of the Leningrad region.

The wave of repression of 1937–1938 eliminated whatever remained of cultural autonomy. Ethnic educational institutions and periodicals, as well as Lutheran churches were closed. Pastors and national elites were subjected to repressions. The repressions caused a decrease in the Finnic population and destroyed the language environment. However, the most crucial changes began with World War II.

When the war started, the Soviet government decided to deport the Finnic and German populations (potentially disloyal in their eyes) away from Ingria. However, Western, Central, and Eastern Ingria were quickly occupied by the Germans, and Leningrad came under siege. The government managed to deport about 50,000 Ingrian Finns from the non-occupied Northern Ingria, Leningrad and the so-called “Oranienbaum bridgehead” (parts of Kaprio and Tyrö parishes) to Siberia, the Urals, the European North of Russia and Central Asia, see the illustration in Nevalainen and Hannes (1991, 311). People were given 24 hours for packing up their possessions, the transportation and the conditions in the new living places were very poor, and

³⁷ It was already said that Votic people were treated by the Russians as a part of the Ingrian population.

³⁸ The majority of Soikkola and Lower Luga Ingrians who attended primary school in the period between 1931 and 1937 studied in Ingrian from several months up to four years. For the 1935 school year, Musaev and Vadim (Musaev 2004, 248) indicates 18 primary and five secondary Ingrian schools in the Leningrad region. Soikkola Ingrians in the Sista river region, as well as Hevaha Ingrians were educated in Russian, as young people in those regions no longer spoke the language (Selickaja 1965, 302).

³⁹ Musaev (2004, 221) indicates no more than one to two percent kulak farms for the mid 1920s.

many died on the way, though at the same time some lives were saved in the besieged Leningrad (see Musaev 2004, 285–291 for more details).

People who remained on the occupied territory had hard times as well. Finland suffered a great lack of manpower after the mobilization, and the Finnish government made an agreement with Germany to deport the Finnic population from Ingria to Finland. These Finnic people were supposed to assimilate in Finland more easily than Russians and were less likely to become a “fifth column”.⁴⁰ The German government originally planned to colonize this territory with German settlers and wanted the preexisting civilian population off Ingria. Later the situation on the Eastern front grew worse, and Germany no longer favored deportation. The local population was needed to provide supplies for the German army, and a deportation could disturb military operations.⁴¹ Paavo Nevalainen, who has thoroughly studied the deportation of the inhabitants of Ingria to Finland, notes that “both parties [Finland and Germany] treated the affair in the negotiations on the governmental level bluntly as a question of a working force. In public—when the affair was discussed at all—Finland was naturally reported as acting only on humanitarian grounds, saving Ingrian inhabitants from the maelstrom of war and bringing them to their old motherland” (Nevalainen and Hannes 1991, 271; see also Nevalainen 1990).

Nevertheless, in 1943, most Finns, Ingrians and Votes were deported to Finland via the Estonian Klooga concentration camp and Paldiski port, while Estonians were sent to Estonia. Kattila Votes and Hevaha Ingrians, who had by that time strongly assimilated to Russians, were obviously no longer considered Finnic-speaking and were not subject to the terms of the agreement between Finland and Germany. Ethnic Votes and Ingrians from those areas, as well as local Russians, stated in interviews that they were sent to Latvia (they mentioned at least Sece, Jaunjelgava, Koknese, Jēkabpils regions) or Lithuania. Some people were not subject to deportation, as there was a need to service local roads. Besides, before, after or instead of these deportations some people from Ingria were sent to work in Germany.⁴²

Officially, the relocation was voluntary: “The relocation of people of Ingria is conducted on the basis of voluntary reports of those willing to relocate.”⁴³ Nonetheless, any researcher working with the Ingrian population would nearly

⁴⁰ A protocol signed in Revel (Tallinn) on November 4, 1943 (Schlussprotokoll über die Beendigung der Umsiedlung der Ingermanländer aus dem Generalbezirk Estland und dem Bereich der Heeresgruppe Nord) stated that “a special unit of the Finnish State Police has checked the political loyalty of people from Ingria.” The original records of the relocation to Finland were made accessible to us by the National Archives of Finland, Helsinki and the Auswärtiges Amt Politisches Archiv, Berlin.

⁴¹ A secret letter from the supreme command of the northern group of troops, June 14, 1943, states: “Still I ask to refrain from extending the resettlement of people from Ingria by another 10,000, or even a total resettlement, which was discussed by the Finnish Resettlement Commission with the General Commissioner in Tallinn, if there is no urgent foreign policy need to make concessions to the Finnish government” (signed by von Kückler).

⁴² In 1943 there were about 3,000 people from Ingria in Germany (Musaev 2004, 301).

⁴³ Agreement on Relocation of Population from Ingria to Finland, which is annexed to the letter addressed to the supreme command of the Army Group North, June 6, 1943.

always⁴⁴ hear that “we were given 24 hours” to pack, cf. Teinonen and Virtanen (1999, 38, 51). “It was December 3, 1943. In the morning Vas’a talked our mother into letting him go skiing. It was a chilly and quiet day. In half an hour two Germans with machine guns approached our house. They had a horse and a sledge. The Germans entered the house and pointed at the exit and the sledge. [...] The Germans were in a hurry and kept repeating: ‘*Schnell, schnell!*’” (Filatova 2003, 18). The inhabitants of some villages went into the forest to hide and managed to escape deportation.⁴⁵ Recollections of the Klooga camp are generally very negative. Memories of the stay in Finland vary: in the worst case, the relocated were treated like slaves; in the best case good relations between Finnish hosts and their workers lasted for many years (cf. also Teinonen and Virtanen 1999, 52; Musaev 2004, 306–309).

In 1944, most inhabitants of Ingria were returned to the Soviet Union (apart from about 8,000 of those who decided to stay in Finland or move to Sweden, cf. Nevalainen and Hannes 1991, 289–292; Musaev 2004, 315–318). However, these people were not allowed to return to their native villages and instead were deported to Central Russia (Kalininskaya, Jaroslavskaia, Pskovskaia, Novgorodskaya, Velikolukskaia regions). Similar to Ingrian Finns deported from the non-occupied parts, they were distributed among the local population speaking other languages and did not have compact areas of settlement. After the war both deported groups (from the occupied and non-occupied territories) tried to return home, but generally only the families of those who took part in military actions got official permits to stay. Others were sent away again in 1946–1947. At the same time, their original houses were sold to Russian, Belorussian and Ukrainian newcomers who were in many cases relocated here by the government⁴⁶ (Krjukov 1987, 129).

Thus, Finnic people arriving home at that time usually found themselves a marginalized minority on illegal grounds, stigmatized as “enemies of the people” and met in a hostile way by the Russian-speaking majority. “People were saying, here dwell Ingrians, a mean nation” (Ingrian, male, born 1937). The inhabitants of Ingria had to conceal their nationality: “We had to become Russians, otherwise we could not return home” (Ingrian, female, born 1931). Russian newcomers treated Finnic people as intruders rather than natives in Ingria: “My son asked a teacher: ‘Is it true that people live better in America?’ The teacher answered that his parents should be sent back to where they came from” (Ingrian, female, born 1920).

Attempts to speak native languages were often suppressed by Russians, who called Finnic people by derogatory names like *talapany*. “An old woman who could speak only Ingrian asked me to buy some bread for her, and I answered her in Ingrian.

⁴⁴ Though the cases were also attested, when Finns from the villages at the front line were indeed asked and agreed to relocate, as active military actions were going on in their villages, all the houses were burnt and the living conditions were very poor. Speakers also indicated that relocation was also voluntary in those Rosona river Ingrian and Finnish villages that belonged to Estonia in 1920–1940

⁴⁵ Among Ingrians, for example, the inhabitants of Kukkuski, Kotko (*Orly*), Vanakylä, Haavikko (*Kejkino*) in the Lower Luga area and also individual Soikkola families.

⁴⁶ For example, the government moved more than 8,000 Russians from the Vladimirskaja, Rjazanskaja, Kalininskaja, Gor’kovskaja and Jaroslavskaia regions to Ingria in 1948–1949 (Musaev 2004, 332–333).

A neighbor heard us and said: ‘Here come the *talapany!*’” (Ingrian, female, born 1928). Speaking Finnic languages was also persecuted by the police (cf. Teinonen and Virtanen 1999, 101). As a result, the overall majority of parents spoke only Russian to their children even if they spoke Ingrian to each other. Children were prohibited to speak their native language also at school: “Ingrian was not allowed at school, teachers got angry. When my younger son was going to school, the teachers told me that he must be taught in Russian, not in Ingrian” (Ingrian, female, born 1920).

Many Finnic people, again barred from their homes, went either to Estonia or Karelia. Our field research showed that people from Western Ingria went to Estonia and very rarely to Karelia, from Central and Eastern Ingria they went either to Estonia or to Karelia, or to Estonia and (usually later) to Karelia, and from Northern Ingria they went almost without exception to Karelia, cf. also Teinonen and Virtanen (1999, 163). In Karelia, a program was initiated in 1949 by G. N. Kuprijanov to increase the percentage of the “ethnic” population there by hiring people from Ingria (mainly for the forest works). About 20 thousand people managed to arrive before 1950 when the program was stopped and Kuprijanov was arrested (Musaev 2004, 335–339).

Only after the death of Stalin, since 1954, the inhabitants of Ingria had a legal possibility to return home. Tolerance from the Russian-speaking majority towards them also rose. At the same time, the situation still did not favor the preservation of the Finnic languages and ethnic identity. The people of Ingria were scattered over different parts of Russia and other countries (primarily Finland, Estonia and Sweden). It was not easy to come back home when many villages had been destroyed and their houses had been occupied by other people. The percentage of the urban population among the Finnic ethnic groups of Ingria rose drastically (the census of 1959 indicates that over 50 % of the Finns of the USSR lived in urban areas). Even those who returned to Ingria were now scattered among the Russian majority and tried not to demonstrate any differences from them. Mixed marriages with Orthodox Russian-speaking people became a norm even among Ingrian Finns, who remained Lutherans. The generation born between the 1910s and the 1930s were exiled and marginalized and completely stopped passing their languages and identities on to their children, who now “construct their identity on completely different grounds” (Teinonen and Virtanen 1999, 120).

At the end of the 1980s, the existence of a Finnic population in Ingria again rose in prominence. However, by that time a language and identity shift had already happened in the middle and younger generations. The state also gave no active support to minor ethnic groups. At present, the traditional habitat and occupations of the Ingrians, Votes and Finns of Western Ingria are threatened by the construction of a huge cargo port in Ust’-Luga.

5 Language Maintenance

From the 1930s up to the end of the Soviet era, there were no attempts to maintain the minority languages of Ingria. At the beginning of the 1990s, minor ethnic groups and the idea of language maintenance gained some attention, but this maintenance

activity is mostly aimed at ethnographic aspects (museums, handicraft, folk bands) rather than at supporting the language. Below we concentrate only on language maintenance efforts.

5.1 Votic

The Joenperä secondary school has made some attempts to organize teaching of the Votic language. Votic was taught there in 2003–2004 by Mehmet Muslimov with the help of language speakers T. F. Prokopenko and Z. A. Savel'jeva and the Votic language enthusiast T. E. Efimova (once every two to three weeks).

Unfortunately, the lack of a natural language environment hindered the emergence of any new language speakers. An interesting experiment was conducted by N. O. Kirsanov, who is not a native Votic speaker himself. He did research in Votic villages and taught his daughter Elena (born in 1987) Votic as her first language.

In 1995, Votic language courses were organized in St. Petersburg first on a private basis, then in the Institute for Language Studies at the Russian Academy of Sciences and later within Inkerin Liitto. For the last three years the courses were held at the Library for National Literatures. The courses were taught by Mehmed Muslimov and lasted from several classes to two to three years. Altogether about 30 people attended these courses; the majority of them were folk singers and people with Votic roots. Muslimov put five Votic lessons on the Internet.⁴⁷

Votic is regularly used in the newspaper *Maaväči*. There was also a column called “Vađđa sōna” in the newspaper *Inkeri*.

5.2 Ingrian

There were some attempts to teach Ingrian at the Viistina school (mainly to the members of local folk bands). These attempts were not systematic and we do not have detailed information about them. Nowadays attempts to teach Ingrian at school are not actively supported by the local people.

Ingrian was sporadically taught in 1998 and in 2008–2012 in the St. Petersburg branch of Inkerin Liitto (Soikkola, Hevaha and Lower Luga dialects) and in 2012–2014 at the Institute for Language Studies at the Russian Academy of Sciences (Lower Luga dialect). Mehmet Muslimov taught the classes and also put three Ingrian language lessons on the Internet.⁴⁸

V. Čern'avskij compiled and put online self-teaching textbooks for Votic and Ingrian (the Votic book has been recently published also as Čern'avskij 2014). They contain very heterogeneous language material which is not always correct.

The Ingrian language is sporadically used in the newspaper *Inkeri* and the magazine *Carelia*.

⁴⁷ <http://elf.org.ru/index.php?i=lang&lng=vodsk&l>.

⁴⁸ <http://elf.org.ru/index.php?i=lang&lng=izhor&l>.

5.3 *Ingrian Finnish*

There has never been any active support for Ingrian Finnish. On the contrary, the learning of standard Finnish by Ingrian Finns has always been promoted. In the 1930s, special textbooks of standard Finnish were created for Ingrian Finns, for example Flink and Mäkilä (1995). Nowadays there are special standard Finnish language courses organized by the St.-Petersburg branch of Inkerin Liitto and the church. Since 2012, Mehmet Muslimov has given lectures on Ingrian Finnish for the students of the Master program “Minority languages and language policy” at the Dept. of General Linguistics in Saint-Petersburg State University.

Ingrian Finnish is sporadically used in the newspaper *Inkeri* and the magazine *Carelia*. Nowadays *Inkeri* has a column called “Omas kieles” where short stories in Ingrian Finnish are published. *Carelia* has published some stories in Ingrian Finnish in its column “Niitä näitä inkeriksi”.

6 Conclusions

Like many other minority languages, Ingrian, Votic and Ingrian Finnish did not have many chances to survive under the pressure of the social and industrial changes that started in the end of the 19th century. The global industrial revolution, which started in Russia in the 1870s and 1880s, put an end to traditional, closed-off rural societies. Such societies were the main prerequisites for safe preservation of the minority languages. When they came to an end, only those languages that could adapt to a new societal structure (depict new realities, quickly spread through education and mass media and thus give access to various political and economic resources), had a chance to be learned by younger generations and survive. Younger generations in turn were becoming less dependent on collective values, more individualistic and free in their life choices. The postindustrial information society that emerged after World War II, with its rapid processes of globalization, posed even greater challenges for minority languages and further sped up their extinction (cf. Zamyatin et al. 2012).

All other negative factors that were exerting pressure on minority languages (in the case of Ingria, these included forced migrations, political repressions, marginalizing and stigmatizing of the minorities, deliberate dissolving of language communities, lack or deprivation of a standard language and education in it) just intensified and accelerated existing processes of extinction. However, these factors cannot be considered the main underlying force of the vanishing of the languages of Ingria, as well as of many other languages. There is a high degree of variation among particular sociolinguistic situations for minorities around the world, but mass language shifts were happening in the 20th century all over the globe approximately at the same time.

Still, intensive state repressions executed on the minorities and their languages in the Soviet Union (and the Finnic population of Ingria among them) drove many of these languages to “radical death”. Otherwise these languages would have rather experienced “gradual death”, in the terminology of Campbell and Muntzel (1989). The term “linguicide” (see Orlin’s chapter “[The Death of Languages; the Death of](#)

Minority Cultures; the Death of a People's Dignity" in this volume) can thus be fully applied to state policies towards minority languages in the Soviet Union.

Obviously, any particular case of language shift also has features specific to it. For the Finnic languages of Ingria, the main characteristics are summed up below.

6.1 Ingria as a Whole

Factors:

1. The rise of a nationalist movement and a short period of mainly symbolic independence supported by Finland and Estonia;
2. A tight network of contacts in Ingria between speakers of closely related languages;
3. Especially strong and long-lasting repressions compared to the "average" situations for Soviet minorities (Musaev 2004, 363), as the Finnic peoples of Ingria were seen as directly connected to hostile foreign states, and besides resided in the border areas;
4. Forced deportation during World War II and a policy that turned these communities into a newly returned minority that was met on their own ethnic territory in a hostile way by the Russian-speaking majority recently formed in the area.

The first factor played its role in the beginning of the 20th century but is irrelevant for the identity of contemporary language speakers. All other factors are relevant for the last generation of speakers. The second factor triggered a high level of variation in both Finnic languages and Finnic identities in Ingria, blurring and merging their borders. Two last factors caused strong negative emotions towards Finnic languages and identities among many speakers.

6.2 Votic

Factors:

1. The language had a lower status than all other Finnic languages of Ingria;
2. There has been rising interest towards Votic among scholars and the general public since the middle of the 20th century.

Due to the first factor, a language and identity shift into Ingrian and partly Finnish was ongoing in the Votic community since at least the beginning of the 20th century. As a result, the amount of Votic speakers fell several times faster than speakers of other Finnic languages of Ingria. Probably for this reason, Votic never got a written variety. The second factor stipulated a positive attitude among the contemporary Votic speakers towards their native language. Votic even became more prestigious than Ingrian in the Lower Luga area. It is also remarkable that a full five grammatical

descriptions of Votic have been published (Ahlqvist 1856; Tsvetkov 2008; Ariste 1948; Agranat 2007; Markus and Rožanskij 2011). At the same time, Ingrian Finnish dialects have never been objects of systematic linguistic research, and only two grammatical descriptions of Ingrian have been published (Porkka 1885; Junus 1936).

6.3 Ingrian

Factors:

1. There are no strong factors that would support the prestige of the language today;
2. Compared to Votic and Ingrian Finnish, Ingrian was under the least pressure from closely related languages.

Across the background of other minority languages in Soviet Union, Ingrian has the least specific features among the languages of Ingria. Due to the first factor, the attitude of the speakers towards Ingrian is more negative than in the case of Votic and Ingrian Finnish. At the same time, due to the second factor, Ingrians show the least unambiguous ethnic identity among the Finnic ethnic groups in Ingria. They consider themselves as a separate ethnic group speaking its own language, and are also perceived in this way from the outside. Probably for the same reason, the youngest fluent speaker in the whole area is Ingrian.

6.4 Ingrian Finnish

Factors:

1. Unlike Votes and Ingrians, Ingrian Finns have always been Lutherans;
2. Wherever possible, Ingrian Finns had strong support from Finland in various aspects of their lives;
3. Standard Finnish became a standard written variety for Ingrian Finnish dialects.

All these three factors resulted in that nowadays Ingrian Finnish speakers and a portion of the semi- and non-speakers have a Finnish rather than Russian identity (unlike Ingrians and Votes). The second factor also played its role in that Ingrian Finns used to be more educated than Votes and Ingrians and managed to produce a national elite that was the core of the national movement. Due to the third factor, Ingrian Finnish is often seen as a variant of standard Finnish. Standard Finnish has high prestige among the Ingrian Finnish speakers, and therefore the dialects also usually evoke positive emotions in the community. On the other hand, a shift into standard Finnish started among Ingrian Finns already in the beginning of the 20th century. It was then partly reverted in Soviet times when all contacts with Finland were terminated. Unlike Votic or Ingrian, there have never been any attempts to teach, maintain and revitalize Ingrian Finnish dialects. Until very recently, there have been

no serious attempts to establish the number of Ingrian Finnish dialects or to create any standard version of the “Ingrian Finnish language” (compare to the situation with Kven in Norway). It is hard to estimate precisely, but it seems that nowadays the percentage of those speaking Ingrian Finnish among those who claim an Ingrian Finnish ethnic identity is much lower than in the case of Ingrian and Votic.

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The Challenge of Language

On Developing Aboriginal Culture in Northern Russia

Lennard Sillanpää

Abstract In the fall of 1999, a University of Helsinki–Russian Academy of Sciences (RAS) research team conducted a survey on the socio-economic and political cultures of some twenty-four different national minorities inhabiting Northern Russia (Sillanpää 2008), focusing primarily on traditional livelihood and cultural identity. No set of questions caused a wider range of emotion than those related to the respondent's knowledge of his or her native language. These ranged from a fatal realism that recognized the dwindling of one's ancestral culture all the way to full anguish. For many respondents, it was a source of humiliation, a stark reminder of the extent to which their ancestral culture had declined to the point of virtual extinction. While many older members we interviewed could claim a working fluency in the mother tongue, most of those in their twenties, thirties and forties would confess, often with tears, how they had completely lost any proficiency they may have once had in their mother tongue or could only remember enough to convey greetings and remember snatches of phrases. Many wondered if it would be possible for a culture to survive if so few were able any longer to communicate in the ancestral language. This chapter, excerpted from that study, will focus on situating the issues gleaned from the survey related to the preservation of ancestral languages.

Keywords Language extinction · Political marginalization · Indigenous rights · Shamanism · Traditional economy · Indigenous core value system · Linguistic action plan · Consociational arrangement · Indigenous numerically small peoples · RAIPON–Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North

1 Setting for the Survey

When the Cold War came to an end in the early 1990s, there has been no greater cultural renaissance than among the many indigenous nationalities of Siberia who, since their conquest by Russia early in the 17th century, existed in almost total isolation from contact with other parts of the world. It has only been since 1985,

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with the policies of *perestroika* and *glasnost* implemented by the then President of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev, that these widely scattered peoples have began to mobilize and to participate in issues related to their identity and livelihood. These are what Russian authorities and academics refer to as the “Indigenous Numerically Small Peoples of the North”—small in that no people numbered more than 50,000 in total in the Census.¹ Russian Federal Law No. 82-FZ also mandated that the state establish an official list of such peoples. Eleven months after the law was adopted, the Russian government confirmed such a list of 44 peoples (Edinyj perečen’ 2000). Most of these nationalities live in the Russian North. Each indigenous nation ranges from a few hundred in number to as large as 42,000. All of the 24 groups surveyed are on this list. Many of these nationalities are also Finno-Ugric peoples.

While approximately two hundred and fifty thousand in total number, according to the 2002 Census (FSGS 2004), the traditional homelands of these “indigenous numerically small peoples” extend over the Arctic and sub-Arctic territory, from the Kola Peninsula in the west to the Bering Strait in the east.² This region of tundra, taiga and vast forests covers about two-thirds of the land mass of Russia and contains enormous reserves of oil, gas, minerals, timber and hydro-electric potential. Indigenous peoples have practiced a subsistence lifestyle over centuries through fishing, hunting, trapping and reindeer husbandry. Since World War II, huge industrial enclaves and development projects have been established throughout the Arctic region with little consideration by developers or government officials as to their impact on either the ecology of the north or the traditional livelihood and culture of its indigenous inhabitants. Vast areas in the Russian North that had been occupied by these indigenous peoples for countless generations have been turned into wastelands and the water systems polluted. One result has been their political marginalization for generations, leaving the cultural identity of many at a crisis stage.

Through four hundred years of contact, these Siberian peoples have always been seen as some kind of collective entity. The Russian explorers, military officials and administrators who first conquered Siberia and the Far East referred to these native peoples as *inorodcy* ‘aliens’, that is, foreign to the Slavic peoples who ruled this vast colony. Aliens were required to pay tribute (*jasak*) to the Tsar as well as payments and

¹ Paragraph 1.1 of Russian Federal Law No. 82-FZ, *O garancijach prav korennych maločislennyh narodov Russijskoj Federacii* (‘On Guarantees of the Rights of the Indigenous Numerically Small Peoples of the Russian Federation’), enacted on April 30, 1999, stated that it applied to the

indigenous small peoples of the Russian Federation who live on territories of traditional residence of their ancestors, who maintain their traditional way of life, economies and crafts, whose members in the Russian Federation is less than 50 thousand men and who identify themselves in independent ethnic communities. (Unofficial English-language translation provided by the World Bank)

Most of these peoples live in the Russia North. This definition resulted from official discussions held during the drafting stages of this legislation in 1993 involving academics, legal specialists and indigenous representatives on what constituted an “indigenous numerically small people” in Russia.

² Other peoples indigenous to Northern Russia are the Komi, Sakha people (Yakut), and Buryat, all of whom number more than 250,000 and reside primarily in homelands characterized as republics (Slezkine 1994). Minorities such as Karelians and Finns could be included.

services to regional authorities. The status of these native Siberians was codified in the great reform known as the “Statute of Alien Administration” of 1822.³ This collective ethnic distinctiveness continued with the Soviet authorities who, in 1926, adopted the “Temporary Statutes on the Management of Native Nationalities and Tribes of the Northern Outlying Areas of the RSFSR”, establishing an official list of 26 northern indigenous peoples (Kryazhkov 1996, 87). The official designation for these northern peoples came to be *malye narody Severa* (‘Small Peoples of the North’).⁴ This ethnic distinctiveness was to form the basis for the political mobilization of today’s Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North (RAIPON), the founding Congress of which, in 1990, had been based on the “List of 26”, and which has since expanded and consolidated its position as a national federation of some 35 affiliated Regional associations.⁵ With *perestroika*, this official collective designation came to be refined with the term “*Indigenous Numerically Small Peoples*” stipulated in Article 69 of the 1993 Constitution of the Russian Federation.

2 Administration of the Survey

In 1999, our research team conducted an all-encompassing survey on the traditional livelihood and land use of the small indigenous minorities of northern Russia to determine their current socio-economic situation and their political rights based on their usage of traditional lands since time immemorial. Dmitriy Funk, Head of the Department of the North and Siberian Peoples at the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology (IEA), Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow, was the coordinator of a 12-member research team in Russia. Based on a questionnaire that I designed, RAS researchers traveled to the homelands of 24 different northern minorities to conduct in-depth taped interviews. A total of 340 interviews were collected, summarized in Russian, translated into English, and edited along the themes outlined in the questionnaire (Sillanpää 2008).

The questionnaire was divided into five themes with the questions arranged around complementary subject areas germane to the culture and livelihood of the respondents:

1. economic situation in the region;
2. traditional livelihood of the respondents;

³ Legal concepts on how these peoples have been identified over the years can be found in Kryazhkov 1996.

⁴ Soviet policy towards these 26 indigenous peoples was to provide a number of material privileges and advantages: recognition of fishing and hunting rights, free medicine, free transportation, good primary and secondary education, competition-free admission to educational institutions anywhere in the Soviet Union, and providing for the material needs of students belonging to the northern peoples at the expense of the state.

⁵ See the official website for RAIPON: <http://www.raipon.org>. The First Congress of what first came to be known as the Association of Northern Peoples was held in March 1990. RAIPON claims to represent 41 different indigenous numerically small peoples. RAIPON identifies itself as a permanent participant of the eight-nation Arctic Council and a participant in the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

3. relationship of the indigenous minority with the majority culture in a region;
4. knowledge of these peoples of their own indigenous skills, language, religion and culture;
5. views of the respondents on the socio-political issues affecting their lives.

Personal data was also gathered on each respondent. The questions were based on the experiences of commissions of inquiry on the rights of aboriginal peoples in such Arctic jurisdictions as Canada, Alaska and Scandinavia, where these commissions would hold hearings in native communities where oral testimony would be accepted from elders, youth and others prepared to participate in these proceedings. Published reports of these commissions, in their assessment of the evidence, would, as a matter of course, cite oral as well as written submissions.

The analysis of this survey attempted to determine the degree of consociationalism that may be present denoting how the Russian state and its authorities have responded to claims by these indigenous minorities to the recognition of their historical rights as a cultural minority. Consociationalism denotes a model of democracy that seeks to resolve political differences by techniques of consensus rather than majority rule. A distinguishing feature of a consociational democracy is the ability of the leaders of competing subcultures within a pluralist society to avoid the dangers of intergroup conflict through a continual striving for both cooperation among the respective subcultures and a degree of commitment to the unity of the country.⁶ Consociationalism provides for a continuing dialogue between the state and a minority within an administrative framework that the minority has had a major role in developing. To what extent, if any, some form of consociational arrangements may have taken root, was a prime objective in the analysis of the findings of this survey.

This chapter will utilize the responses received for this survey, especially as these relate to the current situation for indigenous languages and culture.

3 The Minority Situation and Indigenous Cultural Revival

On every occasion, the respondent's group was in a minority position in the region. It may have constituted a majority in some settlement or village or within a hunting, fishing or reindeer-herding group within the parameters of a collective or state farm. However, in every region where the interviews took place, the respondent faced a minority-majority situation as a permanent social and political reality. More importantly, this long-term relationship between the indigenous minority and the majority could best be characterized as "subservient" in that the minority has always been in the position of an inferior. The second part of this section will indicate various manifestations of indigenous cultural revival that provide a backdrop to the current situation for the ancestral language.

⁶ Lijphart (1977) has maintained that consociational democracy could be attempted in virtually any society irrespective of the degree of societal pluralism it exhibits, although much would depend ultimately on immeasurable factors, such as the negotiating skills of elites and the motivation of the parties.

3.1 Relationship with Other Cultures in the Region

Most indigenous respondents reported on being at a general disadvantage in their dealings with their non-indigenous fellow residents and neighbors. The demographic fact was that, except for certain villages and settlements, the “numerically small” populations of this study were always in a minority. The Slavic majority population in each community or region would be of more recent arrival. Reasons for their coming to the region would have been based on opportunities for farming (especially in the latter period of the Russian Empire) and, since the 1950s, on the promise of well-paying jobs from large-scale industrial development. Every decision to open up a pristine region to industrial development had been made by the central authorities in Moscow. Local authorities would oversee the implementation of these decisions through the development of new communities, with housing, schools, and various health and social services. Everything for the newcomer had been provided by administrators appointed by outsiders. The presence of an indigenous population in a region was regarded by the majority population as the “primitive remnants of a disappearing way of life”—a local by-product amounting to very little as far as the lives of the newcomers were concerned.

Perhaps nowhere was this minority-majority power situation more stark than for the Sámi people inhabiting their traditional region of the Kola Peninsula (see also Siegl and Rießler’s chapter “[Uneven Steps to Literacy](#)” in this volume). Of a total population of more than one and a half million, the 2002 Census enumerated a total of 2,132 Sámi (FSGS 2004).⁷ Since the 1930s, the Soviet Union undertook massive industrialization in this region. Moreover, Murmansk is the center for much of the Russian navy. More nuclear reactors are situated in and around Murmansk than anywhere else in Russia, indeed the world. Notwithstanding this vast disparity in population and political might, international conventions, such as the UN’s *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, stipulate that the Sámi, as the only indigenous people on the Kola Peninsula, should be able to continue to enjoy certain rights as a people and that the state has a mandate to assist them in maintaining their cultural identity.⁸

The Evenki people of Siberia, with a population of 35,377 in the 2002 Census (FSGS 2004), faces a different minority-majority situation. Because their traditional nomadic lifestyle has extended over a huge territorial range throughout central and eastern Russia, the Evenki, more than any other Siberian people, have lacked a national or geographical boundary. The territory of the Evenki falls into many administrative districts across Siberia. While there is an Evenki National Region, only about 11% of all Evenki live within this vast and sparsely populated area. About 42% of

⁷ This 2002 total represented a 16% increase in real numbers from the Sámi listed in the 1989 Census.

⁸ At the Fifth Congress of RAIPON held in Moscow, Nina Afanasyeva, President of the Sámi Association of the Kola Peninsula, spoke at length on April 11, 2005 of the difficulties Sámi on the Kola Peninsula faced in trying to move freely about on their home territories because of military and policing that restricted their movement (cf. Sillanpää 2008, 78).

all Evenki live concentrated in a number of communities within the Sakha Republic, where they face unique problems asserting their rights to self-determination since the Yakut have been advocating their own form of self-determination within the political boundaries of this Russian (and previously Soviet) republic (Fondahl 1998, 81–86).⁹

Even though respondents throughout Russia realized they had special rights in lieu of their being aboriginal residents in a region, they had been continually frustrated by their lack of success in carving out a niche for themselves within the community and region in which they reside. It was only with the emergence of *perestroika* in the late 1980s that indigenous spokespeople could even begin to conceive of such possibilities as attempting to establish an effective working relationship with local authorities.

The survey identified comments from the respondents on the following themes as these relate to the status of indigenous languages.

3.1.1 Systemic Inferiority

One overall observation is that, for generations, many members of these indigenous groups have been made to feel inferior in their dealings with the majority Russian population within their district—a majority invariably supported by the authorities. This was apparent with the first colonization of Siberia by an expanding Russian Empire and continued with the centralizing policies of sovietization in the 1930s and increasingly consolidated during the post-World War II period with the influx of large numbers of newcomers. Many respondents told of how they had suffered social stigmatization within their very homeland if, for example, they had continued speaking their mother tongue in public or expressed other outward manifestations of their culture, such as the wearing of national costumes or taking part in public manifestations of their traditional cultural activities—i.e. “nationalism” (Forsyth 1992, 407).¹⁰

3.1.2 Impact of Newcomers

Many respondents described how development had brought a large influx of migrant labor from other parts of the Soviet Union, many of whom would only work at industrial development projects for a limited period of time and then leave. Others took jobs in administration, health services, and teaching and prepared to settle into the region for the long haul. Few Northern residents had access to well-paying jobs, which led to understandable resentment. Many newcomers also had first opportunities at accommodation in the modern homes that were built as part of the economic development of an area. Northern residents continued to reside in their traditional, often comparatively primitive, homes. Most locals, especially unskilled indigenous

⁹ Census data for 2002 from Suljandziga et al. (2003, 28–32); cf. also Forsyth (1992), who has several lengthy descriptions of the emergence of Yakutia.

¹⁰ One of the most serious charges that could be leveled in the USSR was to have accused someone, who may simply have been promoting some unique heritage aspects of a minority, as being a “nationalist” and, therefore, hostile to the egalitarian principles of the communist state.

locals, did not share to the same degree (if at all) in the prosperity brought into a region by outsiders. However, as the economy declined during the 1990s and, in many regions, had moved into an outright depression, many newcomers began to leave as they lost their jobs or had not been paid. Many indigenous Northern residents had come to know these newcomers quite well after many decades of living together in the same communities. They also came to realize how many skills were being lost in local communities with this emigration, as qualified health-care workers and teachers left and were not replaced. Many newcomer homes became available to longtime residents, particularly those who were senior citizens.

3.1.3 Public Ignorance of Indigenous Rights

The greatest source of antipathy between indigenous residents and the more recent Russian (and other Slavic) arrivals, one that had become an increasing source of aggravation during the recent economic turmoil, was the question of the continued rights of indigenous peoples to be able to pursue a traditional livelihood. Respondents throughout Russia deeply resented the fact that they were being censured by their non-indigenous neighbors for having rights and privileges that Russian newcomers did not have. These indigenous Northerners had always had the right to pursue a living through hunting, fishing, trapping and gathering berries and other food products, long before contact with Russians. To a great extent this had been recognized by the Soviet authorities even though, at the same time, these authorities initiated the huge development projects that had destroyed many of the lands, forests and waterways used by these indigenous peoples in the pursuit of their ancestral rights. What was most frustrating for many Respondents was that they felt they had been put on the defensive about their very rights within their own region—that they had been made to feel guilty about their exceptionality. Much of the non-indigenous local population did not understand, or refused to accept, that longtime local residents had always enjoyed special rights with respect to a traditional livelihood and that they should want this to continue, especially in hard economic times. These non-indigenous neighbors would insist that everyone was equal—as, indeed, this had always been the underlying premise of communist ideology—and that, therefore, there could be no special set of collective rights for anybody, even an indigenous minority who had had lived in a region for countless generations before outsiders arrived. As residents in many regions began to lose their jobs during the 1990s and had to rely on what was available for food within the region in which they were residing, these newcomers began to criticize how their indigenous neighbors seemed to have an advantage in hunting licenses and fishing quotas. Respondents bitterly resented that they even had to argue about this.

3.1.4 Summary

Respondents could recount endless examples of social humiliation in their dealings with their non-indigenous neighbors, whether it was the clothes they wore or how

they were accused of being rude if they persisted in speaking an indigenous language in public when Russian speakers were present who did not understand. While indigenous people had begun to mobilize in many regions throughout Northern Russia, their leadership still needed to deal with centuries of systemic inferiority that their members had endured. The language of administration remained exclusively Russian and the majority of the local population wanted to keep it that way. Although this dominance had somewhat lessened during the 1990s, primarily because of the breakdown in the national economy, this did not mean that a competing indigenous way of life could suddenly come forward to fill this socio-economic vacuum.

Most importantly, the Respondents wanted local authorities to launch an information campaign to make clear to newcomers that these indigenous residents had a longstanding right to carry on a traditional livelihood in these difficult economic times; that this was the only vestige of their ancestral past that remained; that these were activities they had practiced for hundreds, if not thousands, of years; and how, even then, much of their ability to continue pursuing such activities had been compromised by industrial development and large-scale immigration. They desperately wanted the non-indigenous population of the North to become more aware of the historical rights of their indigenous neighbors.

3.2 Revival of Indigenous Religion, Skills and Culture

Many of the responses to questions on religion, indigenous skills and culture complement the situation of the ancestral language.

3.2.1 Religious Revival

The demise of the Soviet Union brought about a major revival in religious activities. The state Orthodox Church restored churches that had long been closed across all of Russia, including in many small Northern communities with an indigenous population, and found clergy to serve in these remote areas. Many of those interviewed told of having family roots within the Orthodox religion dating back to long before the Revolution. Much of this can be attributed to the fact some national groups or, in other cases, a faction within a nationality, had converted to Orthodoxy before the Revolution and continued to identify with this religion. For other Northern indigenous groups, the Orthodox Church had been an instrument of the state but never one of worship. Of those who identified with the Orthodox Church, many told of being baptized, or of their parents being baptized, even during the Communist period, indicating how strongly they had held to their beliefs. Others told of how they had come to identify with the Church only after it had freed itself of the restrictions of the Communist state.

This survey also noted that other denominations of Christianity were taking hold across Northern Russia, in the form of a number of new “born-again” Christian

evangelical denominations promoted by outsiders. Our first field trip was to the village of Palana on the Sea of Okhotsk in 1997, where Elena Batyanova interviewed a twenty-year old Koryak, Grigory Shmagin, a carpenter by trade and pastor of the local Church of the Resurrection, which he had established after attending a Bible College (Sillanpää 2008, 499–500, found in Chap. 25 on Koryaks). Many of these denominations were structured around outside evangelists (often foreign) who would visit villages across Northern Russia to hold services, supported by local parishioners. Evangelicalism was seen as a grassroots movement, even when outside (and foreign) organizers were involved. The desire to escape alcoholism was often stated as an underlying factor.

The most notable observation was the return of “the old ways of believing and practice”—i.e. shamanism. From one end of Northern Russia to the other and in every region, Respondents told how members were again turning to shamanism or at least acknowledging some of its practices. There could be a ceremony prior to a hunt, or feeding a fire with bits of meat while on the land, or celebrating the success of a hunt by ensuring that certain traditions of thanks to the spirits were observed. Many Respondents, particularly those in the traditional occupations, had always paid a greater or lesser deference to the spirits involved with nature. This had continued to take place even though shamans had been persecuted as “charlatans” during Soviet times and official atheism had been the prescribed national policy.

The rebirth of shamanism represents a very important social development, indicating a return to traditions that had been severely condemned according to the long-established communist orthodoxy. More importantly, it demonstrates that key elements of the core belief system of many northern indigenous nationalities, ones that even existed long before contact with Russian invaders, were again being activated and respected. Elements of such an ancient belief system might provide the prerequisites of a core value system essential for potential social and political mobilization.

3.2.2 Indigenous Skills

Respondents engaged in traditional livelihoods took pride in their skills in deriving a living from the surrounding lands and waters, as their ancestors had done over the centuries. Many even stated that they were pleased with the end of subsidies and the cultural domination it had represented, as it enabled the good hunters and fishermen, those who felt themselves at one with nature, to flourish in a newly re-emerging economy. Many related how they had acquired these skills from parents and grandparents and how, in many cases, they were now able to pass these on to their children. Two problems, however, restricted a return to traditional ways: (1) the pollution of so many streams and (2) the destruction of vast expanses of land through excavations and the clear cutting of forests.

Many living the traditional lifestyle had developed an interest in promoting aspects of their culture that could have a commercial purpose, such as native handicraft made from the skin of reindeer, other fur-bearing animals, birds, and even the skin

of fish. Others had carved tusks from whales and walruses. Respondents in several communities told how native women had manufactured clothing from these animal skins for sale to tourists. Many small enterprises had gone bankrupt because of inadequate funding, but the creation of such clothing shops indicated that, if a sound business plan could be prepared, the requisite skill level was present.

3.2.3 Culture

In many areas, local indigenous people had come to realize that their national culture was unique and began to develop some sort of local museum and/or institute that would serve to consolidate their culture. In the fall of 2001, Dmitriy Funk and I visited a small Teleut museum located in the village of Bekovo, in the Belovskii district of the Kemerova region. As a museum, it was a very modest center, comparable to small community museums anywhere in the world. As a senior official informed us during this visit, the district administration had very little funding for these kinds of cultural centers. Even if, as in this case, this particular museum was the only building dedicated to the history and culture of an ethnic nationality that existed nowhere else in the world, the district administration could only treat it as any other local operation in a time of severe economic restraint. Yet, at the same time, as its curator, Vladimir Chelukhoev, pointed out to us, this was not just some local museum, but rather it needed to be seen as “a *national museum* for the Teleut people—the only such museum for our people in the world”. The research team found many other such examples throughout Northern Russia. Many small nationalities, after decades of neglect and prosecution under the Soviet regime for anything labeled as “nationalism”, had begun the arduous and painstaking process of seeking out their distinct national history and gathering what artifacts they could find.¹¹

A number of individuals had begun to take an interest in sewing national costumes, although for some groups it had become difficult to ascertain exactly what constituted a true national costume. Some Respondents felt that a number of the existing national costumes represented, at best, hybrids of what a true national costume of their own group should look like. Other individuals began to develop folk dancing groups and choirs that sang national songs. These ensembles had proven popular as they enabled many local people to participate in practices leading to performances. Some ensembles became quite popular in their own region; some would travel to other communities to perform, including to Moscow, St. Petersburg and other urban centers. Folk dancing, singing and theater had been encouraged during the latter decades of the Soviet Union so long as these adhered to the class lines of party ideology. What had changed was that, since 1991, these minorities had begun to perform in ways that would enable them to determine their national identity. Social clubs have

¹¹ A former hunter, Anatoli Khomyakov, took it upon himself to build the Uchinsk open-air museum in the village of Polovinka, which he founded and maintained himself (cf. Sillanpää 2008, 164, Chap. 8 on the Mansi, interview by Natalia Novikova). There was also a Khanty-Mansi Cultural Institute in the region with ties to research institutes in other parts of Russia and in other countries.

been established in many Northern communities that provided indigenous residents with a center to develop a range of activities, including folk dancing, choir singing, theater, making national costumes, and holding special events featuring traditional national food dishes. Separately or collectively, these activities created a source of pride. There were even reports of an occasional bear festival after a successful hunt.

3.2.4 Situation of Youth

Respondents were concerned whether their young people would retain an interest in their national origin. Many had acquired an education through boarding schools, which involved years away from their families, except for summer holidays. Sociologists had reported how, even during Soviet times, such youth seemed *unemployable* since the secondary education they had achieved was not enough for a major career but at the same time they no longer worked on the land as their parents had done (Forsyth 1992, 399–403). Respondents told how local youth had turned to alcohol since there was nothing for them to do in these small settlements and villages. In fact, alcoholism among their youth was one of the greatest social concerns expressed by Respondents.

Many youth were identified as belonging to one or another indigenous nationality in their internal passports so that they would continue to be eligible for certain programs dedicated to improving their situation. This included eligibility for hunting and fishing licenses, as well as support for education at faraway colleges. Yet, in hard economic times and high unemployment in industrial-type jobs, some native youth had stayed in their communities and even assumed a productive role in the traditional economy. Many educated youth began to assume a leadership role in their community where they were able to apply their newly acquired education and their local knowledge to assist their home community in coping with the depressing times. One notable example identified by this survey was the interview with Vyacheslav Shadrin who, only in his twenties, had become head of administration of the Yukagir community in Nelemnöye (Sillanpää 2008, 453–457, Chap. 23 on Yukagirs, interview with Vyacheslav Shadrin by Nikolai Pluzhnikov).

4 Status of Ancestral Language

As stated in the introduction to this chapter, no set of questions caused a wider range of emotion, almost to the point of humiliation, as those related to the status of one's ancestral language. These responses have been complemented by recent studies that have determined that many of these ethnic groups had no written language, their members have completely lost the ability to communicate in their aboriginal mother tongue, and that for some groups their language is, in fact, on the point of extinction. Many Respondents realized that their cultural identity had reached a crisis stage. They questioned whether it was possible for a culture to survive if so few could communicate in the ancestral language any longer.

4.1 *Ancestral Language Within Community*

A pervasive comment repeated over and over, no matter which group was being interviewed, was that, for generations, these peoples had been made to feel inferior in their dealings with the majority Russian population. Nowhere was this more apparent than in the social custom of not being able to speak in one's indigenous language in public. Whatever the region of Russia, Respondents would tell our interviewers how, while they could speak their native language at home, they had not been allowed to speak it in school or in public. While "allowed" may be too restrictive a term in that there may not have been an actual legal restriction, these natives of Northern Russia had been made aware for decades that it was socially unacceptable. Respondents made it clear that to speak one's native language in public, even if both speakers were of the same origin, was considered bad manners by the majority Russian population—that it was impolite to speak in a language a Russian listener would not understand. Moreover, Respondents would cite examples where a Russian had been quick to admonish them for such bad manners.

There are different versions of whether aboriginal languages were actually "banned" in Northern schools. It had been expected that all students conform to the principle that Russian was the language of instruction and this had been driven home to all students from the first day of school. Our questions on how indigenous children had been expected to conduct themselves when they started school clearly struck a nerve. Respondents would recall, how, on reporting to school, they had been immediately made aware that many attributes of their cultural identity and being (native language, religion, dress) had to be abandoned. Although now in their forties, fifties, sixties and much older, each Respondent could recall their initiation to the school system as if yesterday.

Indigenous languages were categorized as the language of the home. More than one Respondent termed his or her native language as "*a woman's language*, only spoken at home." In many communities, older women were seen as the last refuge of the language. Young Respondents (between 18 and 30) who claimed to have a good working knowledge of the native language, invariably replied that the reason for this was that they had spent a lot of time in childhood with their grandparents. Those who had been brought up by parents working in urban communities at non-traditional jobs often found that their language skills had atrophied through lack of use.

While indigenous languages came to be primarily the language of the home, even at home ancestral languages came under threat as parents were encouraged to speak Russian there among family members, lest the schooling of their children suffer by confusing the language of school (progress, authority and the social objectives of Soviet society) with that of home (the past). Many recalled how, in their youth, they had been teased, often quite cruelly, by Russian children because they were different, often leading to inter-ethnic fights among children. None of the Respondents reported of these fights being more than local events. Yet, remembering such indignities many decades later does show that native children had been acculturated with a sense of inferiority in their dealings with the Russian majority culture. Under the

Soviet Union, Communist authorities made special attempts to recruit bright young aboriginal students and help them rise to positions of prominence, but only if they were prepared to abandon much of their past and completely embrace Soviet society.

Many described how the language still thrived among older members, particularly those engaged in hunting, fishing and reindeer husbandry. For those who tended reindeer, whether in the forests or on the tundra, the working language was usually the native one for that region. Outsiders to this occupation, who would join the herders for a season or two, found that they had to adapt to the working language related to the job at hand. Those engaged in hunting and fishing on a more or less full-time basis, tended to be proficient in the native language.

A significant factor in the rapid decline of many languages, as reported by the Respondents, had been the forced relocation of large sectors of the Northern population to larger centers. Where a language had been the focal point of communications in the life of a small native community, many indigenous languages came to be grouped together in a larger urban center, resulting in Russian increasingly becoming the main, and often sole, means of communication. Where a native language had pride of place in a small settlement where it had thrived for countless generations, the situation changed when its speakers were relocated to a larger multicultural urban center where it lost this stature and was relegated to the social margins.

4.2 Teaching of Ancestral Language in Schools

For many brought up on the land by parents who pursued a traditional livelihood, the seminal moment for the beginning of the decline of their native mother tongue occurred when they started school—when school authorities made it very clear that only the Russian language would be tolerated as the language of instruction. Often the teachers would follow this up by intimating that continued use of the native language as a means of communication in the schoolyard or after school would hinder progress in acquiring a proper education. After two or three years at a boarding school, many Northern native children had lost the ability to communicate with their parents when they returned home for the holidays. Whether or not there was a national policy to ban all use of native languages in the school system, it was obvious to most Respondents that the school authorities behaved as if this was stated policy and demanded that these Northern native students conform to what were regarded as acceptable national standards and objectives.

Respondents told how many of today's children had been receiving instruction in their indigenous language in the primary grades. Many questioned whether it was already too late at this point for the culture to recover. They pointed out how indigenous language instruction often took place after the regular school day, leaving little motivation on the part of young students; some might even have felt they were being punished. Respondents reported on the often poor quality of language instruction, that the instructor did not know dialects or had difficulty with indigenous pronunciation. Respondents pointed out that, while children learned the ancestral language in school, they did not speak it at home or in social settings. In many

families, parents themselves did not know the indigenous language, making it difficult for schoolchildren to practice or for real dialogue to take place. In many instances, the problem had become reversed in that, while it might now be possible for children to learn their native language, there was no longer a home situation within which it could thrive.

Another problem identified was in the preparation of the primers used for teaching these native languages in the primary grades and the frustration of linguistic specialists confronted with competing dialects. Even a small group such as the Aleuts, for example, who numbered 592 in the 2002 Census (FSGS 2004), had two rather differing dialects: Mednovskii, spoken by those who had lived on the Mednyi Island; and Beringovskii, spoken by those who lived on Bering Island and to where those on Mednyi had been relocated in the late 1960s (Sillanpää 2008, Chap. 29 on Aleuts, interviews by Nina Meschtyb; cf. also Forsyth 1992, 405–406). Academics and native intelligentsia, aware of the critical state of many languages, have tried to address this concern, although funding has been scarce.

The survey also identified positive aspects, interviewing several dedicated instructors of the indigenous language. Some had formal education as teachers; others would undertake such instruction on a voluntary and almost missionary basis. There were reports of elders visiting schools to tell stories (Sillanpää 2008, Chap. 25 on Koryaks, interviews by Elena Batyanova). Other teachers organized choirs that would perform songs in indigenous languages, even though the students might not have been able to participate in actual conversations in said languages. Interviews were conducted with language specialists of indigenous origin who had worked with well-known university academics to develop primers, dictionaries and other textbooks. Respondents told of scholarly work on indigenous languages, such as that undertaken on the Nivkh people by scholars in Japan (Sillanpää 2008, Chap. 22 on Nivkh, interviews by Dmitriy Funk and Aleksei Zenko).

Respondents from across Northern Russia reported on the phenomenon of boarding schools, first instituted by the Soviet Union in the early 1930s to ensure the education of as many native children as possible. Indigenous communities in small villages had schools for the first four grades; older children went on to boarding schools in larger centers for grades five to eleven. Respondents told of how they had to change from traditional clothing into school uniforms, often having their hair cut to school specifications. The Russian language came to dominate all instruction and social activities at these schools, resulting in the loss of aboriginal language, culture and social customs.

However, the survey also found positive statements on the usefulness of these boarding schools. Teachers interviewed during a time of economic depression, told of how students had been arriving in poor clothing and shoes. Parents of indigenous students, who continued to live off the land, were thankful for what residential schools could provide in hard economic times. Parents could leave one or more of their children at these schools, confident their children would receive the best education possible in this region, while at the same time being properly fed, clothed and otherwise taken care of as students had been for generations. In other words, during the hard economic times of the transition from a Communist system to a market economy, these

residential boarding schools were one of the few institutions that continued to produce positive results. Indigenous parents could trust these schools to feed and accommodate their children and, through education, preparing them for better times ahead.

4.3 Summary

The interviews showed that many saw themselves at a critical stage in their history as a nationality. Respondents, particularly those directly involved in institutions that dealt with indigenous culture, such as language teaching, working at a cultural institute, or serving on the executive of an indigenous representative organization, realized they had an opportunity for the first time in history to develop their own national culture on their own terms. And they were determined not to let it slip away. Many wondered whether their mother tongue might already be lost and if a culture could persevere without it. Others saw opportunities to celebrate their culture in dance and song in their own way and found others who enjoyed this also. Recovering the language was the most urgent issue identified in this set of theme questions.

The ancestral language for many groups had been reduced to only a few speakers. Much had never been written down. Even the few speakers differed in the words they employed as there were regional dialects within even the smallest of nationalities. Our survey discovered how, in a number of regions, native speakers had been working in close cooperation with academics to catalog these disappearing languages for dictionaries and for primers that could be used for teaching. Respondents saw a need to instill pride in indigenous students to motivate them to learn their native language. Another priority was to try and develop, where possible, a true indigenous literature based on the myths and stories of each nationality.

Some had found, while manifesting their traditional skills, some commercial success through production whether from wildlife husbandry or in making handicraft. Many were prepared to do this but had been frustrated by a lack of materials and even the most minimal of capitalization. Many expressed appreciation that the old belief system (shamanism) was staging some kind of revival and that this was being tolerated by the authorities. The survey found much despair at the weak, seemingly hopeless situation many Respondents found themselves in, but it also identified an intense tenacity that these aspects of their very being and belief as a people were worth holding on to. Centuries of assimilation meant that steps had to be taken as soon as possible to consolidate what was left of their culture. One useful activity has been the recent development of native handicraft and art displays which could eventually be turned into some kind of commercial enterprise.

There have also been increasing ties with native representatives and academics in other countries involving exchanges of visits. This has enabled Russia's indigenous peoples to see concrete examples of what was feasible while, at the same time, establishing partnerships for the long-term process of re-establishing their culture after so many centuries of simply trying to survive. Documentary films were being made from the point of view of the indigenous peoples rather than to complement the ideology of the Communist state as had been the case in the past; many of these had been shown on national television in Russia, as well as internationally.

5 Responding to the Challenge of Cultural Survival

The totalitarianism that had been the Communism of the Soviet Union, one that had even collectivized the traditional occupations of its indigenous inhabitants, represented a hurdle that indigenous peoples in other jurisdictions of the Arctic have never had to overcome. The transformation of the Russian economy from Communism involved high unemployment, inflation and a transition to a market economy, all of which—combined with a much weakened central administration—left the entire Russian Federation in weakened condition. Political power had become diffuse.

The post-Soviet state did, however, take a number of concrete steps that could lead to some kind of consociational relationship with its subject Northern indigenous peoples. These include a special clause in the 1993 Constitution that continues the historic recognition of these peoples in the collective sense, and follow-up legislation in 1999 that expands on their rights and powers. In addition, the central government has taken the initiative in many regions to include these indigenous peoples and their representative associations into the decision-making process. Progress may have been slow due to the economic turmoil, but some kind of consociational structure has been forming.

Over this same period of transition, indigenous organizations have mobilized into effective non-governmental organizations at both the regional and national levels in Russia. The aforementioned RAIPON, established in 1990, has some 35 affiliated regional organizations throughout Northern Russia and has developed extensive contacts with indigenous NGOs outside Russia. There are opportunities to develop a political agenda along cultural criteria. A number of concrete steps have been initiated by these indigenous peoples, whether through RAIPON or simply at the local level, to establish a new political framework based on the efforts of the indigenous peoples themselves.

One has been the transition involving a renewed position for traditional livelihoods across Northern Russia. With the economy in a state of virtual recession, the traditional economy came to be increasingly appreciated in many regions, leading to an increased reliance on the “old economy”, that is, a return to the old traditional livelihoods of hunting, fishing, gathering and reindeer husbandry. The traditional nomadic or semi-nomadic livelihood had become a “default” means of employment that could continue even in the harshest of economic times. Many who practiced this livelihood were of indigenous origin, especially those in reindeer husbandry.

Other initiatives have involved the development of an indigenous value system or set of core values as a collective voice of the indigenous peoples. A return of shamanism across Northern Russia has served as a basis for such a core belief system. A concrete step in this direction would be a political action program such as was initiated at the national level when the Fourth Congress of RAIPON, in April 2001, adopted a *Charter of the Minority Indigenous Peoples of the North, Siberia and Far East of the Russian Federation*. This charter provides an all-encompassing value system that enunciates the socio-economic and political objectives, not only of the

national organization, but also a common political vision for its regional and local affiliates.

Some core values have also been developed through a series of indigenous “national museums” of the kind found among the Teleut, Khanty-Mansi and a number of other peoples. There could be greater promotion of the worthiness of traditional skills, including the making of handicrafts, national costumes, and other forms of clothing and souvenirs, as well as the promotion of folk-singing, choirs, and other forms of entertainment that feature indigenous languages and cultural traditions. An important factor in any revived indigenous value system is that it be seen to have a positive cultural role in a pluralist society.

However, it is the question of the preservation and ultimate development of indigenous languages that makes for the most difficult and complex issue. The survey reported on how so many of those interviewed reported on how much of their ancestral language had been lost. Many were pessimistic as to whether this could ever be reversed. Most importantly, even if the language was taught in the school system, it was necessary that it be seen to be viable once again. The status of many indigenous languages was at a very critical stage as to their continued existence and use. What was needed was a political commitment on the part of the Russian state that such languages were still essential for the survival of a culture. This would need to be followed by an action plan whereby linguistic specialists and indigenous elders would work on the many problems involved in reclaiming a (virtually) lost language. As several of these groups are of Finno-Ugric origin, it might be possible for scholars in Finland to take a leading role in this effort. It might also be possible to tap into this same expertise to assist other Arctic peoples of Northern Russia.

How much of a true consociational administrative structure develops will depend on what new balance will emerge between the institutions of the state and the self-determination initiatives of Russia’s aboriginal minorities. The main element for any successful consociational arrangement would be the *commitment* of elites representing the state and the indigenous peoples to develop a framework within which a continuing dialogue can take place. Such a dialogue must effectively address the fundamental concerns raised by indigenous peoples over the continued existence of their culture. What might also be needed is a core of civil servants, academics and indigenous specialists, sensitive to the needs of these indigenous minorities and dedicated to resolving them, so that economic development can be synonymous with cultural inclusion.

While the Russian state has established a framework that identifies these peoples, it has yet to commit itself to a formal plan for committing long-term resources for reclaiming and developing long-lost languages (Table 1).

Table 1 Small-numbered indigenous peoples of the North in 1989 (Russian Federation) and 2002 (Russia)

Peoples	Total				
	1979	1989 % to 1979		2002 % to 1989	
Aleut ^a	489	644	131.7	592	91.9
Dolgan ^a	4,911	6,584	134.8	7,330	105.0
Itel'men ^a	1,335	2,429	181.9	3,474	143.0
Ket ^a	1,072	1,084	101.1	1,891	174.4
Koryak ^a	7,637	8,942	117.1	9,077	110.0
Mansi ^a	7,434	8,279	111.4	11,573	133.9
Nanai ^a	10,357	11,883	114.7	12,355	104.0
Nganasan ^a	842	1,262	149.9	879	69.6
Negidal	477	587	123.1	806	137.3
Nenets ^a	29,487	34,190	115.9	41,454	121.2
Nivkh ^a	4,366	4,631	106.1	5,287	114.0
Orok (Uilta) ^a	–	179	?	432	241.3
Oroche	1,040	883	84.9	884	100.1
Sámi ^a	1,775	1,835	103.4	2,132	116.2
Selkup ^a	3,518	3,564	101.3	4,367	125.5
Tofalar	576	722	125.3	1,020	141.3
Udege ^a	1,431	1,902	132.9	1,665	87.5
Ulchi ^a	2,494	3,173	127.2	3,098	97.6
Khanty ^a	20,743	22,283	107.4	28,773	129.0
Chuvany ^a	–	1,384	?	1,300	93.9
Chukchi ^a	13,937	15,107	108.4	15,827	104.7
Evenki ^a	27,941	29,901	110.6	35,377	118.3
Even ^a	12,452	17,055	137.0	19,242	112.8
Enets	–	198	?	327	165.0
Eskimo ^a	1,460	1,704	116.7	1,798	105.5
Yukagir ^a	801	1,112	138.8	1,529	137.5
Total	156,575	181,517	116.4	212,489	117.0
Kerek	–	–	–	22	–
Taz	–	210	–	291	138.5
Total		181,727		212,802	117.0
Kumandin	–	–	–	3,123	–
Teleut ^a	–	–	–	2,658	–
Todzhintsy	–	–	–	4,442	–
Shor	–	15,745	–	14,018	89.0
Total	–	–	–	237,043	–
Kamchadal ^a	–	–	–	2,422	–
Soyot	–	–	–	2,833	–
Telengit	–	–	–	2,614	–
Tubalar	–	–	–	1,569	–
Chelkantsy	–	–	–	864	–
Chulymtsy	–	–	–	661	–
Total	–	–	–	248,006	–

^a A national group that was interviewed during the 1999 survey

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Uneven Steps to Literacy

The History of the Dolgan, Forest Enets and Kola Sámi Literary Languages

Florian Siegl and Michael Rießler

Abstract The article describes the evolution of literary languages for four endangered indigenous languages. Different paths of language standardization and revitalization in the Soviet Russian minority context are illustrated with case studies from Dolgan (Turkic), Forest Enets (Uralic), and Kildin Sámi (Uralic). The three cases offer an excellent comparative view of the origin and progress of literacy creation for small indigenous languages in the Russian Federation. The fourth language Skolt Sámi (Uralic) provides a comparative view beyond the border into the European Union. The different geographical and political settings of language planning attempts for the four languages has resulted in chronologically and substantially different developments. For Dolgan, Forest Enets and Kildin Sámi, the effect standardization has upon language survival has been very similar. In these languages, neither standardization nor the evolving written culture seem to inhibit language shift to any considerable degree. On the other hand, Skolt Sámi in Finland has undergone a slightly more successful process of revitalization, even though the language remains critically endangered.

Keywords Skolt Sámi · Kildin Sámi · Dolgan · Enets · Literacy · Soviet Union · Russia · Finland · Ethnic history · Kola Peninsula · Tajmyr Peninsula · Language loss · Language planning · Language revitalization

1 Introduction

The creation of written standards for the languages of the so-called ‘less-numerous peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East’ of the former Soviet Union has a comparatively short history and spans a period of less than a century. Language planning and the introduction of literacy was started in the late 1920s as a primarily linguistic

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task, as many native Siberian languages were only poorly known if not completely unknown. Research and language planning, however, went hand in hand with the general introduction of Soviet rule in the whole country. Whereas the introduction of Communism in the central and Slavonic-speaking parts of the USSR was declared accomplished in the 1920s, remote areas such as the North of European Russia, the whole of Siberia and the Russian Far East lagged behind and became subject to enforced communist agitation from the mid-1920s (for a historical overview see Slezkine 1994). In this respect, eliminating illiteracy and creating and introducing written standard languages was a central component of the early Leninist nationality politics. Literacy among citizens was required to accompany the advent and enforcement of bringing Communism via education to the periphery of the USSR. The publication of textbooks and other teaching materials also meant official recognition of a language by the state and its authorities.

In fact, the official policy towards northern Russian indigenous peoples in the early Soviet Union was founded mainly on centralized minority language planning, with the aim of introducing literacy by training native academics and through school education in the native languages, rather than through forced assimilation. From the perspective of minority language preservation, this story of state official policy is still unparalleled in the world (cf. Trosterud 1995, 1997). However, official policies changed radically during the later history of the Soviet Union. Today, many northern Russian indigenous languages are among the most endangered in the world.

The aim of this chapter is to sketch and compare the development of four languages spoken by members of indigenous minority groups of the North: two closely related Uralic languages from the Kola Peninsula, namely Skolt and Kildin Sámi, and two languages from the Yeniseian North, namely the Uralic language Forest Enets and the Turkic language Dolgan. The different language sociological environments in which these languages are spoken (and written) are described in brief in Sect. 2.

Section 3 presents the main part of this investigation and describes the history of literacy creation starting already in pre-Soviet times with Bible translations. Later, during early Soviet times, Kildin Sámi was standardized twice—first in a Latin script and then in a Cyrillic one—before being banned for decades. During late Soviet times and especially in the period known as perestroika the language was standardized anew. From a wider perspective, the multiply fractured attempts of pre-revolutionary missionaries, early Soviet communists and perestroikian revitalizers to create literacy for Kildin Sámi followed the same path as in many other indigenous languages of northern Russia. General background information on this development, especially in the early communist Russian North, can be found in several recent publications, e.g. Bartels and Bartels (1995), Vachtin (1992, 2001), Grenoble (2003), Burykin (2004). The Kildin Sámi case, which has not been described in detail before (but cf. the overviews in Utvik 1985; Scheller 2004; Rießler 2013), will be used to illustrate the complete path of early literacy creation, language ban and revival of minority languages in northern Russia.

In Sect. 4, the paths to literacy for two languages of the Yeniseian North, Dolgan and Forest Enets, are discussed. Neither language belonged to the small circle of early standardized languages of northern Russia and Siberia. Dolgan literacy development

began in the 1970s and took decisive steps during perestroika in the mid-1980s. The first attempts at literacy for Forest Enets started in the late phase of perestroika and continued after the collapse of the USSR. The history of literacy in both languages can be connected to the late Soviet Period of literacy creation, which has continued in post-Soviet times and shows signs of evolving language activism on both the national and international level.

Section 5 analyzes the different cases from a comparative perspective and against the background of native and non-native attempts at language standardization, maintenance and revitalization.

The second Kola Sámi language, Skolt Sámi, will be of special importance to our conclusions. The first missionary texts in Skolt Sámi were created concurrently with those in Kildin Sámi. Later in the early Soviet Union, however, only Kildin Sámi was further promoted. A written Skolt Sámi standard evolved only in Finland, where linguists, in collaboration with language activists, started working on the creation of descriptive and teaching materials and curricula for Skolt Sámi in the early 1970s. Today, the Skolt Sámi literary language is the most developed among the four cases described here. It has also entered more consistently into new domains of use. Since written Skolt Sámi is exclusively used outside Russia today, this case allows for comparisons relevant to the general question of the present volume.

2 Current Language Landscapes

The Sámi are the officially recognized indigenous people of the Murmansk oblast of the Kola Peninsula in northwesternmost Russia. According to the Russian Census from 2002 (FSGS 2004), 1991 persons in Russia claim to be ethnic Sámi. However, the Sámi in Russia speak different languages.¹ Kildin and Skolt Sámi are only two of the four Sámi languages spoken in Russia. The two other languages, Ter and Akkala Sámi, are almost extinct. They were not considered separate languages in the Soviet Union and have no written standards. Since the Kola Peninsula² is the traditional homeland of the four Sámi languages of Russia, they are normally referred to as Kola Sámi. Skolt Sámi presents a special case. It used to be spoken predominantly on the Kola Peninsula and the adjacent mainland in the borderland area between Russia, Norway and Finland. However, most members of the original Suõnn'jel, Paaččjokk and Peäccam villages resettled in Finland after the area of Petsamo (Russian *Pečenga*) was ceded to the Soviet Union in 1945.

Five indigenous people are officially recognized in the Yenseian North; apart from the Dolgan(s) and Enets(es), these are the Nenets(es), Evenki(s) and Nganasan(s).

¹ Note that in Finland, Norway and Sweden, the Sámi are also officially recognized as *one* nation, even though more than one Sámi language is spoken (and written) in each of these countries as well.

² In Russia, “Kola Peninsula” is normally used synonymously with the whole of the Murmansk oblast, rather than in its true geographic meaning.

While there is a small Dolgan diaspora in the neighboring Sakha (Yakut) Republic, Enets is spoken entirely within the boundaries of the Tajmyr rajon.

Concerning its genealogical affiliation, Dolgan belongs to the Turkic language family. Its closest relative is Yakut (Sakha). Whether Dolgan is indeed a language on its own or a dialect of Yakut is not settled; in Western European Turcology, Dolgan is usually classified as a dialect of Yakut. In Russia, apparently for political reasons, Dolgan and Yakut are perceived as two different languages and this topic will be dealt with in more detail below. As for demography and speakers, there are around 5,500 Dolgan living on the Tajmyr Peninsula, but there are no reliable numbers available on the percentage of native speakers among them. Within the boundaries of the Tajmyr rajon, the Dolgan core settlement area is the Chatanga rajon, where the language is still transmitted to children and can be seen as comparatively safe for a generation or two. Outside its core settlement area in the eastern part, there is a clear tendency towards assimilation. Finally, although three dialects are distinguished, they are mutually comprehensible and do not pose problems for communication.

The following sections describe the current language landscapes for the four investigated languages.

2.1 Current Kildin Sámi Language Landscapes

The Kola Sámi languages of Russia are almost extinct as the result of language shift to Russian. The number of speakers is decreasing rapidly from year to year. According to Scheller (2011b) Kildin Sámi is actively spoken by only about 100 native speakers today, almost all of them from the grandparent generation. Kildin Sámi is hardly ever heard in public life. In general, there is a strong decline even in passive language competence due to the lack of a vibrant speech community and the lack of social motivations for learning and using Sámi. There are probably no children who learn Kildin Sámi at home as their first language. For more detailed information on the current situation of Kildin Sámi, see the descriptions in Rantala (1994), Sergejeva (1995, 2002), Scheller (2004, 2011a,b) and further references mentioned there. A comprehensive description of current Kildin Sámi mass media can be found in Rießler (2015), Rießler (2013) describes the use of written Kildin Sámi in the Computer Age.

Originally, Kildin was spoken in the central inland parts and the central coastal parts of the Kola Peninsula. Today, more or less compact Kildin Sámi settlements in or close to their original villages are found only in Lovozero, Revda, Kola, Loparskaja and Teriberka. Small Kildin Sámi speech communities exist also in other settlements, such as in the larger cities of Murmansk, Olenegorsk and Apatity. As a result of the forced resettlement of considerable parts of the Kola Sámi population to Lovozero, this town has recently developed to the “Sámi capital” of Russia. Lovozero (Kildin Sámi *Lujavv’r*) has in fact by far the densest Sámi population in Russia. Ethnic Sámi nevertheless account for less than one third of the village’s approximately 3,000



Fig. 1 The current geographic distribution of Skolt and Kildin Sámi

inhabitants, and the number of Sámi speakers among the ethnic Sámi is considerably lower.

At present, the only school offering compulsory teaching of Kildin Sámi is the vocational school in Lovozero. Children learn Kildin Sámi as a second language only in one other school in Lovozero. This weekly two-hour course is optional and taught only in grades one through four. One pre-school in Lovozero has a Kildin Sámi group. In addition, classes in Kildin for adults and children are occasionally taught in Lovozero, Murmansk and other places. The language of instruction in all these courses is predominantly Russian. Efforts towards revitalization of spoken Kildin Sámi in teaching are thus marginal and have hardly produced new speakers.

One of the few instances in which the Sámi language is visible in public today is on maps of the Kola Peninsula. A huge number of place names are of Kola Sámi origin. Despite Russification (or misspelling), many original Sámi place names are still transparent to native speakers. But there are practically no instances of Kildin Sámi actively used in the language landscape, with the exception of a few instances of symbolic language use. For example, the official coat of arms of Lovozero includes the Kildin Sámi name of the village *Lujavv'r*. The two small hotels in the village bear Sámi names as well: *Lujavr*, i.e. the village name in a different spelling, and *Koavas*, which is the name for the traditional conical tent used by the Sámi. Furthermore, there is a chain of three food shops in the village under the Sámi name *Vuess'*, meaning 'luck, fortune'. A few multilingual signs in Lovozero include Kildin Sámi, e.g. a welcome greeting (in Kildin Sámi and Komi-Zyrian) in the hall of the "National Cultural Center" or the official sign of the Kola Sámi Radio (in Kildin Sámi, Russian and English) attached on wall of the building.³ The language is sometimes also visible on Sámi book covers temporarily put on display during exhibitions at the library, the local historical-ethnographic Museum or the National Cultural Center.

In mass media, Kildin Sámi is only marginally represented. Radio programs in Kildin Sámi were already being broadcast locally in Lovozero in the 1980s. However, this was never more than about half an hour weekly. The radio station has been repeatedly closed down for longer periods of time and is currently closed as well. There is no newspaper or journal in Russia which publishes Sámi texts regularly. In March 2011 a Kildin Sámi test Wikipedia (in the Wikimedia Incubator) was set up⁴, but so far only a few short articles are available, and most of these are written by non-Kildin Sámi. A Kildin Sámi blog was created very recently by language activists living in Norway, but there has never been much activity there.⁵

³ Salo (2011) attempted a systematic investigation of Kildin Sámi language landscapes in Lovozero, but she did only find this one sign.

⁴ <http://incubator.wikimedia.org/wiki/Wp/sjd/>.

⁵ <http://saamkill.ucoz.com>.

2.2 Current Skolt Sámi Language Landscapes

In Russia, Skolt Sámi has perhaps somewhat more than 20 passive speakers today, according to Scheller (2011b, 90). Most speakers belong to the former Njuõ'ttjäu'rr (Russian *Notozero*) village and live close to that area in the north-western parts of the Murmansk oblast, e.g. in Verchnetulomskij, Tuloma and Murmaži. Although the language no longer seems to be actively spoken among Skolt Sámi in Russia, at least one speaker uses the language on her regular visits to Finland. According to our own observations, written Skolt Sámi is scarcely used in Russia today, though teaching is organized from time to time and in collaboration with revitalization projects in Finland and Norway.

Although the Skolt Sámi dialect of Neiden (Skolt Sámi *Njauddâm*) is no longer spoken, the language cannot be declared dead in Norway. There are speakers in the area who recently resettled from Finland, and attempts are being made to reintroduce the language, at least symbolically, and to create teaching materials specifically for the Skolt Sámi in Norway. Still, the language is virtually nonexistent in its Norwegian homelands today, except at the Skolt Sámi Museum in Neiden, where an exhibition is being prepared providing information in Skolt Sámi, among other languages.

The largest part of Skolt Sámi speakers, approximately 300 individuals (Kulonen 2005, 396; Salminen 2007, 268), live in the municipality of Inari in Finland. The larger group among them are descendants of the former Suõ'nn'jel (Finnish *Suonikylä*) village and live in or near the village Če'vetjäu'rr (Finnish *Sevettijärvi*) north of Lake Inari. Another considerable fraction of Skolt Sámi live in Njeä'llem (Finnish *Nellim*) east of Lake Inari as well as at other places in the Ivalo-Inari area.

A detailed and systematic survey on language proficiency among the Skolt Sámi in Finland has been carried out by Hallamaa (2007). Recent language sociological data for Skolt Sámi in Finland are also summarized in Feist (2011, 17–20). It is reported that the active use of spoken Skolt Sámi is in strong decline and that the language is predominantly used by members of older generations (above 40 years of age) with Skolt speaking spouses at home or with Sámi relatives and neighbors. However, compared to Russia, the Skolt Sámi language is much more viable in Finland. Written and spoken Skolt Sámi has, for some years, also been taught regularly as a subject to children and young adults. In 1993, experimental language immersion teaching to pre-school children, in a so-called “language nest”, started in Čevetjäu'rr. Unfortunately, this project was not successfully institutionalized or continued permanently, but another language nest has been operating in Ivalo since 2007 and the language nest in Čevetjäu'rr has recently also been restarted. As a result of teaching, some Skolt Sámi of the young and middle generations (below 40 years of age) have learnt Skolt Sámi as a second language at school.

Skolt Sámi is also increasingly used in new media, including one weekly hour of radio broadcast by YLE's Sámi Radio based in Inari, an Internet-based Skolt Sámi news forum including a blog,⁶ and the Skolt Sámi rock music by Tiina Sanila, which has sold successfully nationwide between 2005 and 2007. Last but not least,

⁶ *Saa'mi Nue'tt* ‘Skolt Sámi Net’ <http://oddaz.saaminuett.fi/>.

Skolt Sámi is visible on multilingual road signs and tourist information boards in the Skolt settlement areas of Inari municipality. Other public texts relevant to Skolt Sámi culture are also multilingual, e.g. on the exhibition walls in the Skolt Sámi Heritage House in Čevetjaurr, a branch of the Inari Sámi Museum *Siida*, and a few tour descriptions for the Čevetjaurr-Njauddâm area available from the tourist information pages of the state-owned silvicultural enterprise Metsähallitus.⁷

2.3 Current Forest Enets Language Landscapes

Enets belongs to the Northern Samoyedic subgroup inside the Uralic language family. Whereas the Dolgan are the most numerous indigenous people of the Tajmyr rajon, the Enets are the smallest group among its five indigenous peoples. According to the Russian Census from 2002 (FSGS 2004), 237 individuals claimed to be Enets, yet local statistics for the year 2008 indicate 167 individuals.⁸ Enets is split up in two idioms, which may be considered independent languages as they are mutually incomprehensible. Tundra Enets used to be spoken in the Ust'-Jenisejskij rajon in and around the village of Voroncovo and in the Tuchardskaja tundra; Forest Enets is currently spoken in the village of Potapovo in the Dudinskij rajon. Unfortunately, no accurate data on the number of speakers of Tundra Enets is available. According to data from Siegl's fieldwork on Forest Enets, eight fluent speakers remain; further, 10–15 semi-speakers and 20 possible speakers who no longer speak the language were also registered. Whereas Dolgan is comparatively safe, both variants of Enets are moribund and functionally extinct, and will likely be gone in a decade or two.⁹

Outside their core settlement area, Dolgan and Enets live in the district capital Dudinka. For 2005, 786 Dolgan and 24 Enets were registered in Dudinka.¹⁰ Neither in Dudinka nor in Potapovo can any signs in Enets be found. Concerning media coverage, the monthly page of news in Forest Enets in the local newspaper *Tajmyr* remains the only visual sign of any variety of Enets in the local media.¹¹ For a period of roughly 10 years, starting in 1991, Forest Enets was used in local radio broadcasts. This service was shut down in 2002. Although officially this was due to the reporter Nina Bolina's decision to quit radio, the dwindling number of potential language users would have prompted its closing sooner or later. Whereas the single page of news is in a similar situation, this service will be provided as long as somebody

⁷ <http://www.lundui.fi/>.

⁸ This discrepancy, which is characteristic for most of the 20th and the 21st century, has been dealt with in Siegl (2005), which should be consulted for a more detailed overview.

⁹ Due to administrative restrictions, Siegl could not conduct primary fieldwork among the last speakers of Tundra Enets and only by chance was able to have several meetings with speakers. Based on such meetings it appears that Tundra Enets is remembered but no longer spoken.

¹⁰ Unpublished statistics provided by the local Tajmyrian administration. No data for the neighboring area of Norilsk is currently at our disposal.

¹¹ One page in Forest Enets has been published since 26 March 1998 roughly once a month. Tundra Enets has never been used in the media.



Fig. 2 The current geographic distribution of Dolgan and Forest Enets

agrees to compile texts in Enets. In education, Forest Enets was taught at the local school in Potapovo as a foreign language along with German. At Dudinka college, which offers intermediate education preparing local students for further university studies in cities throughout the Russian Federation, optional courses in Enets were provided for several years. However, these classes focused more on ethnic history and less on language. In 2009, teaching stopped as the teacher passed away and the position has been vacant ever since.

Finally, although Enets consists of two varieties, it must be said that from a quantitative perspective most materials on the language represent Forest Enets, while Tundra Enets is virtually invisible. When we refer to Enets in this chapter, we are referring to Forest Enets.

2.4 Current Dolgan Language Landscapes

Whereas the status of Dolgan in the eastern part of the Chatanga rajon seems to be relatively safe, there is no first-hand data on if and how existing teaching materials are used in education. Chatanga, the center of the Chatanga rajon, serves as the local administrative and cultural center for Dolgan, and a secondary school is located there. In contrast, in the district capital Dudinka, where a large Dolgan diaspora currently lives, the language is still not taught regularly, despite several isolated attempts during the last two decades. At the higher secondary level, Dolgan is taught at the Dudinka college, but only as an optional subject.¹²

From the perspective of language landscapes, the position of Dolgan is weak as well. The only Dolgan sign in the district capital of which we are aware is the name of a café. Once a month a page of news is published in the local official newspaper *Tajmyr*, which started on 27 January 1990, but there is no Dolgan newspaper in the Chatanga rajon itself.

Concerning other spheres of media, the position of Dolgan is equally weak. Dolgan is used in several radio broadcasts on weekdays; as far as we remember, this happens about three times a week and lasts about 30 min. In fall 2006, an attempt to broadcast weekly news in Dolgan on the local TV station was started, but this was stopped only a few weeks later when the announcer quit his job. In 2008, the same announcer was re-hired and the service is currently running again.

¹² Some further classes in Dolgan can be attended at the Institute of the People of the North in Saint Petersburg, whose role in education will be addressed below.

3 Priests, Communists, Revitalizers—The Multiply Fractured History of Literacy Creation in the Russian Minority Context

No indigenous language of northern Russia and Siberia had a stable established literary standard before the 20th century, although Orthodox missionary materials had already been translated into several languages in the 19th century. The prototypical path to literacy for northern Russian languages started in the late 1920s or early 1930s with research and the introduction of a Latin-based script. Only a few years later, however, Latin orthographies were replaced by Cyrillic before work on the standardization and maintenance of these languages was finally prohibited. A general historic outline of this development is presented in the following sections using the Kildin Sámi case for illustration, but comparing it to other languages.

3.1 The Starting Position—Religiously Driven Attempts to Create Literacy

While neither Dolgan nor Enets saw first attempts at religious literacy in the 19th century, the Sámi languages of the Kola Peninsula were indeed used. The first book-length piece of missionary literature for Kola Sámi was the Gospel of Matthew, which appeared in the late 19th century. Curiously, the same text was edited by two different people, and in three Kola Sámi languages. The Finnish linguist Arvid Genetz (according to his diary published in Genetz 1891) translated the text of the Gospel with the help of Sámi consultants during his expedition to the Kola Peninsula in 1876. The first 22 sections were translated in the town of Kola and with the help of a Kildin Sámi consultant. After that, Genetz continued his expedition but did not finish the remaining six sections until the end of his travels while staying in the town of Kandalakša. Here, he found an Akkala Sámi consultant. Consequently, the Gospel is written partly in Kildin Sámi, partly in Akkala Sámi.

In 1884, a Skolt Sámi translation of same Bible text was published in Archangel'sk (Ščekoldin 1884). The editor, Konstantin Ščekol'din, was an Orthodox priest in the Skolt Sámi area of Peäccam who worked with Skolt Sámi consultants on the translation. He wrote also the first primer for the Sámi in Russia (Ščekoldin 1895). This book includes a Skolt Sámi and a Russian part. Although missionary in character, the book was primarily intended to introduce general literacy in the Cyrillic-based Russian orthography among children (cf. Utvik 1985, 10–11; Pineda 2012, 499–500).

The first Kola Sámi texts by Genetz and Ščekol'din mentioned above were published essentially using the letters of the Russian alphabet. Still, the first missionary texts for Kola Sámi and other indigenous languages of the Russian North do not seem to have had any impact on the development of Sámi literacy in Russia (cf.

Kert 1967, 111).¹³ This is also true for other languages for which Orthodox missionary materials had been translated, among them Selkup, Khanty, Tundra Nenets, Even, Aleut and several others. The distribution of these materials was local and very restricted. Therefore, the missionaries' efforts in the 19th century thus played no role in the spreading of literacy in local communities before the Soviet introduction of literacy.¹⁴

Furthermore, as most if not all materials were translated and compiled by non-native speakers, the overall quality of these translations was generally judged as poor. Thus, for example, widespread use of the first Tungus primer and prayer book based on the Okhotsk dialect of Even and published in 1858 never caught on (Tarasova 1998). Regarding Khanty, Steinitz concluded:

Die Missionsliteratur hatte unter den Ostjaken kaum irgendeine Verbreitung zumal auch die Auswahl der Dialekte [...] sehr ungeeignet war. (Steinitz 1950, 23)

The same tenor prevails concerning Grigorovski's religious materials published in the Lower Chaya dialect of Northern Selkup in 1879 (Helimski 1983, 10–15).

3.2 Language Planning for the Less-Numerous Peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East

In the 1920s, a special program was compiled to ease the transition and integration into the 'modern Soviet Society' of 26 indigenous minority peoples of the Russian North, Siberia and the Russian Far East.¹⁵ A necessary step accompanying this effort was the creation of literary standards for many of these languages as part of the Leninist nationality policy. For this purpose, a so-called Committee of the North¹⁶ was created. In addition to political activists, the committee was run by a handful of ethnologists, among them two better-known senior ethnologists Vladimir Bogoraz¹⁷ and Lev Šternberg.¹⁸ The role of ethnologists for this political enterprise was seen as highly necessary as political activists lacked virtually any knowledge

¹³ It has to be noted, however, that Genetz's Bible text together with the accurate linguistic documentation carried out during his expedition were valuable sources for later descriptions of these languages.

¹⁴ Illiteracy was a general problem in Czarist Russia of the late 19th century and by no means a problem restricted to the Northern and Siberian periphery.

¹⁵ This list was expanded several times in the last two decades. Currently, 40 people are listed in this category.

¹⁶ The full name was *Komitet sodejstvija narodnostjam severnykh okrain pri Prezidiume BTsIK*, but the short variant "Committee of the North" is generally used.

¹⁷ The author is known under a variety of other names from non-Russian publications e.g. Waldemar Bogoraz or Vladimir Bogoraz-Tan.

¹⁸ Both Šternberg and Bogoraz were exiled to the Russian Far East in the late 19th century after being accused of supporting anti-Czarist circles. Although both researchers 'benefited' from their exile as they collected most of their data on which their later career was based during these years, the 'revolutionary and anti-Czarist spirit' was instrumental in their installation in the Committee.

about many Siberian indigenous peoples, including their cultures and languages. In this respect, early Soviet Ethnology followed the ideas of ‘social engineering’ to which a dedicated political component was added.

Due to the lack of qualified researchers, both political and particularly scientific efforts were concentrated on larger groups among the northern Russian indigenous minorities in order to immediately target a larger amount of people. This step was further motivated by the fact that in a variety of cases, languages of neighboring larger minority groups were frequently used as local lingua franca. Such “major minority languages” were used for both instruction as well as political propaganda. Although the fieldwork of the 1920s and 1930s produced much primary data on Siberian cultures and languages whose value cannot be underestimated, it should not be forgotten that the whole enterprise was entirely politically motivated. Finally, researchers who intended to spend longer periods in Siberia, either as Russian teachers, as local political agitators or as ethnologists (in many cases, individuals fulfilled all three roles) had to demonstrate their loyal political attitude.¹⁹ Creation of literacy for the northern Russian indigenous people started in the late 1920s with primers for Evenki and Nanai before publishing activities sped up in the early 1930s.²⁰

3.3 *The Latin-Based Period*

During the 1920s, many non-Slavonic peoples of the USSR, especially Turkic and Caucasian peoples whose written languages were based on the Arabic script, saw the creation of new Latin-based orthographies. Whereas a similar decision was made in Turkey to bring the country closer to Europe, in the USSR this transition was conceptualized as revolutionary:

The new Latinized alphabets are strong weapons in our war for the cultural revolution, for the race of socialistic construction. (Tadžiev 1930, 67)

In fact, this step was characteristic for the *Zeitgeist*, as the Communistic revolution was by definition a global undertaking and therefore international, and the Latin script was seen as a central tool. It was therefore not surprising that the first orthographies for the “less-numerous people” were also based on the Latin script. Starting in the

(Footnote 18 continued)

Both researchers had good connections to Franz Boas and participated in the Jessup North Pacific expedition. For some further background on Šternberg, Bogoraz and Boas, see Kan (2009).

¹⁹ This, of course, created tensions, as the goals of politically motivated young Communist missionaries remained frequently incomprehensible to indigenous people. Occasionally, this resulted in open conflicts and bloodshed in different areas of Siberia; among these, the Kazym uprising of Khantys and Forest Nenets in 1934 is documented best in Leete (2004, 2005).

²⁰ A particularly illuminating account on the principles and hardships of compiling the first Chukchi primer was written by (Bogoraz-Tan 1931). This short description is historically interesting because it reflects the pragmatic approach before the advent of the Great Terror, which seriously altered the status-quo a couple of years later. As Bogoraz died before the advent of the Great Terror, he did not witness this change in policies.

late 1920s, several first attempts to create written standards were made. Tungusic languages were mentioned above, and in 1930 Khanty followed. However, the outcome was seen as unsatisfactory and a variety of proposals were made to improve the situation (Al'kor 1931). In 1931, a phonologically-informed, Latin-based writing system called the 'Unified Northern Alphabet (UNA)' was officially approved and introduced. Al'kor (1931) describes the genesis of the UNA and mentions three textbooks which were published in different locations.²¹

As a unifying alphabet, this orthographic convention was intended to be used for all northern Russian indigenous languages from the Kola Peninsula in the Northwest to Kamchatka in the Far East. Although the literacy wave targeted speakers of all ages, the compilation of teaching materials for children clearly dominated and even outnumbered the compilation of agitational texts. Table 1 shows the initial publication year of primary teaching materials for a variety of peoples.²² The most central academic institution for language planning has been the Institute of the People of the North (INS) in Leningrad (now Saint Petersburg).²³ The first attempts to create literacy for the Kola Sámi were initiated by INS when a group of collaborators around the ethnographer Zacharij Černjakov and the linguist Aleksandr Ėnd'jukovskij started working on the creation of teaching materials in a standardized Sámi language and the training of Sámi teachers during the early 1930s. The local ethnographer-historian Vasilij Alymov from Murmansk was another highly influential researcher during this period. Between 1927 and 1938, Alymov was the leader of the local Committee of the North in Murmansk. He knew the Kola Sámi languages well and had previously carried out fieldwork on Sámi linguistics and folklore. During his time working there, he published a number of articles and reports about Sámi issues and discussed questions related to Sámi education, orthography development and even linguistic description together with Černjakov and Ėnd'jukovskij (cf. Rantala 2005, 2006).

In addition to the researchers mentioned above, several Sámi students at the INS were included in the group's work as consultants. Kert (2007, 11) indicates that 20 Sámi students were at the INS in 1932, while Alymov writes that there were 18 Sámi students for the years 1931 and 1932 (Alymov 1932, cit. Rantala 2006, 24). In addition to the activities based at the INS in Leningrad, a Sámi department was established at the Pedagogical College in Murmansk during 1933–34 (Kert 2007, 11). The aim was to offer special training for local Russian teachers in the Kildin Sámi language. Between 1933 and 1936, three additional courses for future Sámi teachers were led by Černjakov and Ėnd'jukovskij (Kert 1967, 114–115).

²¹ Similar unified alphabets were also designed for other peoples of the USSR, especially the Turkic peoples [for a comprehensive study see Baldauf (1993)]. The creation of the UNA was preceded by some cooperation with and under consideration of initial results among the Turkic peoples.

²² A warning is in order: the year of publication does not necessarily indicate that these books arrived in the same year in remote communities or that they were even used at the local level. An obscure case has been reported for a region in the Russian Far East where a shipment for the Nivkh people mistakenly contained textbooks in Romani (Slezkine 1994, 243).

²³ Russian *Institut Narodov Severa*, a specialized teacher training institute that was founded in the middle of the 1920s (cf. Slezkine 1994, 180–183, 220–221; Bartels and Bartels 1995, 62–69).

Table 1 Year of literacy creation for several indigenous languages of northern Russia

Language	Year	Language	Year
Evenki	1928/1929	Mansi	1932
Nanai	1928/1929	Nenets (Tundra)	1932
Khanty (Obdorsk)	1930	Selkup	1932
Chukchi	1932	Khanty (Kazym)	1933
Eskimo	1932	Nivkh	1933
Even	1932	Sámi (Kildin)	1933
Koryak	1932	Ket	1934
Itelmen	1932	Udege	1934

Kildin was chosen as the base for the Kola Sámi standardized language because it was considered the most central Kola Sámi variety linguistically, with most speakers, and mutually understandable by Ter, Skolt and Akkala Sámi speakers (Ěnd'jukovskij 1937; Lujsk 1934). Other important strategic factors might have been that the Kildin Sámi villages had the largest amount of reindeer (Alymov 1931, cit. Rantala 2006, 39) and were closest to the new port of Murmansk and other recent settlements along the main infrastructural artery from Karelia to the Barents Sea. On the other hand, the geographically more distant Ter Sámi dialects were linguistically documented to the same degree as their western neighbors—if not even better—because Finnish scholars had already devoted considerable effort to the documentation of these geographically and (presumably) linguistically most remote East-Sámi varieties. Note that Černjakov had even originally prepared a primer in the Jokanga-dialect of Ter Sámi, published as booklet with the title ‘First lesson in Sámi (Jokanga-dialect)’ (cf. Sorokažerd’ev 2007, 23; Pineda 2012, 502–503), years before he started his work with the preparation of teaching materials for Kildin.

The decision against Skolt Sámi, which already had a pre-revolutionary primer and was taught regularly in missionary schools, is most likely due to the fact that dialects of this language were also spoken outside the Soviet Union. Furthermore, Skolt Sámi geographical, ethnographical and linguistic matters had already been the focus of research undertaken by numerous Scandinavian and Finnish scholars.

In 1933, the first Kildin Sámi primer *Saam' bukvar'* was compiled by Černjakov. Until 1935, additional pieces of Kildin Sámi teaching materials were produced at the INS. However, these books consist exclusively of translations of primers and textbooks. Note that the same Russian source texts were translated into different minority languages. Even standardized communist propaganda texts, like ‘Industrialization of the country—what does this mean?’ (Valerštejn 1934) or ‘What did the October Revolution give the working people of the North?’ (Al'kor 1933), were translated into Sámi (and several other indigenous languages). The last product of this short but fruitful period was Ěnd'jukovskij's short but thorough grammatical description of Kildin Sámi. The grammar appeared 1937 and served mainly a prescriptive, practical

purpose to be used for the education of future teachers in the Sámi language. All materials appeared in the Latin orthography (based on UNA).

3.4 *Back-Transition from Latin to Cyrillic and Final Prohibition*

On 11 February 1937, the Soviet of Nationalities, one of the two chambers of the Central Executive Committee of the Soviet Union, passed a resolution according to which Latin orthographies created for the northern indigenous peoples had to be switched to Cyrillic (Isaev 1977, 252). Accordingly, Kildin Sámi was again written with the letters of the Russian alphabet and new versions of two school books, a primer and a textbook, were published by Ėnd'jukovskij as early as in 1937 (cf. Kurutsh 1977; Kuruč et al. 1995, 177).

Officially, the transition was claimed to be based on scientific reasons and the indigenous teachers' own wishes. Kurutsh (1977) indicates that it was the Sámi *intelligencija* who suggested implementing the new alphabet. However, this rather political decision hardly came as a surprise, as the political climate had changed profoundly, and both collectivization and Russification in the North was being enforced. Psychological arguments might be valid to a certain degree, e.g., the acquisition of two different writing systems. Yet the inevitable transfer to Russian played an important role, too (Bartels and Bartels 1995, 53). It seems likely that returning to Cyrillic was indeed intended to ease the transition to Russian. In addition a handful of other arguments, mainly political, were at stake. Thus, this step was later conceptualized as in the following example:

For a variety of reasons, the transition to Cyrillic orthography was necessary for the people of the USSR. This must be considered due to the political, economic and cultural connections between the Russians and other peoples; due to their collaboration, the vast brotherly help of the Russian people to all nations and peoples of the nation. (Dešeriev 1958, 29, our translation)

In fact, until the very last years of the Soviet Union, researchers repeatedly advocated the use of a Cyrillic script by stressing alleged drawbacks of the Latin script. One instance is Isaev (1978, 28), who states that the bulk of Russian internationalisms could be integrated significantly more easily into a language using a Cyrillic script. In 1987, Bojko writes:

The choice of the Latin system of letters could not be successful. Rather, this was an academic endeavor, lacking a practical aim. Bojko (1987, 44, our translation)

However, not all languages which had received a Latin-based orthography made the transition to Cyrillic. In the Itelmen case, we have not yet found a reason why the transition was not made, but as the first primer was compiled by a group of Itelmen students, it seems that further attempts had no political support. The Nivkh and Ket cases are much clearer than Itelmen. Nivkh teaching materials were compiled exclusively by Eruchim Krejnovič, a student of Šternberg and one of the first

politically educated young ethnolinguists who spent several years on Sakhalin advocating the new Soviet State (see also Gruzdeva's chapter "[Explaining Language Loss the Sakhalin Nivkh Case](#)" in this volume). However, during the height of the Great Terror, Krejnovič was arrested during the night between 20 and 21 May 1937 and accused of being a Japanese spy. He was twice sentenced to exile in different areas of Siberia until 1955, at which point he was allowed to return to Leningrad (Roon and Sirina 2003). The Ket history is even more dramatic. Nikolaj Karger, who created a primer for the first grade published in 1934, was also arrested. However, unlike Krejnovič, Karger was executed in 1937. As capacity building among the indigenous *intelligencija* had only begun in the 1930s, no native Nivkh and Ket linguists could continue the work of their Russian predecessor and this situation seriously affected the status-quo of both languages in the following decades.

The ethnologist Alymov and the linguist Ėnd'jukovskij, two influential Kola Sámi researchers, fell victim to such oppression as well. As leaders of an alleged Sámi terrorist cell preparing an armed conspiracy against Soviet power, they were sentenced to death and executed in 1938 (Sergejeva 2000, 176; Rantala 2005, 364; Sorokazerdev 2006, 64–65); cf. also the records of Alymov's interrogation documented in Rantala (2006, 77–128). The non-local scholar Černjakov managed to escape this fate for unknown reasons (Sorokazerdev 2006, 64; Rantala 2005, 364), even though Černjakov was also suspected by the secret police of being involved in these "counterrevolutionary activities" (Sorokazerdev 2006, 64). After Alymov's and Ėnd'jukovskij's death, all ethnographic and linguistic work on Kola Sámi was stopped.

This final prohibition of language planning attempts for the minority languages after 1937 was even indirectly justified by Soviet researchers later on, such as Isaev (1977, 152–153, 1978, 174), who explains that the Sámi would rather use the Russian literary language because they are all bilingual and their native language belongs to ordinary daily life and folklore.

3.5 Re-literarization and New Language Planning During Perestroika

After the transition from Latin to Cyrillic-based orthographies, language planning for the indigenous peoples of the Russian North stopped for almost three decades. In the 1950s, minor adjustments were made for Evenki, Even and Nenets. For Evenki, a new dialect was chosen as the basis for the written standard. For Even, several graphemic modifications occurred (Burykin 2004, 257–275), which was also true for Tundra Nenets. The next phase began in the late 1970s, when Khanty varieties received new literary standards. Interestingly, there were a few other languages, which already had a Latin-based standard before (such as Nivkh and Ket), but nevertheless, they did not switch to a Cyrillic orthography before the early days of perestroika. Finally, several languages which never had a written standard entered literacy around the same time,

e.g. Yukagir, Ul'čiči and Tofalar, with Nganasan and Forest Nenets entering in the early 1990s.

Kola Sámi linguistic studies were stopped completely until 1954, when new field expeditions to the Kola Peninsula were organized by members of the Karelian branch of the Soviet Academy of Science in Petrozavodsk (cf. Kert 1971, 23). The most influential linguist for Kildin Sámi was Georgij Kert. He prepared text collections and published a descriptive grammar of Kildin Sámi (1971), which is still the most comprehensive grammatical description of this language. Kert also trained several Sámi students who later became teachers.

The Petrozavodsk-based activities, however, were purely scientific and did not result in practical teaching or didactical materials. The only exception is Kert's Kildin Sámi–Russian–Kildin Sámi school dictionary, which appeared in 1986. The scientific linguistic work on Kola Sámi done by Kert and others, as well as the training of a new generation of Sámi teachers with the help of these linguistic materials, were nevertheless fundamental for the revitalization attempts started during the 1970s.

In 1976, a Sámi working group was founded at the Educational Department of the Executive Committee of the Murmansk oblast, consisting of the linguist and language education expert Rimma Kuruč and the two Sámi teachers Aleksandra Antonova and Boris Gluchov. In collaboration with specialists from the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, they revised the 1937 Cyrillic alphabet for Kildin Sámi. Experimental Sámi teaching at the school in Lovozero also started during that time (Kurutsh 1977). The first version of the new Cyrillic alphabet for Kildin was presented in 1979. This was also the variant used in Antonova's Kildin Sámi primer from 1982, the first one to be printed in the new Cyrillic orthography. In the meantime, however, further phonological analyses had been carried out by the group around Kuruč, on the basis of which a few new letters were added to the existing alphabet. The second version of the alphabet was presented to the public in 1982. This was also the variant used for the Kildin Sámi–Russian dictionary compiled by Afanas'eva et al. (1985). A third reform of the orthography, which exchanged two typographically disputed letters, was presented to the public in 1987. This variant was used in the teaching materials and didactical guides for teachers published in the 1990s, as well as in a Kildin Sámi–North Sámi dictionary printed in Finland (Sammallahti and Chvorostuchina 1991) and several Kildin Sámi books with poems and stories for children printed in Norway (e.g. Vinogradova 2003; Bažanov 1996). Books printed today use either the orthographic variant of Kert's dictionary (1986), e.g. an edition of Esenin's poems in Kildin Sámi translation (Esenin 2008), or the variant of the large dictionary from (1985), e.g. a recent collection of bibliographic essays translated from Russian into Kildin Sámi (Zaborščikova 2010).

Between members of the Murmansk-based working group and other teachers, e.g. in Lovozero, there was never complete consensus about the adopted orthography reforms. After the publishing of Kert's school dictionary in the first pre-reform orthography variant of 1979, the orthography debate transformed into a true ideological dispute about linguistic, pedagogical and even political competence. Indeed, Antonova's primer (1982) and Kert's dictionary (1986) were published by the publishing house *Prosvěščenje* 'Enlightenment', which specialized in educational and

teaching materials and was officially recognized by the Ministry of Education of RSFSR. Kuruč's group, on the other hand, claimed official status for the revised orthography variant on the basis of official recognition by the 'Executive Committee of Murmansk oblast' as well as by academic recommendations by Russian and Estonian colleagues from the Academy of Sciences.

A thorough description of the history of Kildin Sámi language planning since the 1970s, including the founding, development and breakup of the Kildin Sámi language working group in Murmansk, as well as its achievements and conflicts, has yet to be written. So far the description in Kuruč et al. (1995, 175–186) offers the most comprehensive, albeit partly polemic, outline. A few recent scientific investigations into Kildin Sámi language sociology (Scheller 2004, 14–15, elsewhere) and political activism (Øverland and Berg-Nordlie 2012) deal with the topic, but these are biased concerning how Kildin Sámi language planning has led to conflicts inside the Kola Sámi society and between the Sámi and the non-Sámi researcher Rimma Kuruč.

Concerning standardization, the achievements of Kuruč and her colleagues cannot be described as anything but remarkable. Three dictionaries of contemporary written Kildin Sámi came into existence either as the direct (Afanas'eva et al. 1985) or indirect (Kert 1986; Sammallahiti and Chvorostuchina 1991) result of collaborative work between the linguist Kuruč and Sámi language activists. Last but not least, all teaching materials and literary texts which were published later in either of the orthographic variants would scarcely exist without the groundwork of Kuruč and her colleagues. Unfortunately, systematic language planning for Kildin Sámi with a professional foundation and including active participation of native speakers came to an end when the Kildin Sámi language work group at the Sámi division of the Murmansk branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences dissolved during the late 1990s.

4 How Dolgan and Forest Enets Became Written Languages—Comparative Case Studies

Although the path and the outcome of literacy creation for Dolgan and Enets differ substantially from each other, the starting situation shared a couple of affinities. First, Dolgan and Enets were not among the languages which received literary standards in the 1930s. Second, both of the ethnonyms *Dolgan* and *Enets* are Soviet innovations dating from the early 1930s, which are characteristic results of the early Soviet Nationality politics prevailing during that period (cf. on Dolgan Chap. 4 in Anderson 2000; cf. on Enets Siegl 2005; 2007b). As both ethnonyms were superimposed, they were not readily accepted by members of both speech communities until the 1960s.²⁴

²⁴ The dedicated effort to create a Dolgan people clearly distinct from Yakuts seems to be responsible for Soviet and later Russian practices of maintaining two different languages.

In contrast, the central difference between the Dolgan and Enets languages lies in their socio-historical background. As already mentioned once, Dolgan is spoken in a very compact area on the eastern part of the Tajmyr Peninsula in the Chatanga rajon, and only to a lesser degree in the western part of the Tajmyr Peninsula. From a historical perspective it is also known that during their arrival on the Tajmyr Peninsula, speakers of what is nowadays called Dolgan assimilated a former Evenki minority in this area (Ubrjatova 1985; Stachovskij 2002). The western end of the core Dolgan area is made up of the villages of Ust-Avam and Voločanka, where Nganasan is also still spoken, in addition to Dolgan.²⁵ Otherwise, Dolgan had been the dominating language in these areas for at least 200 years before the arrival of Russian. In contrast, Enets which was once spoken over a stretch of almost 400 km from Potapovo to Voroncovo, has been a minority language for the last almost two centuries, and assimilated into Tundra Nenets and to a lesser degree also Nganasan. Since the late 1940s, the influx of other nationalities, especially to Potapovo, resulted in a final language shift to Russian.²⁶

4.1 *The Dolgan Path to Literacy*

The first attempt to create literacy for Dolgan took place in the year 1960.²⁷ A young Dolgan reporter, Nikolaj Popov, compiled short news in Dolgan for the local newspaper *Sovetskij Tajmyr* based on an idiolectal orthography (for historical background cf. Chap. 4 in Anderson 2000). However, this attempt did not have any impact and was abandoned rather quickly.²⁸

The first steps that finally led to the creation of Dolgan literacy were taken by the Dolgan writer Ogdo (Evdokija) Aksenova.²⁹ It is fair to say that Aksenova was a product of the Soviet indigenous capacity building endeavor, as the following biographic notes demonstrate. Aksenova was born in the tundra close to Voločanka and

²⁵ A former Tundra Enets diaspora in and around Ust-Avam is now extinct but must be taken into account historically. The complicated history of Dolgan living west of these two villages must be excluded here.

²⁶ The sociolinguistic background of Potapovo is closely connected to the deportation history of this village and has been addressed in Siegl (2007a).

²⁷ It is reported that in the 1930s there was indeed an attempt to create a Dolgan primer and a Dolgan orthography. This attempt was initiated by the young Vladimir Nadeljaev, who was working as a teacher of Russian among Dolgan in the Chatanga rajon. Later Vladimir Nadeljaev became a phonetician and worked at the Siberian Branch of the Academy of Sciences in Novosibirsk. Anna Barbolina, one of the co-authors of Dolgan textbooks, has spent considerable time in several archives trying to locate the manuscript, but so far without any result.

²⁸ Around the same period, teaching of Yakut was started in the Chatanga rajon, but this attempt was not long lasting either.

²⁹ The following account is based on Ogdo Aksenova's private correspondence with Valerij Kravec, who translated her poetry into Russian. Their correspondence was published as Aksenova (2001). Additional data available to Siegl is found in an unfinished manuscript on the history of Dolgan literacy written by Anna Barbolina, who is also the co-author of the first primer.

attended the local boarding school. Later she was granted a place at Irkutsk University, she decided against taking up studies as she was troubled by health problems which accompanied her throughout her life. Instead, she worked for many years as a political agitator in a ‘Red Chum’ among Dolgan, and later also as a teacher and as a librarian. Since the late 1960s, Aksenova has occasionally published poetry in her native language; this was first gathered in little Dolgan-Russian booklets in the 1970s.

The first of these with a larger print-run was called *Baraksan* and appeared in 1973. With her acceptance as a professional member of the USSR writers’ union in 1976, Aksenova was able to attend several advanced training sessions in literature in Moscow between 1977 and 1979. During those training sessions, she became acquainted with other writers from different indigenous peoples of Siberia. It appears that in this period, Aksenova must have decided to compile a primer for Dolgan. The first time this was mentioned in her correspondence with Valerij Kravec was in 1978.³⁰ Although Aksenova did not receive any higher education, she was aware that a variety of Dolgan sounds could not be represented by the traditional Cyrillic alphabet. Because of this, she started to investigate how similar problems had been solved for other Turkic languages, mainly Yakut, but Khakass is also mentioned.³¹ In a letter to Kravec, she points out that this step was necessary in order to ensure that future Dolgan materials could be printed without technical obstacles. In another letter to Kravec, Aksenova wrote about her first encounter with the local representative of the Communist Party, from whom she sought support for her ideas about turning Dolgan into a written language. She approached the local authorities for permission to translate a speech by Lenin. However, their reactions were negative. Her letter contains a quotation from a member of the Communist Party responsible for agitation and propaganda:

Yes, and then this Zykova shouted at me. What? You want to translate Lenin into your language, even if your language has only about 2,000 words? (3 November 1978) (Aksenova 2001, 98)

However, in November 1979, the local Tajmyrian Soviet approved the creation of a Dolgan orthography.³²

4.1.1 The Birth of the First Dolgan Primer and the School Dictionary

An extraordinarily rich documentation of the early process of Dolgan literacy creation compiled by Anna Barbolina sheds some light on this development, which took more

³⁰ It is very likely that this idea could have resulted from her new acquaintances. Many prominent writers from Siberian indigenous peoples have assisted in compiling or have even compiled textbooks. However, this is not mentioned explicitly in her correspondence.

³¹ During this initial period and especially for the publication of *Baraksan*, Ogdo Aksenova consulted the Yakut folklorist Prokopij Efremov for help. Efremov, himself a native speaker of Yakut, visited Tajmyrian Dolgan to collect folklore in the 1960s.

³² The exact date is 30 November 1979, although in several documents provided by Anna Barbolina, 20 December 1979 is mentioned instead.

than a decade before the official primer was published in 1990. In 1979, the Research Institute of Minority Education of RSFSR contacted the Department of Siberian Languages at the Siberian Branch of the Soviet Academy of Sciences in Novosibirsk because of Ogdo Aksenova's proposal to create a written norm for Dolgan based on her earlier publications. The choice of Novosibirsk was not entirely coincidental: Elizaveta Ubrjatova, a distinguished specialist of Yakut and the phonetician Vladimir Nadeljaev belonged to the first generation of researchers on Dolgan,³³ and another three researchers from Tomsk working on Dolgan, Zinaida Dim'janenko, Natal'ja Bel'tjukova, Tamara Koševerova, were involved as consultants. In the meantime, Ogdo Aksenova, Anna Barbolina and Vladimir Parfir'ev continued working on the compilation of the first primer and tested it at a boarding school in Dudinka where Dolgan children from the Dolgan villages in the Dudinka area studied. This resulted in an experimental primer for first grade, which was published in a small print-run in Moscow in 1981. In an internal review of this trial edition this primer was severely criticized by Elizaveta Ubrjatova, as the authors had decided to stick to their own orthography instead of incorporating several modifications proposed by the assisting working group. Quite surprisingly, most of the criticism, including proposals, was even published in print in a local scientific compilation (Nadeljaev 1982).

In the following years, the manuscript for a new primer was compiled, this time by Ogdo Aksenova and Anna Barbolina alone. In March 1983, Elizaveta Ubrjatova and later in September the local Tajmyrian Soviet in Dudinka accepted the revised manuscript and a so-called preliminary stable primer could be to be published in Krasnojarsk in 1984. The decision to publish the interim primer in Krasnojarsk (and not, as expected, as a ready primer in Leningrad) was the outcome of centralized publication plans in the USSR. The printing plan for educational materials did not allow printing the Dolgan primer sooner. In the end, the first officially endorsed Dolgan primer by Ogdo Aksenova and Anna Barbolina was printed in Leningrad in 1990. However, the first official primer never made it to Dolgan schools. When the print-run was finally sent to the Tajmyr Peninsula, the truck transporting the primers from Norilsk airport to Dudinka was involved in an accident and sank into a river. The whole print-run was irreversibly damaged and the local administration had to order a reprint, which arrived safely in Dudinka in 1991.

Apart from Anna Barbolina's documentation of this process, Ogdo Aksenova's letters contain several interesting personal observations. First, in the period of compilation of the preliminary stable primer, the first quarrels within the Dolgan community seem to have occurred. Criticism was centered on Aksenova's lack of any higher education, which she also confessed as a problem to Kravec. We have, however, not found any relicts of this today. Further, in the same letter, the scientific support from the Tomsk researcher Zinaida Dem'janenko is explicitly mentioned. In the documentation of the process by Anna Barbolina, Dim'janenko plays a marginal role.

³³ Both Ubrjatova as well as Nadeljaev spent several years among Dolgan as Russian teachers in elementary school in the early 1930s. Ubrjatova defended her candidate thesis on Dolgan in 1940, which was later published as Ubrjatova (1985), before she started focusing her work on Yakut.

Although the birth of literacy and the compilation of the first primer are indeed largely products of Ogdo Aksenova's work, her name appears only once more on educational material. In 1992, Aksenova, assisted by the researchers Natal'ja Bel'tjukova and Tamara Koševerova from Tomsk, published a small Dolgan–Russian–Dolgan dictionary containing around 4,000 words (Aksenova et al. 1992). This work also remained her last work directly aimed at the creation of a literary standard for Dolgan during her life.³⁴

4.1.2 Capacity Training

Ogdo Aksenova understood quite early that in order to create literacy for Dolgan, a critical number of assistants and compilers should be available to get the process going. One of her main concerns was that a native speaker should be trained in linguistics, and for this, Vladimir Parfir'ev was sent to Leningrad to be trained in Turcology and Dolgan specifically. This decision paid off, as Vladimir Parfir'ev, together with another specialist on Dolgan based in St. Petersburg, Nikolaj Artem'ev, compiled a primer for second grade. Anna Barbolina, the co-author of the first primer, also completed her candidate degree in educational sciences in St. Petersburg in 1996. Further, she compiled several more teaching materials for Dolgan, among these a picture dictionary and teaching materials for the kindergarten level.

Apart from Ogdo Aksenova, Anna Barbolina and Vladimir Pafir'ev, several more individuals have actively participated in the creation of further teaching and reading materials, among them Žanna Spiridonova and the late Irina Sotnikova. Of these, the most important were the late Nikolaj Popov, a Dolgan journalist, and his wife, a long time school teacher Margarita Popova; they compiled further teaching materials for Dolgan for higher classes (grade three to seven). Popov also further translated fragments of the Bible, a children's Bible and a Puškin fairytale into Dolgan. From the standpoint of literacy, Popov's novels for teenagers and young adults are perhaps the most important. This engagement is indeed noteworthy, as apart from the typical concept of indigenous literacy in Siberia consisting of primers, folklore collections and dictionaries, Nikolaj Popov made an active attempt to take a step beyond.

4.2 *The Forest Enets Path to Literacy*

For most of the 20th century, Enets remained in the shadow of its larger neighbors Tundra Nenets and Nganasan. Although Enets attracted various researchers, the language remained exclusively an object of research (for a comprehensive overview, see Siegl 2013). No steps towards creating literacy for Enets were undertaken during the Soviet period. All Enets texts published during the Soviet period were intended

³⁴ Ogdo Aksenova continued writing poetry, but this is outside the scope of this study.

for linguists; due to a variety of different transcription systems used, most if not all of these were incomprehensible to native speakers.

4.2.1 Attempts to Kick off Enets Literacy

In 1987, the first proposal on what a possible Enets orthography could look like was published by Natal'ja Terežčenko. The central aspects of her orthography were based on Tundra Nenets principles; although a first step concerning literacy creation was finally made, no immediate steps followed. In June 1990, a local proposal for a (Forest) Enets orthography was approved by the local Tajmyrian Soviet. Furthermore, the preparation of language materials for Enets was delegated to a group of seven Enets. When comparing the two orthographies, it must be said that the locally approved orthography was unfitting in many respects and inferior to the proposed Terežčenko orthography. Fortunately, it was never used.

In 1995, a trial translation of the Fragments of the Gospel of Luke was published in Forest Enets (Bolina 1995); the translation followed the Terežčenko orthography. This step marked the birth of Enets literacy and as such it was also celebrated in the local newspaper *Tajmyr*:

Fragments of the Gospel of Luke is not only the first book in Enets, it is the first Enets primer.
(*Tajmyr* 14 March 1996, our translation)

From a historical perspective and considering the Communist attitude against religion, this translation is a splendid example of post-Communist irony. Nevertheless, the Bible translation had no impact, either religiously or on language viability, and its existence remained unknown to a significant number of native speakers.

In April 1996, *Tajmyr* published some short fragments in Enets as part of a folklore festival program; this was the first time that a text in Enets was published in the local newspaper. Since March 1998, news and folklore in Forest Enets have been published periodically: news and short folkloristic materials compiled by a native speaker are published roughly once a month. In the beginning, the first attempts followed the Terežčenko orthography, but not entirely consistently. Initially, this page was edited by Dar'ja Bolina, who was also responsible for the translation of the Gospel of Luke. Later, this task was taken over by Nina Borisova, Zoja Bolina and occasionally by Nina Bolina.³⁵ Nowadays, Viktor Pal'čin is responsible for this page of news.³⁶

In 2001, a small Forest Enets–Russian–Forest Enets school dictionary was published, this time as a joint venture between the linguist Irina Sorokina and Dar'ja

³⁵ This was largely due to Dar'ja Bolina's engagement, as she was the driving force behind the first attempts to create literacy for Enets. Being the offspring of a bilingual Nenets–Enets marriage with a clear preference for Nenets, Dar'ja Bolina studied Nenets in St. Petersburg and graduated as a student of Natal'ja Terežčenko. Because of her exposure to science and extended training in Tundra Nenets orthography, Dar'ja Bolina understood the principles of the Tundra Nenets-based Forest Enets orthography best.

³⁶ As writing news for the local newspaper *Tajmyr* in native languages has been almost always dominated by women, Viktor Pal'čin's effort is most worthwhile to report.

Bolina (Sorokina and Bolina 2001).³⁷ In 2003, a small Forest Enets–Russian conversation guide, again compiled by Dar’ja Bolina, was published (Bolina 2003). However, both publications differed from earlier attempts in that the glottal stop was no longer marked consistently and one could therefore speak of the introduction of a new orthography.

The last piece of work is a revitalization monograph with the title *Rodnoe slovo* ‘Native Word’ (Labanauskas 2002). The book contains texts, songs and a sketch grammar of both Enets varieties for use in linguistic and cultural revitalization. Although it was also compiled locally, the Terežčenko orthography is consistently followed. Labanauskas’ work was a milestone and remains the most recent book published in Forest Enets.

For several years, Dar’ja Bolina has been engaged in local politics and has given up her engagement with the Forest Enets language. Meanwhile, those who have taken over writing news for the newspaper have introduced new orthographies, as none of them is familiar with the principles of Tundra Nenets orthography on which the Enets orthography is based. In this respect, everybody uses their own individual orthography, which is itself inconsistent.³⁸

Although the Forest Enets community has tried to get literacy going, the attempt has failed. First, although references to an upcoming Forest Enets primer can be found in older editions of the local newspaper since the early 1990s, the potential author Dar’ja Bolina never succeeded in compiling one. A suitable textbook has been missing ever since and due to the lack of relevant material, the 2003 conversation guide is used in most classes attempting to teach the language. Secondly, Forest Enets was never taught successfully and its teaching history is also rather short. The first attempt to teach Forest Enets at the local boarding school in Potapovo was undertaken in 1992 and occasionally later as well, but all attempts failed.³⁹ Furthermore, a similar program teaching Forest Enets at the college in Dudinka did not produce new second language speakers either. With the death of the teacher in 2009, the program was closed and, due to the lack of potential candidates, will remain closed. Third, in contrast to Dolgan, which had a variety of researchers at hand who could assist in the creation of a literature program at various steps, only the one Russian researcher Irina Sorokina has worked continuously on Enets. The other researcher, the local folklorist and linguist Kazys Labanauskas, has occasionally assisted Forest Enets in their attempts, but Labanauskas’ attention has also been occupied with similar tasks for Nenets and Nganasan.

³⁷ In 2009, a slightly enlarged Forest Enets–Russian dictionary was published by the same authors. The orthographic problems have remained unaltered, unfortunately.

³⁸ For the linguist, such idiosyncratic orthographies contain a wealth of idiolectisms which a strict orthography would erase. For this reason, we are less critical here than language activists themselves.

³⁹ This attempt, originally organized by Viktor Pal’čin, was criticized by several Enets and seen as unnecessary. As late as the summer of 2011, Siegl could observe tensions between several Forest Enets which date back to this particular attempt.

4.2.2 Capacity Building

As Enets was not taught at any institution of higher education, capacity building could not apply. With the exception of the bilingual translator of the Fragments of the Gospel of Luke, Dar'ja Bolina, no other Enets has received any specialized training in linguistics.

5 Comparison and Discussion—Who Creates Literacy for Whom and How?

As literacy for the indigenous languages before the 1920s, all attempts to standardize the languages in the early Soviet Union came from outside specialists who were occasionally assisted by native speakers. The leading specialists for Kildin Sámi were Ěndjukovskij and Ćernjakov, who were also the exclusive authors and translators of materials. A third specialist was the local researcher Aymov, who was obviously involved in the work as a researcher, teacher and consultant, but not as an author of the final materials. Trained native speakers, recruited among students in Leningrad and Murmansk, were also included in the working group, but they worked exclusively as resources for the leading researchers.

5.1 Native and Non-native Specialists

A particularly well organized system of capacity building throughout the USSR was responsible for the quick increase in the number of native *intelligencija*. In this respect, this development preceded similar steps in other areas of the world by several decades. Besides the most central INS in Leningrad, numerous smaller institutes offering higher education were also created throughout the North and Siberia; for the scope of this study, the colleges in Dudinka, the district capital of the Tajmyr rajon, and Igarka, a small town in Northern Ěvenkija should be mentioned. Especially for Dolgan, several higher educational institutes in Jakutsk have played a more important role. Due to ongoing centralization in the Krasnojarsk kraj, to which the Tajmyr rajon belongs, the role of the Siberian Federal University in Krasnojarsk is continuously growing. For the Kola Sámi, the Murmansk State Pedagogical University (recently renamed to Murmansk State Humanities University; previously it was a college, Russian *pedagogičeskij tehnikum*), the Kola branch of the Academy of Science in Apatity (Murmansk oblast) and the Karelian branch of the Academy of Science in Petrozavodsk (Karelian Republic) have been instrumental.

Consequently, when new language planning attempts for Kildin Sámi started in the 1970s, the academically trained native *intelligencija* was also included. Although the leading person, Rimma Kuruč, was again an outside specialist, the group's work

was now carried out in much closer collaboration with the community. Educated native speakers, predominantly female teachers with academic training in the humanities, were trained and soon became co-authors or even single authors of the materials. Thus, even during the late Soviet Union the Kola Sámi had a group of native speaker language workers, who today would be regarded as “language activists”. Although currently there is no systematic work with language planning going on, several of these language activists continue producing teaching materials or literary texts.

5.2 *Research Infrastructure for Language Planning*

Most linguists who were engaged in theoretical research and practical language planning in the 1930s had spent a considerable amount of time among those people for whom a written language needed to be created. Although these researchers were all experts in their respective fields with first-hand knowledge of the diverse local situations, they needed to follow a special canon of official procedures. For remote areas in Siberia, the introduction of so-called *kultbazy* ‘Culture bases’, complexes which consisted of special facilities for trading, education, and medical help (both human and veterinarian medicine) and included special political propaganda started in the mid-1920s, accompanying collectivization. From an education-based perspective, both children and grown-ups were targeted, albeit differently. Whereas children were to be educated in boarding schools for which teaching materials for both native languages and Russian needed to be created from scratch, evening courses and “Red Chum activities”⁴⁰ were targeted towards adult generations.

In principle this system was in place until the collapse of the USSR.⁴¹ Occasionally, teacher-training materials for higher education, which was of course carried out in Russian, followed later as well. Finally, teach-yourself courses for party workers and teachers who were supposed to be in need when sent to remote areas also had to be created, although this was apparently never a top priority and stopped with enforced Russification in the 1960s.

In the Soviet Union, an administrative (and obviously also financial) official infrastructure for systematic work with language planning for indigenous languages on the local level was available.⁴² As a result, a working group was founded officially at the oblast level in Murmansk in the 1970s for Kildin Sámi. In 1988, Kuruč and her collaborators even succeeded in transforming this working group into a special

⁴⁰ Russian *čum* is the technical term for the traditional conical tent of indigenous people of Russia. ‘Red chum’ (Russian *krasnyj čum*) was the terminus technicus for party work among indigenous people.

⁴¹ The profound changes to local communities which accompanied this process have been covered in the literature (e.g. Slezkine 1994; Pika 1999; V poiskach sebja 2005) and need not be reviewed here.

⁴² For larger languages, such as Yakut, such an infrastructure continues to be available.

Sámi division inside the Soviet (later Russian) Academy of Sciences⁴³ (cf. Kuruč et al. 1995, 185).

Unfortunately, this institution dissolved during the decade after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Today there is no professional base available which could continue the work with Kildin Sámi language planning, although there are two local institutions evolving which could potentially fulfill this task. So far, however, both lack the relevant personal competence and interest.

The first institution is a Sámi research group called “Sámi language laboratory” led by the linguist Olga Ivanižčeva at the Murmansk State Humanities University.⁴⁴ Although Olga Ivanižčeva and her students conduct research and the establishment of a master program on Sámi language and culture is planned (according to Ivanižčeva, p.c.), none of them has active proficiency in this (or any other Sámi) language. So far they also predominantly work on theoretical questions of Sámi lexicology and terminology related to culture and society. It also seems unfavorable from the language planning perspective that the research group currently has neither Sámi collaborators nor close collaboration with Sámi institutions or organizations.

The other institution, called the “Center for Sámi Competence”,⁴⁵ is itself a Sámi institution located in Lovozero. It is provisionally led by the non-Sámi historian Maksim Kučinskij and was officially registered in December 2011. According to project descriptions, practical language work will be but one target area of the center’s future work. Although the successful implementation of this aim hinges on the availability of permanent funding and the professional expertise of participating personnel (neither of which is provided yet), the center should have the best prerequisites for also including a language center due to its close administrative and personal ties to the local Sámi community, to Sámi representative organizations as well as to Sámi and non-Sámi educational and academic research institutions in Russia and abroad. A very detailed critical discussion of the “Center for Sámi Competence’s” history and current role in the Kola Sámi society is found in Scheller (2011b, 108–110).

Note that Kildin Sámi people are generally interested in revitalizing and maintaining the language; several representatives play an active role in practical measures and relevant projects. There were attempts to pool current revitalization attempts into renewed work with language planning and to institutionalize a language center in Lovozero before the “Center for Sámi Competence” came into being (Scheller 2011b, 92). These attempts were partly initiated by the non-Sámi Elisabeth Scheller in combination with her ongoing investigation of Kildin Sámi language landscapes and revitalization. Scheller organized several language camps as well as linguistic and pedagogical training for native language activists, and initiated work on new teaching materials (e.g. Šaršina et al. 2008). Concerning ongoing revitalization, see also Scheller (2011a) and in particular Galkina et al. (2010), which is a joint paper by a group of language activists from Lovozero.

⁴³ Officially this division was called *Murmanskij sektor lingvističeskich problem finno-ugorskich narodnostej Krajnego Severa AN SSSR*.

⁴⁴ <http://www.mshu.edu.ru/>.

⁴⁵ <http://Saami-tied.ru/>.

On the Tajmyr Peninsula, local institutions similar to the “Center for Sámi Competence” have been functioning, but their work has suffered from state regulation and started comparatively late. The fate of the second largest indigenous people of the Tajmyr rajon, the Tundra Nenets, is symptomatic. Although Tundra Nenets belong to those languages which saw the introduction of literacy in a Latin-based script in the early 1930s, successful transition from Latin to Cyrillic in the late 1930s and consecutive language planning throughout the second part of the 20th century, teaching of Tundra Nenets in schools on Tajmyr started as late as in the end of the 1970s.⁴⁶ Many Nenets who were sent to the Institute of the People of the North to become teachers of Russian and Nenets could not work as such in their native area. Consequently, even today Nenets from Tajmyr are not involved in the creation of educational material for their language; instead, this takes place in the aforementioned Institute in St. Petersburg as well as in Nar’jan-Mar and Salekhard. Nowadays, several state-funded institutions in Dudinka are working on the creation and maintenance of local research infrastructure, but most typically their work concentrates on folklore rather than on education and linguistic documentation. All three functions are covered by the ethnographic department at the Tajmyr House of National Culture, the other two institutions, the local Dudinka college and interscholastic methodical center, are strictly educational, although new teaching materials are occasionally compiled, both for native indigenous languages and on local culture and history written in Russian.

5.3 Publishers of Educational Materials

After the introduction of UNA in the 1930s, pedagogical materials were published centrally by the publishing house Učpedgis,⁴⁷ which was a part of *Narkompros*.⁴⁸ Later, the publishing house was renamed to *Prosvješćenie* ‘Enlightenment’ after fusing with another publishing house in 1964. Only after the collapse of the Soviet Union competing publishers for educational materials such as *Drofa* appeared on the market.⁴⁹

As is probably true everywhere in the world, the official recognition of teaching materials involves negotiations with centralized educational institutions; the Soviet Union was no exception. Such negotiations could lead to long periods of waiting. For the vast majority of native Northern languages, both the staff at the Institute

⁴⁶ During the same period, Dolgan started to take its first steps towards literacy. The other indigenous languages of the Tajmyr Peninsula, Nganasan and Enets, were not considered in education in that period and had no impact at all. Evenki, another language which shares a similar history of literacy with Tundra Nenets, was apparently never taught on the Tajmyr Peninsula in the Soviet period. Also for this language, educational materials have never been created in Dudinka.

⁴⁷ Acronym for *Učebnoe pedagogičeskoe izdatel'stvo* ‘Publishing company for education and pedagogy’.

⁴⁸ Acronym for *Narodnyj komissariat prosvješćenija* ‘People’s Committee on Enlightenment’.

⁴⁹ Recently Drofa re-printed a revised version of the first Kildin Sámi primer from 1982 (Antonova 2004); several recent Dolgan textbooks were also published.

of the People of the North as well as the Ministry of Education of the USSR were responsible for planning and making decisions, occasionally with the assistance of linguists. Besides the obligatory political review concerning contents, publishing new teaching materials underwent an ‘experimental phase’ in a variety of schools and a final scientific evaluation, which added further delays before finally the green light was given for the print-run. As the decision making behind closed doors has apparently never been addressed in print, the observations in (Bartels and Bartels 1995, 69–74) deriving from the early 1980s are very illustrative. Whereas teaching materials were made for the periphery, it appears that decision making seldom left the corridors of Leningrad and Moscow. In this respect, the re-literarization of Ket, which was partly observed by Bartels and Bartels (1995) and which did not follow the general rules as it was partly conducted without approval of the Ministry of Education, would not have been possible in a period before perestroika.

Again, the Dolgan case is slightly different. As mentioned before, decision making took also place in the Siberian Branch of the Soviet Academy of Sciences in Novosibirsk. The first experimental primers for Dolgan were published in Krasnojarsk before the final primers were published with *Prosveščenie* in Leningrad.

Apart from the creation of new textbooks, a complicated maintenance system was established. As far as we understand this procedure, an author was obliged to correct and supplement already published materials. For several languages, manpower is restricted as only some persons are engaged in compiling teaching materials and have a full teaching load to fulfill, and this regulation thus imposes a further hardship.⁵⁰

Most materials published for Kildin Sámi in the 1990s mention as the publisher the Murmansk branch of the Russian Academy of Science, but they were actually printed locally and with financial support by various newly founded institutions supporting post-Soviet indigenous movements.⁵¹ Some recent materials, including a Kildin Sámi–Russian phrasebook (Afanas’eva 2010), were published with the financial support of the regional “Center for Indigenous Peoples of the north in the Murmansk Oblast”.⁵²

On the Tajmyr Peninsula a similar picture prevails. Educational materials such as primers and dictionaries are printed in St. Petersburg, and state funding is occasionally supplemented by additional funding from the local mining company Norilsk Nikkel. Other materials which can be used in education, such as text collections, additional mini-grammars or even ethnographic and folkloristic materials, are not bound by such restrictions. If not printed locally in Dudinka or Norilsk, this is outsourced to Krasnojarsk, but in most instances, the aforementioned Tajmyr House of National Culture and its legal predecessors are instrumental in the publishing process. In the latter case, funding comes from a variety of sources: local funds, funds from

⁵⁰ For Dolgan, this was frankly admitted to by one of the remaining authors of the existing teaching materials by the same publishing company has been uttered by a senior author of Tundra Nenets textbooks.

⁵¹ For instance the *Fond vozroždenija kol’skich saamov* ‘Foundation for the revival of Kola Sámi’, mentioned in the publication of Kuruč et al. (1995).

⁵² *Murmanskij oblastnoj centr korenych maločislennyh narodov Severa*; note that the Sámi are the only officially recognized indigenous group in the Murmansk oblast.

Krasnojarsk and to a certain degree money from Norilsk Nikkel. Funding has also come from sources outside Russia, but this is clearly marginal.

5.4 *The Conceptualization of Teaching Materials*

Apart from its main content, education materials had to incorporate certain Communist concepts that were seen as necessary for promoting their pedagogical purpose. However, the relevant texts⁵³ were hard if not impossible to translate, especially for those who produced the first teaching materials in the early 1930s. A particularly open-minded insight was given in 1931 by Bogoraz-Tan, who was instrumental in compiling the first Chukchi primer. After the transition to Cyrillic-based orthographies, political winds blew even stronger. In 1938, a review by Egorov (cited in the following passage after Grant 1995, 99) of early textbooks revealed the following major shortcomings:

- Černeceva's book for the Mansis overlooked the role of the working class before 1917.
- Sunik's book for the Nanai failed to mention the role of peasantry in the October Revolution; Sunik "speaks about soviets, schools and Red Yarangas,⁵⁴ but not one word about kolkhozes".
- Prokof'ev's book for the Nenets mentioned Lenin's name only once in eighty-eight pages.

Other textbooks were accused of containing no examples of the lives of heroes or presented outdated Soviet ideology. Finally, the Koryak primer by Sergej Stebnickij, which contained almost nothing but fairy tales, was even accused of actually having been "written for children". Egorov concluded:

All these distortions are the result of sabotage by bourgeois nationalists, the absence of efforts to combat the consequences of such sabotage, and the extremely weak supervision over the publication of these textbooks on the part of Narkompros [...] Only through the battle for party-mindedness in scholarship, and by preventing the oversimplification of pedagogic ideals in the northern schools, will we be able to root out the Trotskyite-Bukharinist gangs, the bourgeois nationalist and saboteurs on the ideological front. (Egorov 1938, cit. Grant 1995, 99)

Over time, most of these comments were implemented and a canonic genre of topics for textbooks could be found. These include stories about the capital Moscow, the "Great Patriotic War" (i.e. World War II) and its heroes and of course a solid overview of Communist values. The following quotation from the final chapter of an Evenki first grade primer from 1958 is characteristic:

⁵³ Obligatory key words in these texts were revolution the working class, factories, exploitation, class struggle, class consciousness, the First of May, the Red Army, socialism, bourgeoisie and the like.

⁵⁴ Red Yarangas are the Far East equivalent to *Red čums*.

The school year has ended. Some pupils will remain at home. They will help the kolchoz workers, they will fish. Others will leave for a pioneer camp. I, too, will go to the pioneer camp. In the morning we will all gather at school. Then we will sit on a boat and go upstream. There is our camp. The whole month we will live in the camp. (Konstantinova 1958, 49)

What is also most typical for languages of the smaller indigenous languages is the mere focus on the compilation of educational and folkloristic material for the younger generation. The adult generation of Dolgan, Forest Enets and Kildin Sámi is virtually excluded from using written language. Furthermore, none of the languages under discussion is used in legal documents. Thus, for potential adult readers, local newspapers are the only specialized kind of written language they have access to. Commonly, however, such newspapers have at best a symbolic value in showing the Russian majority that a different language is spoken in a given area—if an adult reader is interested in news, most likely he or she will obtain such news much more quickly in Russian. A good illustration of the symbolic use of an indigenous language was found in the local newspaper *Lovozerkaja pravda*, appearing weekly in Lovozero.⁵⁵ The newspaper preserves the heading *Modžes' čärr'*, meaning 'beautiful Tundra' in Kildin Sámi, for Kildin Sámi contributions. However, authors write almost exclusively in Russian.

The situation for Dolgan is slightly different. Many compilers have been acting teachers, both in primary and higher education, and one of the senior compilers, Anna Barbolina, defended a candidate thesis in educational sciences in 1996. Furthermore, active cooperation with compilers of similar materials for other languages provided some basic knowledge about ongoing trends in educational sciences in the Russian Federation.

Another problem in the conceptualization of teaching materials is the fact that teaching materials are still created for native children speakers, who make up a clear minority nowadays. Whereas such primers are still feasible for the majority of children in the three eastern villages, such materials are inappropriate in the other areas. Although the impact of language endangerment and language shift towards Russian is well known (see e.g. the contributions in Shoji and Janhunen 1997; Vachtin 2001), the compilation of present-day teaching materials follows the same concepts as in the 1930s. The target group of virtually any primer is still considered to consist of either monolingual native children or at best a completely bilingual child speaking Russian next to its native first language. Consequently all materials are designed to be similar to Russian primers aiming to teach reading and writing the alphabet to children who are already fluent native speakers of the language. Perhaps this situation was still common in the 1970s, like Rimma Kuruč observed among the Kildin Sámi (cf. Kurutsh 1977). However, our own observations lead us to believe that first language speakers do not make up any significant fraction among school children any longer (for Kildin Sámi see also Scheller 2011b, 101). On the contrary, our own experience tells us that the necessity for teaching materials for second language learners should be highly prioritized.

⁵⁵ http://lovozeroadm.ru/zhizn_rayona/gazeta_lovozersk/.

It has to be noted, however, that in the more recent periods at least some language planners have tried to systematically consider theoretical knowledge. For instance, the work with language planning for Kildin Sámi starting in the 1970s aimed at producing sets of primers, textbooks and additional didactic training for teachers of each grade, as well as at complementing dictionaries. Although work progressed slowly and did not go beyond materials for the third grade, from the language planning perspective, the work obviously mirrors the state-of-the-art situation at that point in time. Note that Kuruč herself holds a candidate degree in educational sciences. However, although research on bilingual education has since made huge progress, all work on the production of teaching materials for Kildin Sámi seems to be stuck on the common knowledge from the 1980s. The best example is the recent re-print of the first Kildin Sámi primer from 1982 by Antonova (2004). Major editions in the re-printed version are restricted to the replacement of Soviet terminology and cultural items. As a primer basically designed for introducing literacy to first language speaking children, this book is of little avail today. As a matter of fact all available teaching materials and methods are outdated and not effective (Scheller 2011a, 101–102).

In fact, no change can be recognized in the general methodological principles of creating and teaching small native languages even today. To be sure, similar claims have been made by Russian ethnologists in the early 1990s.

It is time to stop pretending that teachers are teaching children grammar in their native language. For contemporary northern children, the language of their ancestors is virtually foreign and should be taught as such [...] We should put an end to standardized northern textbooks which are published infrequently, but in surprisingly large quantities. New textbooks should be published in small quantities and designed for particular local needs. (Pika 1999, 149–150)⁵⁶

6 Evaluation and Conclusion—What Are the Actual Results of Literacy Creation for Dolgan, Forest Enets and Kola Sámi?

This short and inevitably incomplete sketch has tried to show how Kildin Sámi, Dolgan and Forest Enets started down the path to literacy in the Soviet Union. The following section tries to synthesize their development by comparing individual results. Skolt Sámi, which was standardized in Finland, will also be compared to these cases.

6.1 Dolgan Versus Forest Enets

Although the socio-political starting positions of Dolgan and Forest Enets were rather similar, their paths to literacy have developed profoundly differently. The most

⁵⁶ See also Kasten (1998), which is a collection of papers addressing the same problem.

obvious difference, which has affected the outcome significantly, was presumably triggered by a very simple fact: Dolgan has a much larger number of speakers than Forest Enets and therefore a potentially much larger group of supporters of literacy. Furthermore, the decisive steps to literacy for Dolgan were attempted at a moment when the language was still reasonably vital and spoken by almost all generations (albeit with emerging regional variation in language transmission). From a historical perspective, the introduction of literacy for Dolgan was unusual as it was triggered by the engagement of a single member of the speech community. In contrast to the general politics of imposed language planning from above, the bottom-up success of Dolgan is a very unique story in the history of literacy campaigns for the northern Russian indigenous peoples during the time of the USSR. Later, with the assistance of scientific consultants from Novosibirsk and Tomsk, the necessary expertise was available and the Dolgan story can indeed be called a small success. Finally, with the collapse of the USSR, ideological control concerning literacy creation and the contents of primers was lost.⁵⁷ From the 1990s and into the 21st century, additional teaching materials up to grade 10–11⁵⁸ as well as other literature not primarily targeted at children were published. The existence of an established radio program is surely beneficial as well. However, the role of TV and print media for language maintenance is best seen as symbolic.

Although the initial steps of Dolgan literacy were indeed successful, the immediate future is crucial for language maintenance. First, three compilers of initial educational materials have passed away in recent years and one has retired. In the younger generation, there is currently only one successor and it is quite obvious that this person alone cannot compensate for the output of three experienced compilers of educational materials. Second, interest in Dolgan in Russian Turcology is currently very low and support from foreign researchers is problematic due to the legal status of the Tajmyr Peninsula, which results in a complicated invitation process. Whereas some grammatical descriptions exist, the lack of a reasonably comprehensive dictionary is becoming more and more problematic for younger speakers. The small school dictionary is far from useful today as it is virtually nothing more than a bilingual word-list excluding any kind of relevant grammatical information. Whereas this dictionary helps monolingual children in learning Russian, it is utterly useless for a Dolgan child who does not know her or his heritage language at all. This point brings us directly to the third major challenge of the immediate future: compilation of alternative teaching materials. Whereas the Dolgan orthography has been stable since its modification for the 1984 primer, the language situation has changed drastically in the meantime. As more and more children enter schools showing a clear preference for Russian or not even knowing any Dolgan at all, the compilation of second language teaching materials must be seen as the challenge of the future. Finally, although usually excluded from such programs, materials for adult learners should be considered as well.

⁵⁷ This, however, does not imply that this won't happen in the future.

⁵⁸ However, as already mentioned, the Dolgan curriculum is not yet fully accredited due to the lack of various teaching materials for higher classes.

As much as the Dolgan story has been successful, the Forest Enets path to literacy started relatively late and has been less successful. In contrast to Dolgan, whose major literacy protagonist was a native speaker, attempts and impulses to create literacy for Enets came from researchers, both distant (Natal'ja Terežčenko from Leningrad) and local (Kazys Labanauskas, Dudinka). Only after the collapse of the USSR did the local Forest Enets community become active. Another contrast must be pointed out clearly as well: the decisive attempts to promote Forest Enets literacy in the middle of the 1990s came at a moment when transmission to children had already seized for at least two decades. This resulted in a target audience of middle-age and elder adult speakers, which was starting to dwindle. As a matter of fact, only the generation of middle-aged speakers (who are nowadays in the grandparental generation) actually started to write in Forest Enets. As the production of primers and other printed material in book form never caught on, the most important medium, the page of news in Forest Enets in the local newspaper, remains the only regular possibility to write and read Forest Enets nowadays. Indeed, the potential number of readers does not exceed a dozen plus a few linguists. Due to the slightly more complicated phonology of Enets in contrast to Dolgan, the proposed Forest Enets orthography, which was based on the principles of the Tundra Nenets orthography, turned out to be too complicated for native but linguistically untrained speakers. The frequent inconsistency in marking long vowels and the omission of the marking of glottal stops including idiolectal preferences and many unnecessary borrowings from Tundra Nenets in writing, have resulted in almost as many Forest Enets orthographies as there have been active writers.

Next, Forest Enets has attracted considerably less interest among Soviet and Russian linguists, and therefore necessary support in the crucial days of literacy creation was lacking.⁵⁹ This has also affected the potential translation of the Bible into Forest Enets. The Institute for Bible Translation, which sponsored a trial edition of Fragments of the Gospel of Luke which was published in 1995, did not further support the undertaking, which would surely have eventually resulted in a Forest Enets Bible. Their official statement referred to the same problem as stated above: no suitable linguist for an evaluation of the trial version could be found.⁶⁰ Summing up the Forest Enets case, although the path to literacy has most certainly not been as successful as the Dolgan case, literacy in Forest Enets shows a marked difference in contrast to Dolgan. Whereas Dolgan literacy should be understood as “writing for everyday usage”, the few remaining promoters of Forest Enets literacy are actively helping to document a language which begun its journey down the path to extinction. Even when linguistic and orthographic shortcomings are present in many instances of written Forest Enets, every page adds further primary material to the knowledge of an otherwise poorly documented language.

Finally, having spoken about major differences between the Dolgan and the Forest Enets path to literacy, a final note on a potential parallel that we have perceived is in

⁵⁹ The local linguist Kazys Labanauskas worked simultaneously on three languages, Nenets, Nganasan and Enets, but concentrated mostly on the first two mentioned.

⁶⁰ Mrs. Beerle-Mohr from the Institute for Bible Translation, p.c. to Siegl (2003).

order. Although the following observation is preliminary, it appears that the presence of the more-numerous linguistic relatives Yakut (to Dolgan) and Tundra Nenets (to Forest Enets) has had no positive direct impact during the crucial phase of literacy creation. This is perhaps somewhat unexpected, because these languages share the same coherent history of literacy and language planning, including a Latin-based period, during the 1930s. This is even more surprising as both Dolgan and Forest Enets have been in frequent contact with their linguistic neighbors, but apparently these contacts have not been utilized in the sphere of language planning and revitalization.

6.2 Kildin Sámi Versus Skolt Sámi

Kildin and Skolt Sámi share several important points in their history of literacy creation and language planning. Both languages were first written in the Christian missionary context of the late 19th century. During early Soviet attempts towards language planning for the northern minority languages, Skolt Sámi was not considered specifically. Instead, all standardized and prescriptive materials were based on Kildin Sámi, but adjusted to partly cover all closely related Sámi varieties spoken in Russia, including Skolt Sámi.

Whereas missionaries and early Soviet literacy creators came from outside the Sámi society and their attempts petered out for several reasons, more sustainable efforts have been made by specialists and educated native speakers working together on a revised literary standard and on language planning since the 1970s. For Kildin Sámi, this work was carried out with local administrative support by a working group led by the linguist and educationalist Rimma Kuruč in Murmansk. Although systematic work with language planning came to an end in the 1990s, a few members of the former working group continue with the creation of teaching materials, and renewed revitalization attempts are being carried out even by non-specialist native speakers. Kildin Sámi is also increasingly used in different genres of written mass media.

The first attempts to revitalize Skolt Sámi in Finland were initiated from inside the community in the early 1970s and are connected to a pan-Sámi indigenous movement starting in the Nordic countries. The first written materials were prepared and an orthography was developed in collaboration by linguists and language activists and was officially introduced in 1973 (Korhonen 1981, 64). Among the main actors in Skolt Sámi language planning were the Skolt Sámi Jouni Moshnikoff and his Finnish wife Satu Moshnikoff from Sevettijärvi. They worked closely together with Finnish linguists such as Mikko Korhonen, Pekka Sammallahhti, Eino Koponen and others.

In contrast to the Kildin Sámi, who have never experienced more than general official recognition as speakers of an indigenous language in the Soviet Union or Russia, the Skolt Sámi in Finland can appeal to specific language rights formally implemented in the Finnish legislation. This is especially relevant for the municipality of Inari, where most Skolt Sámi live today and where Skolt Sámi is one of the official languages. While the implementation of practical measures for safeguarding or maintaining

Kildin Sámi always relied (and still relies) on the attitudes of the local administration, Skolt Sámi language legislation ensures the implementation of certain rights by law.

The work with Skolt Sámi language planning in Finland continues on different levels even today. A recent result of collaborative work between language activists and linguists is the pedagogical grammar of Moshnikoff et al. (2009), but on the local level teachers also continue to publish their own materials. Skolt Sámi is systematically taught to school children, at least in Sevettijärvi, and there are also courses for adults offered regularly, e.g. at the Sámi Education Center Institute in Inari. The Skolt Sámi language is used in new media and even occasionally in official documents such as announcements from the Inari municipality. As a result, the Skolt Sámi written standard has not only gained new domains of use but has also undergone quite successful modernization, making the language suitable for use in modern Finnish society. The pan-Sámi indigenous movement, providing idealistic and material support from different sources, is certainly an important catalyst for the development of Skolt Sámi, but the most crucial precondition seems to be systematic and continuous official support through language legislation.

On the Russian side, on the other hand, no true support from language legislation is available. After perestroika, indigenous political activism (including but not restricted to the Nordic pan-Sámi movement) has also reached and inspired Kildin Sámi activists. However, these resources can only provide unsystematic and temporary project funding, at best (cf. Scheller 2011a, 105–110). General theoretical knowledge about relevant issues on linguistics, multilingualism or education also seems much less developed than in Finland. As a result, Kildin Sámi, which started down the path to literacy simultaneously with Skolt Sámi and has been in step with the latter at least until the 1980s, has fallen significantly behind in the meantime.

6.3 General Conclusion

Ensuring the survival of an endangered language means, in general terms (cf. Fishman 1991, 2001; Grenoble and Whaley 2005), stopping and reversing language shift by regaining lost domains and, ideally, occupying new additional domains of language use. A literal reversal of the language shift process, resulting in new monolingual speakers of the minority language, would be neither realistic nor even beneficial in the cases discussed here. Instead, revitalization aims at maintaining the communicative function of language in the multilingual minority context to the best degree possible.

Since the writing and reading of what was originally a spoken language effectively opens a new domain of language use, the successful introduction of literacy for the small endangered minority languages Dolgan, Forest Enets, Kildin and Skolt Sámi is in fact already a giant stride towards successful revitalization. Kildin and Skolt Sámi started first and have progressed farthest in establishing, maintaining and further developing written languages because they are already used in several new mass media of the computer age. However, in terms of the language choice of individual speakers, the situation for all four languages is more or less similarly adverse because the language shift process has not been stopped and children are not

learning the native language at present. As a result, literacy creation and the further development of written languages, which is characteristic for all four languages, does not automatically promote spoken language survival.

In the Russian and the other European majority societies, which largely rely on written media for language maintenance and development, the existence of standardized and prescriptive written materials is a prerequisite both for teaching endangered languages to new potential speakers and for the prospective further text production by those revitalized language users. The availability of written texts ranging from teaching materials to different genres of written mass media, and, ideally, even official documents will most likely affect attitudes towards active language use inside the native speaker community. The final success or failure of all revitalization attempts, however, hinges on the individual speakers' language choice. Only when speakers choose to regain the native language, to use it actively and resume the intergenerational language transmission, will the language survive as a means of spoken communication.

All four cases compared in this chapter provide evidence against the direct influence of existing literary standards on the vitality of an endangered language. All four languages have developed literacy and achieved written standards to different degrees. The actual situations are still basically similar. All four languages are critically endangered, at best, because transmission of the native language to the next generation has ceased and the languages are scarcely ever actively used.

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Part III
Why Some Languages Survive.
On Language Laws, Policies
and Changing Attitudes

Explaining Language Loss

The Sakhalin Nivkh Case

Ekaterina Gruzdeva

Abstract Despite current positive attitudes of the Nivkh people towards their culture and language, Nivkh is disappearing in the face of the vast penetration of Russian in all linguistic domains and the full adaptation of traditional Nivkh culture to Russian lifestyle. The chapter gives an overview of Nivkh traditional culture, describes the current sociological situation of the Nivkh language and provides a diachronic and synchronic survey of political, socioeconomic and cultural reasons leading to marginalization and loss of the language. Furthermore, the article traces the development of language shift from Nivkh to Russian, outlines the history of the study of the language, and describes the attempts for standardizing, teaching, and preserving Nivkh at different stages of its history.

Keywords Nivkh language · Sakhalin Island · Language shift · Language loss · Language maintenance

1 Introduction

Nivkh (Giljak) is a moribund language spoken in several dialects on Sakhalin Island and in the Amur region of Russia. Being a language isolate, not genetically related to any other languages spoken in the area or elsewhere, it is traditionally classified as a Paleosiberian language. The language is heavily endangered: according to the last Russian census (2010) Nivkh has no more than 198 speakers (FSGS 2010). For all other ethnic Nivkhs, Russian is their mother tongue and the only language of communication. Furthermore, even Nivkhs of the oldest generation, who have preserved a knowledge of their native language relatively well, nowadays prefer to communicate in Russian, not in Nivkh. Despite the current positive attitudes of the Nivkh people towards their language, Nivkh is disappearing in the face of the vast penetration of Russian in all linguistic domains and the full adaptation of traditional Nivkh culture to a Russian lifestyle.

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Fig. 1 Map showing the current geographic distribution of the Sakhalin Nivkh language

The obsolescence of Nivkh is an example of ‘gradual death’, i.e. the loss of a language due to a gradual shift to the dominant language in a language contact situation (cf. Campbell and Muntzel 1989). Nowadays the Nivkh people live in small towns and villages with a mixed population, where Russian is used as the only language of communication, totally dominating even in the everyday conversation of the remaining Nivkh speakers. This chapter gives a short overview of Nivkh traditional culture, describes the current sociological situation of Nivkh, provides a diachronic and synchronic survey of political, socioeconomic and cultural factors leading to marginalization and loss of the language, traces the development of language shift

from Nivkh to Russian, outlines the history of the study of the language, and describes attempts towards standardizing, teaching, and preserving Nivkh at different stages in its history.

2 Nivkh Traditional Culture

The Nivkhs, who differ anthropologically from the neighboring peoples, are considered to be the only surviving descendants of an original Neolithic population of the lower Amur (cf. Forsyth 1992; Rudnikova 2008; Šternberg 1933; Taksami 1967, 1975).

“Nivkh” is this people’s self-designation, which simply means ‘human being’. In Tungusic languages, the Nivkhs are called *Giljaki*, *Gileke*, *Giljami*, *Gilymi*, etc., i.e. ‘people who travel by big boats with paired oars’. The terms *Giljaks* and *Giljak language* were also used in Russian research literature until the mid 20th century and are still used in some non-Russian works. Various Nivkh tribes have also named themselves according to the area in which they settled, e.g. *Ruivn* ‘people living in a settlement on the river Rui’ and *Kryuspiŋ* ‘people living near the mountain Kryuspal’ (Krejnovič 1973; Šternberg 1999). Like many other Siberian peoples, the Nivkhs identified with a clan group rather than a linguistic or ethnic group.

Nivkh culture was coastal-subarctic and characterized principally by hunting and fishing (primarily coastal hunting of sea-mammals). The most important economic event for the Nivkhs was and still is the annual salmon run. The fish were caught in large nets or with harpoons by groups of men. The Nivkhs’ survival depended on the size of the catch, since fish was a staple food for the Nivkhs. It was either cooked fresh or dried and preserved chiefly for consumption in winter. As a supplement to their diet, in summer and autumn the Nivkhs gathered wild plants and berries, some for medical and religious purposes.

The Nivkhs were a semi-nomadic people that regularly moved between winter and summer settlements. Winter dwellings were traditionally dug into the ground and covered with earth, whereas summer dwellings were built above ground on stilts near the rivers where salmon spawned. Nivkh villages consisted of three to four households shared by several families with larger villages having up to twenty dwellings, mostly located on the Amur estuary. Practically every settlement included families belonging to different clans and ethnic groups, and several clans having Nivkh names and speaking the Nivkh language were in fact composed of people whose recent ancestors were Ainu, Negidals, Ulchis, Nanais, or Uilta (Oroks) (Forsyth 1992, 210–211).

Among the Nivkhs, dog breeding (for draft animals, for food and for fur) was widespread. The main means of transportation in winter was dog sled, whereas in summer the Nivkhs traveled by various types of boats, usually hollowed-out logs decorated with intricate Nivkh artwork. Nivkh hunting clothes and footwear were made of seal fur. The usual garment had a wide wrap-over flap. Women’s robes were ornamented with embroidery in the spiral Amur style and adorned with metal ornaments (Smoljak 1984; Taksami 1975).

The Nivkhs were patriarchal and lived in exogamic clans. Vestiges of group marriage existed until the beginning of the 20th century, but by that time most Nivkhs lived in monogamous relationships. Their religion was based on animistic, totemic and magical conceptions of nature. The mountains, trees and even the island of Sakhalin were considered animate beings. The Nivkhs believed in various ‘masters’ of natural phenomena and spirits that surrounded them everywhere. The cult of the bear was highly developed, the most important religious event of the year being the clan bear feast in honor of a deceased relative. Unlike their Tungusic neighbors, the Nivkhs practiced cremation, burying the ashes in the earth.

The Nivkhs’ highly developed folklore culture is represented by two main genres: (i) epic narratives telling of the origin of the world, the life of divine animals and spirits, love affairs between human beings and animals, hunting and fishing adventures, battles between the Nivkhs and mountain, forest, sea, sky, or underground people, monsters and cannibals, about getting a wife, etc., and (ii) lyrics, i.e. love and humorous songs, lullabies, shaman songs, incantations, prayers, etc.

3 Historical and Socioeconomic Background

The earliest historical record concerning the Nivkhs dates back to a 12th-century Chinese chronicle. For a long time the territory in which the Nivkhs resided was under Chinese, Mongol and Manchu dominance. The Nivkhs have also interacted and traded with neighboring Tungusic tribes and with the Ainu on Sakhalin Island. Most of the local people inhabiting the area under discussion were hunters and fishermen and the population density was very low.

The Russians appeared in the Amur basin in the 17th century. Reports by Russian Cossacks give an account of the indigenous peoples of Siberia and the Far East and the Nivkhs in particular. At that time, the Cossack expeditions did not result in the annexation of the Amur Region by Russia. Until the middle of the 19th century, the Nivkhs together with other indigenous peoples of the area remained nominally under the Chinese Emperor.

After the conclusion of the 1858 Aigun and 1860 Peking treaties between Russia and China, all territory north of the Amur, as well as Ussuri kraj, part of modern-day Primorskij kraj, were ceded to Russia. These political-geographical changes opened the door to Russian colonization of the area. As a result, during the last four decades of the 19th century, some 100,000 people from European Russia and other parts of Siberia migrated to the new Far East territories. The arrival of immigrants naturally affected the life of the indigenous inhabitants of the lower Amur. Thus, some Nivkh fishing grounds were invaded by Russian commercial fisheries. Nevertheless, due to their isolation the Nivkhs were able to preserve their original lifestyle and culture more or less intact until the end of the 19th century (Forsyth 1992; Šternberg 1933; Taksami 1967).

As for Sakhalin, at the beginning of the 19th century the island did not clearly ‘belong’ to any organized state and was populated by indigenous peoples. The Nivkhs

mainly lived in the northern part of the island. After 1855, according to the Russian-Japanese Treaty of Shimoda, the Kuril Islands were divided between Russia and Japan, while Sakhalin was under the joint control of both countries. This situation was maintained during the ensuing two decades and colonization by both Russians and Japanese proceeded rapidly until 1875, when according to the new treaty signed in St. Petersburg, Russia took complete dominion of Sakhalin in exchange for the surrender of the entirety of the Kuril Islands to Japan (Forsyth 1992, 203; Elizar'jev 2007; Senčenko 2006).

In 1869, the Russian government officially announced that Sakhalin Island would become a zone of penal servitude and exile. Members of the most significant Russian political parties and organizations were exiled to the Sakhalin Penal Colony. Two Sakhalin exiles, Lev Ja. Šternberg and Bronislaw Pilsudski, contributed greatly to the study of Nivkh language and culture.

Attempts to colonize the island with free agricultural settlers in 1868–1886 proved unsuccessful, and the only inhabitants of the island, apart from indigenous peoples and some miners at the coal mines of the west coast, were the inmates and staff of penal colonies. The presence of these convict settlements had an unfortunate effect on the life of the Nivkhs and other local peoples. They were frequently murdered by escaped prisoners, developed a liking for vodka offered by Russian traders as a means of obtaining furs at low prices, and fell victim to epidemic diseases. As a result, the number of Nivkhs living on the island fell considerably from 3,270 in 1856 to 2,000 in 1897 (Forsyth 1992, 218–219).

In 1905, according to the Treaty of Portsmouth signed after the end of the Russian-Japanese War, the southern part of Sakhalin Island, where there lived about 100 Nivkhs, passed into the hands of Japan and was transformed into the Japanese governorship of Karafuto. Japanese immigrants (numbering about half a million) began to settle on the island (Stephan 1971). At the same time, the Japanese authorities started to resettle the native peoples in special permanent settlements. The Nivkhs together with the Uilta (Oroks) who lived around the Poronaj and Terpenija Gulfs (Sea of Okhotsk) were moved to the Otasu (Severnyj) island in the mouth of the river Poronaj.

The first official statement that defined the status of the Siberian peoples for the next century was the Statute of Alien Administration in Siberia introduced in 1822 by Mikhail Speranskij, governor-general of Siberia. All Siberian aborigines were formally classified as aliens (*inorodcy*) and divided into three groups: (i) settled, (ii) nomadic, and (iii) vagrant. The main principle of their administration was indirect rule with as little Russian interference as possible. Each clan had its own native administration that was expected to rule in accordance with traditional laws and customs. The elders were responsible for the distribution, collection, and delivery of tribute and local taxes. Commerce was declared free and the aliens were granted complete freedom of religion (Slezkine 1994, 83–92). Speranskij's Regulations represented quite a remarkable document aimed at preserving the economic benefits and original culture of indigenous peoples. In practice, however, the law was often violated, the government was not able to control colonization and ensure the rights of local people (Vachtin 1993, 17). The native peoples of Siberia and

the Far East remained poor and deprived of rights under the increasing pressure of immigrants.

Thus, the Russian colonization of Sakhalin led to redistribution of lands and fishing grounds between the aboriginal population and newcomers in favor of the latter. The Russian government recognized the problem of native peoples being ousted from their lands and prepared legislation according to which the Nivkhs, who under Speranskij's Regulations were classified a nomadic people, should be considered a settled people (Roon 1999, 182). This new status would guarantee their right to own and inherit lands and fishing grounds. However, this problem remained unsolved until the Russian revolution of October 1917.

Immediately after the Revolution led by Bolsheviks, the newly formed Soviet State undertook to prepare legislation aimed at solving nationality issues. The Declaration of Rights of the Peoples of Russia adopted in November 1917 proclaimed a policy of equality and sovereignty of all peoples of Russia and the free development of national minorities and ethnic groups inhabiting the territory of Russia. The Constitution of 1918, which governed the newly formed Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic, guaranteed equal rights to all people, irrespective of their race or nationality.

The Russian Civil War broke out in 1918 and lasted in the Far East for more than four years, ending in 1922. The inhabitants of the lower Amur and Sakhalin regions tried to avoid involvement in the war, but they nonetheless suffered greatly from the interruption of supplies of grain, gunpowder, flour, oil, sugar, etc., and the breakdown of the fur trade on which their economy had become so dependent (Forsyth 1992, 242).

In 1924, a Committee for Assistance to the Peoples of the Outlying Districts of the North (the Committee of the North) was created with the aim of promoting the planned organization of the small peoples of the North¹ in economic, judicial-administrative and cultural-medical matters. Besides Communist Party officials, the Committee included a group of scholars with first-hand knowledge of Siberia and the Far East, such as Vladimir Bogoraz and Lev Šternberg.

Bogoraz believed that the indigenous peoples should be left to their traditional ways with as little interference as possible. He saw the Committee's task as helping the native peoples to maintain their own culture during the socio-political 'transformations' envisaged for Siberia and the Far East. As the rightful occupiers of their vast, sparsely inhabited territories, they should have the integrity of their lands guaranteed by the establishment of native reservations. However, the Committee had very little actual power and was unable to seriously influence Soviet policymakers whose primary goal was to "draw all the natives into socialist construction" and "to create conditions for organized self-help among the small nationalities of the outlying regions of the North on the new political and economic basis" (Forsyth 1992, 244–245; Grenoble 2003, 163).

¹ 'Peoples of the North' is an umbrella term used for a substantial number of peoples inhabiting the tundra and taiga regions of Russia whose southeast boundary is the Pacific Ocean.

The first piece of legislation codifying new principles of native administration was the Provisional Statute on the Administration of the Native Peoples of Outlying Regions of the North of the RSFSR (ratified in 1926) that was actually modeled after Speranskij's Statute of 1822. It instituted the election of clan soviets as traditional clan gathering places within a few years. The main function of the clan soviets was to gather the statistical information requested by their superiors and maintain internal law and order (Slezkine 1994, 159).

Although remnants of exogamic clan structure were relatively strong among the Nivkhs, their settlements, especially in the Amur area, had long been ethnically mixed and scattered among Russian communities. The local authorities decided that their native soviets should be formed from the beginning on territorial lines, not clan ones. In the Amur area, no national districts were formed for the Nivkhs and the native soviets were subordinated directly to Russian districts. On Sakhalin Island the soviets were organized within two national districts: the East Sakhalin district with its center in Nogliki and the West Sakhalin district with its center in Vereščagino (Roon 1999, 186). These new developments directly affected one of the most fundamental features of traditional life, namely the clan institution that was effectively undermined by the abolition of clan soviets in favor of territorial ones, and the prohibition of tradition clan gatherings (Forsyth 1992, 296–297).

The second half of the 1920s saw the gradual sovietization of the Siberian north-east despite native resistance, active or passive, to the Soviet government's innovations. After the end of the Civil War, one of the first tasks of the Soviet authorities was to restore the disrupted native economy by introducing a cooperative system. Since most of the peoples of the lower Amur and northern Sakhalin had a more or less sedentary way of life, it was relatively easy to establish cooperatives in practically every settlement. A decree of 1927 nominally relieved the people of the north from all taxes. It is said that in several years, practically the entire population of the lower Amur joined cooperatives, and individual hunters and fishermen almost disappeared (Forsyth 1992, 246). As a result, the traditional institutions of tribal society, such as mutual assistance and equal sharing of spoils were abolished.

At the same time, industrial development of oil and gas fields began in the north-eastern part of Sakhalin Island. It had a dramatic effect on the traditional livelihood of the indigenous people due to the displacement of the traditional economy by industry and its destruction by pollution. The number of Russian-speaking workers arriving on the island and settling near the aboriginal villages grew rapidly during this time. By the end of the 1920s, the indigenous people comprised only 5.5 % of the total population of the island and the process of the assimilation of the Nivkh to a Russian lifestyle had been progressing with great speed (Roon 1999, 185).

At the beginning of the 1930s, the Communist Party launched a campaign of mass collectivization that proceeded rapidly in the settled fishing communities in the Amur region and on Sakhalin Island. Among the sixteen fishing collective farms founded on Sakhalin, seven were located in the East Sakhalin native district (Piltun, Čajvo, Nyjvo, Potovo, etc.). At the same time, the Nivkhs were forced to leave their scattered villages for bigger settlements located closer to the fishing grounds which Russian authorities wished to exploit. In Rybnovskij district collectivization

was complete already in 1932—the inhabitants of twenty-seven native settlements were relocated to seven large villages. Due to resettlement on northern Sakhalin, thirty-one native settlements disappeared (Roon 1999, 186). By 1939 over 96 % of all Nivkh households had been collectivized and resettled in villages in the Russian style (Forsyth 1992, 328).

Moreover, it was decided that stock-raising and gardening would be introduced among the Nivkhs. The first agricultural collective farm, Čir-Unvd ('New Life'), was founded in 1930. However, the experiment of transforming Nivkhs into agricultural laborers saw little success, since Nivkh fishermen believed that hurting the earth, e.g. plowing, was a sin, and therefore they sought to resist agricultural work.

As a result of collectivization, Nivkh traditional forms of life and economy have completely changed: the system of winter and summer residences developed to maximize the benefits of local resources was abandoned, the traditional system of relationships between clans and territorial groups was completely transformed and the ownership of fishing grounds was lost.

The religious foundations of Nivkh society were shaken during the anti-religious campaign in 1920–1930, which saw communist persecution of their shamans. However, it was not only shamans who suffered from oppression. In 1937–1938, during the time of the 'Great Terror' as a result of repressive measures undertaken against counterrevolutionary and rebel elements among the peoples of the North, approximately 36 % of the adult native population of Sakhalin Island was deported from the island to the mainland. At that time this meant that they were either sent to labor camps or executed. These 'removed' people comprised mainly Nivkhs and Evenkis from forty to sixty years of age (Slezkine 1994, 291).

In 1945, after the Second World War, southern Sakhalin was incorporated into the Soviet Union. Along with the Japanese population, which was almost entirely repatriated, a small number of Nivkh people moved out to Japan and settled on Hokkaido Island. This group of Nivkhs have now completely assimilated to the Ainu and Japanese.

The way of the life of the Amur and Sakhalin natives underwent further changes in the 1950s when, as a result of a policy of uniting small settlements into larger units that took place throughout the north and the Far East of the USSR (cf. Vachtin 2001), the Nivkhs were forcibly resettled into several small towns and villages of mixed population. On the western and eastern coasts of Sakhalin Island, the small fishing collective farms were integrated into the state collective farm *Krasnaja Zarja* ('Red Dawn') located in the new settlement of Nekrasovka in the Okha district. The inhabitants of the purely Nivkh settlements of Piltun, Čajvo, Nyjvo, Veni, etc. were resettled in the newly built fishing state collective farm *Vostok* ('East') which was merged with the regional center of Nogliki. Those aged Nivkhs unwilling to move into the new settlements, remained in their old houses on the coast, practically cut off from the outside world. With these measures the government of the Soviet Union completed its policy of transferring nomadic peoples into a settled way of life and integrating them into a modern industrial society (Roon 1999, 194).

As a result of the disruption and relocation of communities, the social structure of the native people who have been separated from their natural environment and

economy has profoundly changed. The Nivkhs were drawn away from their traditional occupations and became laborers in the expanding timber, mining and oil-drilling industries, or were engaged in other jobs, typically low-skilled ones. A significant amount of the local population became unemployed, aimless and ended in alcoholism. Moreover, the indigenous communities were so widely separated that there was more contact between the Nivkhs and the surrounding Russian population than with other Nivkh communities. One result of this resettlement was an increase of mixed marriages. Having limited possibilities to retain their native culture, which after all had a very low prestige compared to the dominant Russian culture, most Nivkhs gave up their traditional customs and completely adapted to the Russian lifestyle.

The period from the 1960s to the 1980s saw a massive influx of Russians into the region, caused by further industrial development. This immigration had a striking effect on local demography. In those places where the Nivkh originally lived in closed communities, they became a tiny minority. In 1989, on Sakhalin Island the percentage of Nivkh people in Poronajsk was 0.4 %, in Nogliki 4.6 % and in Okha 0.4 % (cf. de Graaf 1992).

Life expectancy for natives of the north in 1988 was only 45 years for men and 55 for women—18 years lower than the average in the country. Infant mortality was high (two or three times higher than average), tuberculosis was still fairly common, and the indigenous people were generally more prone to disease than incomers with higher standards of living (Forsyth 1992, 401).

Currently in the Amur estuary, only in the settlement of Alejevka can a distinct Nivkh community be said to exist. Other villages with a Nivkh population in the same area include Vlas'jevo, Bajdukovo, Makarovka and Tnejvach (Moseley 2007, 260). Minor groups of Nivkhs live in the cities of Khabarovsk, Komsomolsk-na-Amure and Nikolayevsk-na-Amure. On Sakhalin Island the largest groups of Nivkhs live in the settlements of Nekrasovka and Nogliki (a population of some 800) in northern Sakhalin and in the town of Poronajsk in the southern part of the island.

The Russian economic reforms of the early 1990s contributed to the development and establishment of new economic relations among indigenous peoples (cf. e.g. Grant 1995). The state collective farms were abandoned, and in their place 85 Nivkh hunting and fishing family farms employing about 400 people were created in northern Sakhalin in areas of Nivkh traditional settlement. However, not all of these farms really work; some of them exist only on paper and in district administration records. In fact, one out of every two Nivkhs is unemployed, while one third do not receive wages for work done. Social problems are once again driving young people to move to larger towns and settle down to work far away from their traditional occupations (Roon 1999, 194–195).

The years of 'perestroika' also saw an increase in social movements for indigenous rights in Russia. In March 1990, the Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North (RAIPON) was established at the first Congress of Indigenous Peoples of the North. The goal of the Association is to protect human rights, defend the legal interests of indigenous peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East, and assist in solving environmental, social, economic, cultural, and educational problems.

RAIPON works to guarantee the right to protection of native homelands and the traditional way of life as well as the right to self-governance according to national and international legal standards. The Association is represented by regional organizations, one of which is the Union of the Indigenous Peoples of the Sakhalin Region.

At present, the Nivkhs living in the north of Sakhalin see their future threatened by the giant offshore oil and gas extraction projects known as Sakhalin I and Sakhalin II operated by the Exxon Neftegas Limited and Sakhalin Energy oil companies respectively. The exploitation of natural resources and the use of aggressive industrial technologies has resulted in pollution of traditional Nivkh lands and fishing grounds (Roon 2010, 16). In 2005, the Regional Council of Authorized Representatives of the Indigenous Peoples of Northern Sakhalin was established. The main task of the Council, which has already organized several nonviolent protest actions, is to require that the government and oil companies consult independent ethnological experts, which will reveal the extent of the negative impact on the environment and the traditional nature of indigenous peoples. It should be noted that the Nivkhs currently represent probably one of the most active indigenous groups fighting for their rights.

In response to protest actions, in 2006, Sakhalin Energy launched the Sakhalin Indigenous Minorities Development Plan (SIMDP). The main goal of this long-term program is to organize collaboration between the oil company, the Regional Council of Authorized Representatives of the Indigenous Peoples and the Sakhalin regional administration. The activities of the Development Plan include the Social Development Fund and the Traditional Economic Activities Support Program. Through a system of grants, Exxon Neftegas Limited nowadays also actively supports various projects aimed at protecting the culture, traditions, and lifestyle of Sakhalin minorities.

4 Literacy and Education

One of the most important activities undertaken by the Committee of the North in 1920–1930 was the establishment of cultural bases which provided the local population of certain remote areas with such services as a medical station, a veterinary station, a shop, and a school. On Sakhalin Island such a cultural base was established in Nogliki in 1929. However, the first boarding school for 40 schoolchildren was organized even earlier in the national settlement of Khanduza in the north-eastern part of the island. In 1926, there were 37 Nivkh and Uilta (Orok) children in the school who studied together with 40 adults. One of the most well-known scholars of Nivkh language and culture Eruchim Krejnovič worked in this school as a teacher from 1926 till 1928.

As the languages of the peoples of the North had never been committed to written form, the language of instruction in native schools was almost without exception Russian. In order to develop education in the vernacular, it was essential to produce literate staff for government administration and teachers for schools. For this purpose

special Northern departments were established at the colleges in Tomsk, Tobol'sk, Irkutsk, Khabarovsk and other Siberian towns, where they continue to exist to this day. In 1925, the first group of nineteen students belonging to different northern nationalities were sent to study at Leningrad State University (Forsyth 1992, 245). A group of young people from the lower Amur was sent to Leningrad as early as 1926.

In 1930, the Institute of Peoples of the North was founded in Leningrad to prepare native teachers from Siberia. The institute was run in its original form until 1941. The future native teachers also had an opportunity to receive an education at the Northern Department of the Herzen Pedagogical Institute, created in 1929–1930 also in Leningrad. In 1948, the Institute of Peoples of the North became part of the Herzen Pedagogical Institute, to which it still belongs today. As one can see, Leningrad became the educational center for the peoples of Siberia and Far East.

The Committee of the North intended that eventually all primary education would be carried out in native languages (Alpatov 2000; Grenoble 2003; Vachtin 2001). The Unified Northern Alphabet based on Latin and developed by Jakov Koškin (Al'kor) was introduced in 1931 as a means of writing all the languages of the North. On the basis of this standard alphabet the orthography for the Amur dialect of Nivkh was created in 1931. Though the Amur and Sakhalin dialects differ essentially from each other, no alphabets were invented for the Sakhalin dialects at that time.

After returning from Sakhalin to Leningrad, Krejnovič began to lecture on Nivkh in the Institute of Peoples of the North. One of Krejnovič's students, K. Kando, became the founding editor of the first Nivkh newspaper *Nivkhgu Meker Qlaj-Dif* ('Nivkh Truth'). In 1932, Krejnovič published his first book on Nivkh numerals and the first Nivkh textbook *Čuz dif* 'New Word'. Moreover, Krejnovič translated into Nivkh two readers, two textbooks on mathematics, several booklets about the October Revolution, and two stories by Puškin.

Starting in 1932, courses for primary school teachers were organized in the pedagogical colleges of Nikolayevsk-na-Amure and Yužno-Sakhalinsk on Sakhalin Island. By 1934 primary education had been enforced for all native children, with thirteen Nivkh schools in the Amur area and seven in Sakhalin for the Nivkhs and Evenkis. In order to help the teachers, a guide for learning the Nivkh alphabet was prepared. 500 copies of a new newspaper, *Kolkhoznyj put* ('The Way of the Collective Farm') were distributed in Nivkh settlements. In 1936, a new textbook *Nivkh bitvy* ('The Nivkh Book') was published.

The problems faced in education at that time were connected with the fact that Nivkh children had to cope with learning not only to read and write their native language, using the Latin alphabet, but also to read and write Russian in the Cyrillic alphabet. For that reason it was decreed in 1937 that the languages of the Northern peoples, including Nivkh, must henceforth be written in Cyrillic and the standard Latin alphabet was abandoned. In the same year Krejnovič presented a project for a new alphabet, in which he tried to take into account all of Nivkh phonological features. However, this alphabet was left unused, no textbooks were published and the entire school curriculum was switched to Russian. Teaching in Nivkh stopped

and this was probably a decisive moment in the fate of the language. Nivkh children who studied in Russian boarding schools started to forget their native language.

After a long break in teaching in Nivkh, a new textbook in the Amur dialect was prepared by Valentina M. Savel'jeva, E. Dechal' and Čuner Taksami in 1953. The authors created a new alphabet that unlike Krejnovič's was not so accurate with respect to the Nivkh phonological system. The new textbook was published, but nevertheless not used in Nivkh schools.

In 1960s, an active process of massive Russification of the indigenous peoples of the North was set in motion. Children were separated from their families and sent to Russian boarding schools in places far away from their home settlements. Instruction was provided only in Russian, the schoolchildren were supposed to speak only Russian and were punished for using their native language. Though parents were discouraged from using Nivkh at home, during vacations the language was nevertheless somehow transmitted to the children. Unfortunately it had no practical value upon their return to school. The children almost completely lost contact with their language background. As a result, the language situation in the area has completely changed.

In the late 1970s, the issue of developing alphabets for the peoples of the North was raised again. With respect to Nivkh, Galina Otajna, Marija Puchta, Vladimir Sangi, and Vladimir Panfilov participated in this debate. In 1979, two new alphabets for the Amur and East Sakhalin dialect were adopted, and at the beginning of the 1980s two new textbooks were published by Galina Otajna and Vladimir Sangi for the East Sakhalin dialect and by Čuner Taksami, Marija Puchta and Aleksandra Vingun for the Amur dialect. Stories in Nivkh were written by Vladimir Sangi, who also translated some texts by Pushkin. In 2013, the author finished his longterm project and published the epic of the Sakhalin Nivkh.

Systematic teaching in two Nivkh schools started in 1981–1982 up to the third grade. In Nekrasovka, which is located in the north-western part of Sakhalin, teaching takes place in the Amur dialect, whereas in Nogliki in the north-eastern part of the island teaching is in the East Sakhalin dialect. Due to the extreme dispersion of the native population in the Amur estuary, there are no schools offering Nivkh in that area. Additional readers were published in both dialects by Vladimir Sangi, Galina Otajna, Čuner Taksami, Tamara Paklina, Marija Puchta, Ljudmila Gašilova, and Svetlana Polet'jeva.

However, teaching immediately ran into difficulties which it still faces today. All the children who enter the school speak Russian and not Nivkh as their first language. Nivkh is the language that they are supposed to learn at school from the very beginning as a foreign language, which requires a significant change in teaching methodology and materials. Moreover, primary school remains the only place where the children have access to the language, since the community has switched almost completely to Russian.

After a few years, local teachers came to the conclusion that native-language instruction should begin already in kindergartens. Such preparatory teaching was organized in 1984 in three kindergartens in the Nogliki, Tymovsk and Okha regions.

The results were quite positive and in general the motivation for studying Nivkh is increasing.

Another educational problem is that the teachers themselves do not have a full command of Nivkh. Many of them know the language passively and, like their own students, they use it only in the school context. They often experience difficulties in maintaining a conversation with fully competent speakers, and sometimes they even feel ashamed of the level of their knowledge of Nivkh.

The language instruction is mainly aimed at the study of Nivkh vocabulary and its results are not very impressive—after completing the course, children are capable at most of reading the texts from the primers. Nevertheless, the general attitude to the teaching of Nivkh remains positive, because no one actually expects the children to learn the language at school. As it stands, for the Nivkh population such teaching performs a mostly symbolic function, keeping the ethnic identity alive and proving that something is being done to preserve and maintain the language (cf. Vachtin 2001, 313–314; Baranova and Maslinskij 2008, 156–157).

After graduating from school, young Nivkh people may continue to study their native language and traditional culture in the Technological Lyceum of Handicrafts of the Peoples of the North in Poronajsk, which was established fifteen years ago by the initiative of the Association of Peoples of the North. At the post-graduate level, the Institute of the Peoples of the North (formerly the Northern Department) of the Russian State Herzen Pedagogical University in St. Petersburg is the only Institute in Russia that has a program for training specialists in Nivkh language, culture and pedagogy.

5 The Study of the Language

Nivkh is a language isolate which is generally classified as Paleosiberian (or Paleo-Asiatic) along with some other languages of Siberia and the Far East, an umbrella term for a group of languages without any known genetic affinity.

Within the Nivkh language, four dialects are distinguished: the Amur, East Sakhalin, North Sakhalin and South Sakhalin dialects. There is a major divide between the Amur dialect on the continent and the East Sakhalin dialect, which are substantially different in phonology, grammar, and lexicon, and mutual intelligibility is claimed to be very limited by native speakers. The North Sakhalin dialect is intermediate between these two, but closer to the Amur variety. The almost extinct South Sakhalin (Poronajsk) dialect is closer to the East Sakhalin dialect. In many respects, the Sakhalin dialects are more archaic than the Amur dialect.

The first reliable information on the material and spiritual culture of Nivkhs became available at the end of the 19th century, when Grube published the data collected by von Schrenk and von Glehn during their expedition to the Amur region organized by the Russian Imperial Academy of Sciences in 1854–1856. The most extensive corpus of Nivkh folklore was recorded at the end of the 19th century by the Sakhalin political exiles Lev Šternberg and Bronislaw Piłsudski.

Later, research on the Nivkh language was continued around the world by Russian, European, Japanese, American and native linguists. This academic research in general did not have much impact on language maintenance. However, the Russian-Nivkh (published in 1965) and Nivkh-Russian (published in 1970) dictionaries compiled by Valentina Savel'jeva and Čuner Taksami on the basis of the Amur dialect and the dictionary for the East Sakhalin dialect published by Ljudmila Gašilova and Vladimir Sangi in 2003, as well as the two volumes of Nivkh grammar (1962, 1965) prepared by Vladimir Panfilov are widely used for educational purposes in the Institute of the Peoples of the North.

6 Language Situation

The status of one or another language is regulated in Russia by the Law on the Languages of the People of the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic, ratified by the Supreme Soviet of the USSR in 1991 and re-ratified with minor changes in 1993 by the Russian Federation. Under this law, Nivkh does not have any official status. The language is not standardized and exists only in its dialect forms.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the language situation in the area of the Nivkh territory was characterized by an active multilingualism due to various sociocultural reasons such as joint residence, common forms of economic activities, mixed marriages, etc. (cf. Gruzdeva 1996). The appearance of the Russians and the Japanese did not at first produce any serious changes in terms of language. A general rule that characterized the contacts between the native people and the immigrants was communication in the language of the latter, i.e. either in Russian or in Japanese. The language situation started to change after the Russian revolution of October 1917.

The number of Nivkh people over the last century has remained relatively stable in spite of recurring population reductions due to diseases and repressions. According to the first all-Russian general census of 1897, there were 6,194 Nivkhs in Russia (1,969 on Sakhalin Island), whereas the last census of 2010 gives the number of ethnic Nivkhs as 4,652 (2,290 on Sakhalin Island) (FSGS 2010).

However, the number of Nivkh speakers has been continually decreasing. In 1897, all Nivkhs gave Nivkh as their mother tongue and most of them were monolingual (de Graaf and Hidetoshi 2013, 58). According to the second census organized already in the Soviet era in 1926, 99.5 % of Nivkhs claimed the Nivkh language to be their mother tongue. Since then, due to the political and socioeconomic factors discussed above the percentage of Nivkh speakers began to decline. In 1959, 77.1 % of the Nivkh population declared themselves to be native speakers of Nivkh. For the majority of the other Nivkhs, Russian became the first language. In fact, most of the Nivkhs at that time were already bilingual, though competence in Russian varied greatly from speaker to speaker (Taksami 1959, 22).

The first language sociological inspection that was carried out in the Nogliki school in 1974 demonstrates that for communication with children, 29.7 % of Nivkh parents used only Russian, and 9.9 % only Nivkh, whereas 60.3 % used both Russian

and Nivkh depending on the situation. After five years, the number of parents communicating with children only in Nivkh fell to 3.1 % (Sangi 1988, 203).

The development of the language's sociological situation between 1970 and 1979 on Sakhalin is presented in (Vysokov 1985), cf. also (de Graaf 1992). In that period the number of Nivkh speakers decreased from 1,021 to 597 (by 41.5 %), whereas the number of Russian speakers increased from 1,094 to 1,455 (by 33 %). The number of Nivkh people possessing a good command of both languages also decreased from 47.7 to 34.9 %. In 1979, 37.4 % of the Sakhalin Nivkh population had a good command of Nivkh, whereas practically all of them (97.3 %) had a good command of Russian. In addition, 54 persons (2.6 %) were monolingual in Nivkh and 1,336 (65.1 %) were monolingual in Russian.

In 1989, a selective language sociological survey based on the method presented in particular in Vachtin (1991), was carried out in Nogliki on Sakhalin Island. At that time the population of the town was about 11,000 people, of whom approximately 800 people were Nivkhs. The survey embraced around 40 % of the Nivkh population (315 persons). Four Nivkh experts, who knew the other native inhabitants of the town, evaluated their competence in Nivkh according to the following scale:

1. a person speaks the language fluently, knows the 'old' language and folklore;
2. a person speaks the language fluently but can speak (or prefers to speak) another language (also fluently);
3. a person speaks the language fluently with minor mistakes;
4. a person speaks the language with serious mistakes;
5. a person understands the language, but cannot speak it;
6. a person understands some phrases and the general content of conversation;
7. a person does not know the language.

Moreover, the source of language acquisition (family, school, work) was taken into account. This factor corrected the final values from 0.5 to 2 grades. The results of the survey, which were published in Gruzdeva and Leonova (1990) are represented in Table 1.

As one can see, the Nivkh proficiency continuum is determined principally by age. The table shows that at that time, 74 persons (the youngest were 40 years old; now they are 64 years old), i.e. 23.8 %, spoke Nivkh fluently (received a grade of 3 or higher). For all of them Nivkh was a native language acquired at home. These figures correlate with the 1989 census data according to which 23.3 % (1,090 persons) of the Nivkh population regarded Nivkh as a mother tongue. As seen from the table, 93 persons (almost exclusively under 45, now they are 69 years old), i.e. 29.5 %, did not know the language at all (received a grade of 7). This generation either lost the language or was unable to learn it, because the language of the family was Russian. More than half of the group investigated (53.3 %) has learned the obsolescing language imperfectly and has only a partial knowledge of Nivkh.

The Russian census of 2002 showed a dramatic decrease in the number of speakers: only 9.2 % of the Nivkh population considered Nivkh to be their mother tongue. This comprised 477 persons, half as many as 13 years before. According to the results of

Table 1 Competence in Nivkh (Nogliki 1989)

	pre 1925	1925–1929	1930–1934	1935–1939	1940–1944	1945–1949	1950–1954	1955–1959	1960–1964	1965–1969	1970–1974	Total	
													%
1.0	4											4	1.3
1.5	7	6										13	4.1
2.0	1	6	4	3	2							16	5.1
2.5	4	6	6	7	2	2						27	8.6
3.0		1	2	6	3	2						14	4.4
3.5			1		6	3	3	1				14	4.4
4.0			1	1	5	4	10	2		1		24	7.6
4.5	2				1	2	2	1	1			9	2.9
5.0	2				3	5	8	7	5	1	4	35	11.1
5.5						3		3		2	4	12	3.8
6.0							8	5	7	4	14	38	12.1
6.5	1					2	4	2	1	3	3	16	5.1
7.0				1		6	17	32	18	19		93	29.5
Total	21	19	14	18	22	29	52	53	32	30	25	315	100.0

the last Russian census (2010) the number of speakers has radically declined further and comprises only 198 persons (FSGS 2010).

At present, all the Nivkh people who remember their native language are bilingual and speak fluent Russian as well. Knowledge of Nivkh remains at best a passive retention, whose use is restricted to rare occasions of communication among the remaining native speakers. Moreover, Nivkh has already gone through an intermediate stage of bilingualism since the Nivkh community has almost totally switched to Russian. The language is not transmitted to the younger generation, which will inevitably result in an even greater decline in the total number of speakers. Nivkh is therefore to be classified as a highly endangered (moribund) language (Kibrik 1991; Vachtin 2001).

Nivkh displays typical linguistic attributes of language attrition, i.e. a restriction in language use and a break in the linguistic tradition (cf. Andersen 1982, 87–92). The changes that occur in the language can be traced on different linguistic levels and amount to two interacting processes.

On the one hand, one can observe the ongoing process of borrowing of Russian lexical items and grammatical features into the Nivkh system by native speakers. For instance, the speech of modern speakers demonstrates all three types of phenomena which typically appear in the lexical systems of contacting languages: (i) code-switching, i.e. switching from one language to another within the same conversation, (ii) code-mixing, i.e. using in the same phrase structural elements

from different languages, which is sometimes called ‘hybridization’ of languages, (iii) lexical borrowings, i.e. the adaptation of lexical material to the phonological, morphological and syntactic patterns of the recipient language (Gruzdeva 2000, 2010).

On the other hand, in Nivkh, there is attested a whole set of linguistic phenomena, such as an impoverishment of the lexicon, elimination of analytical forms, reductions in the system of pronouns and numerals, disappearance of certain grammatical markers, etc., that can hardly be explained in terms of borrowing or interference since they appear to have no direct analogues in the dominant Russian language. These internally induced linguistic changes are evidently due to language loss currently occurring at a rapid pace. The language decay is most prominently apparent in the cardinal numerals, whose extremely elaborated system has almost completely collapsed. Nivkh follows the same path as other endangered languages, where language obsolescence results in a general reduction and simplification of the lexicon and grammatical system (cf. Gruzdeva 2002).

However, the obsolescence of Nivkh does not show so much in Russian interference or language attrition proper as in the total domination of Russian in everyday communication. The total switch to Russian is the main factor leading to disuse and gradual death of Nivkh.

7 Conclusion

The obsolescence of Nivkh may be attributed to the whole set of political and socio-economic factors that are typically relevant for the decay of endangered languages (cf. e.g. Dorian 1982, 44–48; Crystal 2000; de Graaf 1992; Vachtin 2001). On the one hand, the Nivkhs’ physical wellbeing was directly threatened by an aggressive influx of Russian speakers, political repression, imported diseases and alcohol. On the other hand, for more than a century the Nivkhs have been living under increasing pressure from the Russian culture and language that became dominant as a result of demographic submersion, political, social and economic power. The process of cultural assimilation was promoted by industrial exploitation of the native lands and fishing grounds leading to the loss of Nivkh traditional occupations, by relocating the indigenous people from native settlements to communities with a mixed population, where it was practically impossible to preserve the integrity of cultural and linguistic traditions, and by the active government policy of educating and influencing the indigenous peoples, especially through Russian boarding-schools.

Nowadays, many Nivkh people are actively involved in the restoration of their cultural traditions, and the sense of a cultural identity for the community is constantly on the rise (cf. e.g. de Graaf and Hidetoshi 2004; Suljandziga et al. 2003). The traditional way of life is being revived and festivals in which Nivkhs perform music, dance, and poetry are organized quite regularly. Craftsmen and women are engaged in manufacturing of souvenirs, wood carvings, embroidery, national ornaments, and sewing the Nivkh national dress. The national ensembles *Larš* (‘Wave’), *Pila Ken*

(‘Big Sun’), *Ari La Mif* (‘Northern Wind Earth’) and others have been established on Sakhalin and are popular among young people. In Nekrasovka, a monthly Nivkh-Russian newspaper *Nivkh Dif* (‘Nivkh Word’) has been published since 1990, and is available on the internet. There is no doubt that Nivkh culture will be preserved and maintained in the years to come.

However, despite a general increase in cultural awareness among Nivkhs, as well as growing sponsorship for implementing social and cultural projects, the language situation looks rather pessimistic. With each year the most competent speakers are lost and this process is irreversible. In spite of the long history (more than twenty years now) of teaching the Nivkh language at school, the younger generation is not able to speak the language at all. Nonetheless, it is probably early to talk about the final death of Nivkh in the near future, since there are still plenty of Nivkh people who would like to keep and even improve their knowledge of their native language. For instance, in Nogliki and Nekrasovka, Nivkh women of different ages regularly gather together and try to communicate in Nivkh. It is difficult to evaluate the linguistic outcome of these meetings, but the interest in preserving the language is obvious.

Furthermore, the Center for Preservation and Development of Traditional Culture of Indigenous Peoples of the North, which is called *Kykhkykh* (‘Swan’) and is located in the settlement of Nekrasovka, promotes Nivkh language and culture by making video recordings of Nivkh speakers, by publishing booklets and teaching materials and by organizing language courses in Nivkh for younger people (cf. de Graaf and Hidetoshi 2013, 62). Another example of active involvement in the restoration of Nivkh cultural and linguistic heritage is the Nogliki regional library, which since 2006 published Nivkh stories recorded from local speakers and illustrated by Nivkh children.

These and other initiatives give hope that as long as positive attitudes and initiatives towards preserving Nivkh will hold on, the language will stay alive in one form or another.

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Parliamentary Structures and Their Impact on Empowering Minority Language Communities

Heiko F. Marten

Abstract This chapter analyses the impact of political decentralization in a state on the position of ethnic and linguistic minorities, in particular with regard to the role of parliamentary assemblies in the political system. It relates a number of typical functions of parliaments to the specific needs of minorities and their languages. The most important of these functions are the representation of the minority and responsiveness to the minority's needs. The chapter then discusses six examples from the European Union (and Norway) which prototypically represent different types of parliamentary decentralization: the ethnically defined Sameting in Norway and its importance for the Sámi population, the Scottish Parliament and its role for speakers of Scottish Gaelic, the German regional parliaments of the Länder of Schleswig-Holstein and Saxony and their impact on the Frisian and Sorbian minorities respectively, the autonomy of predominantly German-speaking South Tyrol within the Italian state, and finally the situation of the speakers of Latgalian in Latvia, where a decentralized parliament is missing. The chapter also makes suggestions on comparisons of these situations with minorities in Russia. It finally argues that political decentralization may indeed empower minorities to gain a greater voice in their states, even if much ultimately depends on individual factors in each situation and the attitudes by the majority population and the political center.

Keywords Decentralization · Parliaments · Scottish Gaelic · Sámi · South Tyrol · Latgalian · Minorities in Germany

1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the relationship between political decentralization and language maintenance efforts. By decentralization, I shall mean the devolution of power to a lower level within a decision-making hierarchy. In practice, this usually means that central authorities share their purviews with institutions which operate at a

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regional or local level defined by territorial boundaries. However, there are also cases where decentralized political units are shaped to meet the needs of a certain (ethnic or linguistic) group regardless of their place of residence within the limits of state borders. From the point of view of political structures and constitutional provisions, devolution of power may take the shape of one of several types of autonomy or of federalism (cf. Ackrén 2005). Although these are fundamentally different concepts from a perspective of law and of political rights, there are also views which regard these as part of a continuum of political structures, at least as regards practical implications for decentralized decision-making and of agency for regional communities (cf. Arzoz 2009). For the purpose of this chapter, this distinction will therefore only play a marginal role—what I will focus on is the practical effect on language policy and maintenance and the voice of linguistic and cultural minorities in a political system.

One of the most important players in this power-sharing are decentralized parliamentary institutions. Therefore the chapter will start by discussing several functions of parliaments and their impact on the participation of linguistic minorities in decision-making processes. In this way, the topic is at the heart of a number of related concepts within the literature on minority language policy, such as the empowerment of minorities. Fishman (2001), for instance, argues that the aim for minority language speakers should be to reach the same high level within the power hierarchy that speakers of majority languages have, i.e. that a minority language can be used in high-prestige functions within mainstream society. Within the structure of this book, this chapter therefore discusses a number of “classical” cases of linguistic minorities from the European Union (and Norway) as examples of good and bad practices which are juxtaposed with several minority situations in Russia and which may thereby help to understand ways through which minority language groups in Russia and elsewhere may strive for more influence in their specific situations.

Ways to empower linguistic minorities through parliamentary decentralization in the sense of this chapter can take various forms. These depend on the structures and traditions in a political entity, and on the characteristics of a minority group such as its size, its area of settlement and issues of identity in relation to ethnicity and the state. In order to give a very broad overview of the spectrum of shapes which these processes may take, I have chosen a number of prototypical and well-discussed examples of participation of linguistic minorities (Fig. 1) which are summarized very briefly and in a way which, within the limits of this chapter, necessarily reduces the complexity of the individual situations. Obviously, there would also be many other examples to mention which will not be discussed here, such as the Spanish autonomous regions since the death of Franco (see also Arzoz’ chapter “[The Impact of Language Policy on Language Revitalization](#)” in this volume) or Quebec. Nonetheless, the examples chosen are representative for a number of ways of empowering linguistic minorities through parliaments. At the same time, they are sufficiently unambiguous to allow concentrating on the main characteristics of each situation. In this it is of vital importance to keep in mind that any type of empowerment of a minority essentially depends on how well democratic structures function and on how participative values are established in society, on the efficiency of the legal system, and ultimately on the



Fig. 1 Map showing the current geographic core areas of the languages discussed in the present chapter

degree to which the majority population or at least parts of it are ready to respect the right to be different and to share power with a minority. In an authoritarian state, it is by far more difficult for *de jure* decentralization, where it exists, to have an impact, depending on the degree to which attitudes which are opposed to central power may be raised. In any case, even where structures are less favorable, decentralized parliaments provide an opportunity as forums of discussion which may give a certain voice to speakers of minority languages, even where they play no real role in decision-making.

2 Parliaments and Languages—Functions and Roles

At the core of this chapter's topic lies the question of what actually counts as a parliament. The functions of parliamentary bodies may differ considerably, and it is not always possible to draw a clear line between parliaments and other types of institutions such as administrative councils. From the point of view of minority language policy and the representation of minority language speakers, I shall mean by "parliament" any assembly which represents a portion of society in order to take a stand on laws and other regulations, on funding of public activities, and to discuss other relevant issues of distributing power and resources within the framework of a certain political structure. This power has to be guaranteed by constitutional or other public legal provisions. What is not included in this perception are private organizations which cannot claim to represent the entire population according to certain regional or other criteria. On these grounds, lobbying groups, activist institutions, clubs and their assemblies are not counted as parliaments since they do not represent the total of (a clearly defined specific subset of) the population based on a legal provision, but have a clear aim of promoting particular interests based only on the unilateral decision of a certain spectrum of the population—even if they in practice may, for instance, act as the main representative of a minority group. It is also crucial that parliamentary institutions have to be distinguished from institutions of the executive, i.e. they are not institutions whose primary task is to actively carry out the decisions taken. It is, however, too easy to assign parliamentary status only to those organizations which have legislative power. First, there are institutions such as the Sameting in Norway which may count as parliamentary and which lack this power, and second it would reduce the functions of parliaments to legislation and leave out other important aspects which will be discussed below.

In the context of the multitude of functions which a parliament as it is understood in this chapter may have, Lord Hope of Craighead (1998) distinguishes two fundamental dichotomies. The first parliamentary function is exactly the legislative question mentioned above—or, in his words, whether a parliament is lawmaking or not. He states that prototypical parliaments certainly are lawmaking. However, if the *raison d'être* of a parliamentary institution is rather to be a representative assembly of a group of the population, it may be limited in its legislative authority. Lord Hope of Craighead's second dichotomy is the question of whether a parliament is sovereign

or not. Sovereignty implies that there is no higher-level institution which sets limits to the parliament's functions and decisions. Sovereign parliaments are thus usually the parliaments of sovereign states, whereas regional or local parliaments which have to stick to the constitutional framework of the entire political entity (i.e. the nation-state in most cases) are typical examples of non-sovereign parliaments. Most decentralized parliamentary bodies are therefore non-sovereign, even though there are more unclear cases on a continuum of sovereignty such as the parliaments of the German *Länder* (i.e. federal states) which have voluntarily agreed to delegate parts of their authority to the national parliament of Germany, the Bundestag.

Bearing these distinctions in mind, let us take a look at other classifications of typical functions which have been identified in the analysis of the status and the tasks of parliamentary bodies as well as in how they work in practice (cf. Marten 2009, 38–48 for a more detailed discussion). Hague and Harrop (2001) identify the following functions as constitutive of parliamentary institutions: representation, deliberation/debating, legislation, authorizing expenditures, and the making and scrutinizing of governments. Broderstad (1995), in the context of the Norwegian Sameting, discusses three core functions of parliaments. First, parliaments speak on behalf of the various groups within the political entity. Second, they are representative, i.e. they reflect the structure of the population according to certain criteria such as age, class, gender, or language. Third, they are responsive to wishes and demands of the population and promote these at different layers of decision-making through debates, legislation, funding of projects, and electing a government. Whereas Broderstad's first two functions are generally in line with the Hague and Harrop function of representation, responsiveness is closely related to what has also been labeled the "canalizing of grievances" (Winetrobe 2001, 181).

Turan (1994, 105–108) establishes a similar distinction in the specific context of the national Parliament of Turkey. As Turan notes, one focus of representation lies in the characteristics of a population and how these are reflected in a legislature. Patterns in the population (should) translate into patterns in the parliament, e.g. concerning ethnic or racial groups, religion, sex and age distributions, even though Turan also notes that it is impossible to represent all characteristics in an elected body and that a distinction between (more) relevant and (more) irrelevant characteristics is needed. It is obvious that, in the context of ethnic and linguistic minorities, language questions, ethnicity, and other features important to minorities or regional groups whose identities are strongly characterized by being different from the majority are among the most relevant issues. On the responsive side of a legislature, Turan identifies four dimensions: policy, service, allocation, and symbolism. In this classification, the dimensions of policy, service and allocation broadly correspond to the Hague and Harrop functions of legislation, expenditure, and government. Symbolic responsiveness, in contrast, focuses on attitudes towards the legislature, rather than on the behavior of the legislators.

These parliamentary functions are all of potential relevance for minority language speakers in decentralized contexts. May (2001, 146) explicitly discusses parliaments and their dominant position as the centers of pluralist policymaking in modern statehood in their relation to linguistic minorities. In order to enable linguistic minorities

to participate adequately in power structures, they should have distinct rights in the form of self-government or special representation. The role of parliaments in this process includes the two functions of legitimizing a language through official legislation, and of institutionalizing it through its regular use in official bodies. In this terminology, legitimization is similar to the idea of the responsiveness of a parliament, e.g. with regard to the development of language policy and legislation as the basis of policymaking. The authorization of expenditure is directly connected to the provision of services and the allocation of means for the funding of language-planning projects. From Hague and Harrop's list of functions of parliaments, the making and scrutinizing of governments, however, are potentially of the least practical relevance for minority language speakers: a considerable degree of strength is needed to directly influence the formation of a government and minority language speakers usually lack this, even though minority language speakers may at least play a certain role in specific contexts of electing and controlling a government.

May's concept of institutionalization may be seen as part of representation. The ultimate aim, according to May (2001), is that language varieties different from the dominating one will become "normalized", i.e. taken for granted in any context. This includes parliament-internal communication and the external communication between parliaments and the citizens, as well as between parliaments and other political institutions. In this sense, the representation and the deliberation of a linguistic minority do not only guarantee the inclusion of the speakers of that minority in decision-making processes. There is also a highly symbolic value in the presence of multilingualism as a topic of discussion or in parliamentary multilingualism itself. In this way, a parliament may bridge the abstract concept of a political unit and the needs of individuals. Only if the population (or a subset of the population such as an ethnic or linguistic minority) feels genuinely represented in an institution such as a parliament can this parliament and the political entity (usually the state, the region or similar) which it stands for be positively connoted in the eyes of the population (group). Representation of minority issues at such a prominent position in the political system as a parliament thus guarantees a certain degree of awareness of minority issues and at the same time may lead to positive attitudes among the minority group towards the political system.

Table 1 summarizes the parliamentary functions as they have been identified by the authors discussed. We will return to these functions in the final section of this chapter.

The hopes for the empowerment of minority language speakers in relation to political decentralization are therefore the following: first, decentralization can help to bring representation closer to the minority population. It is by far more likely that a minority will be represented in a decentralized body in a way that it will get a voice and agency in political issues than in a national parliament which usually represents many more people and their needs. On the symbolic side, a region may through a decentralized parliament demonstrate its readiness to display a minority as one of its unique selling points. The institutionalized use of a minority language within a parliamentary body is a particularly strong symbol in this. In a national parliament, the symbolic aspect of such a representation would arguably even be stronger, but

Table 1 Categories of parliamentary functions with relevance to minority languages

Category I	Category II	Author(s)
Representation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speaking on behalf of the population • Pattern of the population 	Responsiveness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy/legislation • Service • Allocation/expenditure • Symbolic • Deliberation/debate • Making/scrutinizing governments 	Hague and Harrop; Broderstad; Turan; Winetrobe
Legitimizing functions	Institutionalizing functions	May
Lawmaking	Non-lawmaking	Lord Hope of Craighead
Sovereign	Non-sovereign	Lord Hope of Craighead

the likelihood of such symbolic steps being taken is greater in a parliament which speaks for a smaller unit.

Second, a decentralized parliament is also considerably more likely to be responsive to the needs and wishes of a linguistic minority and thereby take steps towards its legitimization. Policies (and legislation if it has the power to enact such) may much more easily be addressed to an ethnic or linguistic minority if it is widely perceived as an important constituent of a smaller regional unit than in an all-encompassing national parliament. Ways of negotiation are shorter, voices are more easily heard. The same applies to the provision of services and the allocation of financial means. Similarly, it is also more likely that debates take place in accordance with demands by a minority group if its members constitute a visible group in a decentralized assembly than in a central parliamentary body where a minority may have only very few representatives, if it is represented at all. Whether this also refers to influence on the composition of the government, depends again on the level to which a decentralized parliament has the power to elect an executive. Where that is the case, however, it is also much more likely that a government responds to the wishes of a minority group or that a member of the minority community might even have an outstanding position within that government.

With that said, it should also be mentioned that the disadvantage of a decentralized parliament may be that its influence is usually less far-reaching than that of a central institution. If a national parliament, even if that might be more unlikely, takes up a minority issue and passes a new policy or even a law, such steps are by far more influential. The same applies to expenditure and the budget—national governments tend to have considerably higher amounts of expenditure available than regional or other decentralized bodies.

In summary it is thus legitimate to conclude that representation (which as a concept is closely related to institutionalization) and responsiveness (and with it legitimization) are the two main strands of parliamentary functions and that the decentralization

of these functions may imply noteworthy benefits for a linguistic minority. In particular this takes place through bridging gaps between a minority group and levels of power, both with regard to representation and to responsiveness. These main categories may take different shapes and focus on different aspects in each individual case. Adequate representation in this is not only crucial for reflecting the population in balanced decision-making, it is also highly symbolic for minority language speakers. Through its language policy and planning potential, parliaments are responsive to the wishes of a linguistic or ethnic minority and enable it to participate in decision-making, in particular with regard to legislation and the distribution of means.

3 Prototypical Examples of Regionalism and Their Impact on Minority Languages

The following section provides a short overview of examples where the presence of representatives of linguistic minorities in decentralized parliamentary contexts have had various degrees of impact on policymaking and ultimately the well-being of the minority language in question. The following examples will refer to the main features of each situation only and will be briefly evaluated in terms of the concepts of representation and responsiveness (including their sub-functions) as identified in the previous chapter.

3.1 The Sameting in Norway—A Minority Assembly Paving the Way for New Policies

The Norwegian Sámi Parliament, the Sameting,¹ is an example of a parliamentary, democratically elected representative body for a minority population only, based on the ethnic self-assignment of the Sámi population regardless of their place of residence within the borders of Norway. Similar institutions exist for the Sámi populations in Finland and Sweden. It is as such a rather unusual case of parliamentary decentralization. In contrast to all other examples given here, the Sameting's electorate is not determined on a territorial basis but by self-assigned ethnicity. The Sameting is elected by universal suffrage of the entire Sámi population in Norway. Its inauguration in 1989 ended a decade-long political struggle for greater recognition by Sámi activists which had ultimately resulted—in Sámi terms—in mass protests against the destruction of large parts of traditional Sámi lands by the damming of the Alta river in northern Norway. The Sameting has since then been a core player in Sámi politics. It has been characterized as having two main functions (Sara 2002)—on the one hand it is the center of Sámi administration, and on the other hand it enables

¹ See <http://www.samediggi.no>.

political representation of the Sámi population in Norway based on a mandate by legislation and through the people.

In this model of decentralization, the minority population is very close to the public parliamentary debate of e.g. language policy issues. However, the direct implications of the Sameting's decisions are by far less clear. Regarding language, the Sameting's most important success took place already a few years after its establishment, when it exerted a substantial degree of influence in the debates which led to the adoption of the Sámi Language Act by the Norwegian parliament in 1991.

The Sameting is highly representative of the Sámi population—more than any other parliamentary body could be. This is at the same time linked to the highly symbolic constant use of North Sámi (and less frequently of the two other main Sámi languages in Norway, Lule Sámi and South Sámi) in the Sameting. Regarding responsiveness, the Sameting actively debates all issues, as its statutes define, which it considers to be of importance to the Sámi people. Furthermore, through its administrative function of deciding on which services to offer and on expenditures, it directly contributes to shaping Sámi policies. However, legislation is strictly limited to the Norwegian Parliament, and any further-reaching steps on Sámi issues have to be negotiated with central authorities. The same applies to the government—the Sameting has no say on the composition of the Norwegian government, and can only elect its own leaders which are then entitled to act on behalf of the Sámi population.

The processes which resulted in the language law, as well as other lawmaking procedures were strongly influenced by decision-making on the Sámi position within the Sámi community, followed by negotiations with the Norwegian government. In this sense, there is a strong legal and moral support for Sámi issues through the establishment of the Sameting. Within mainstream Norwegian society, most important political players support the status quo (cf. Marten 2007). In this it is obviously also of help that Norway has one of the highest per capita GNPs of the world.

Yet, in spite of the success of the Sameting, even the wellbeing of the situation of the Sámi in Norway is contested. The obvious disadvantage of this model is that the Sameting has only limited power in terms of lawmaking. After all, it is highly dependent on central structures when it comes to implementing its decisions. A lot of its political success has depended on the general willingness of the Norwegian government and a far-reaching acceptance among the Norwegian mainstream of the Sámi people's right to equality. Considerable restrictions on Sámi decision-making, however, are still grounded in the constitutional limits of the Sameting's competence. These restrictions apply even to certain language issues, even though language policy generally belongs to the matters which have been assigned to the Sameting's purview. Regarding the lack of Sámi signage in specific places such as at the highly symbolic territorial markers of airports or harbors, for instance, the Sameting can only complain, but it does not have any authority to change reality and thus ultimately depends on the willingness of mainstream institutions. Another important issue in which the restrictions on the authority of the Norwegian Sameting have regularly been felt are land rights and the negotiations in the land right council in the county of Finnmark in northern Norway, the region with the highest proportion of Sámi in Norway and which includes the largest parts of the Norwegian Sámi administrative

area. The board of the Finnmark land right council consists of three members elected by the Sameting, and three members elected by the County Council of Finnmark. It thereby connects the principles of ethnicity and of territoriality and establishes a second important player in what can be labeled as a dual system. The land right council is entitled to make ultimate decisions on such important issues as land use and it may also overrule decisions taken by the Sameting, even though this requires the support of at least one of the board members elected by the Sameting.

In summary, however, the model of the Norwegian Sameting shows that a democratically elected minority-only parliament can gain a lot of functions and use these successfully for shaping policies in favor of the minority and its language. This is based both on the solid legal basis on which it operates and on the willingness of the mainstream population to decentralize such rights, but also on members of the minority group who have actively seized the political opportunities provided. Therefore, it can be argued that Sámi democracy in Norway today is among the best-established examples of democratic influence of minorities—but with clear limits including several highly symbolic and controversial topics.

3.2 The Scottish Parliament—Gaelic Embraced as a Distinctive Marker of Regional Identity

The Scottish Parliament as a territorial regional institution within the United Kingdom is another example of how a new parliamentary institution can give momentum to minority language policy and contribute to giving a voice to its speakers. As a decentralized parliamentary authority with legislative competence, it has helped Gaelic speakers in Scotland to receive far more attention in mainstream politics than was previously the case in the centralized Westminster parliament. Similarly to the Sameting, also the establishment of the Scottish Parliament generated new policies which resulted in a language law after several years of negotiations—the Scottish Gaelic Language Act of 2005 (cf. McLeod 2006; Marten 2009, for the deliberations in the process of discussing and passing this Act).

The Scottish Parliament thereby also offers a forum for discussion. Representation of Gaelic speakers is much higher than in the Westminster Parliament, but until today only very few Gaelic speakers have been elected even to the Scottish Parliament. This is not surprising when one considers the low percentage of Gaelic speakers in the population of Scotland, amounting to less than 2%. One of the aspects which were largely mentioned in this process was the symbolic use of Gaelic in the Scottish Parliament. On the responsiveness side, the impact on policy and even legislation has been enormous. The entire new Gaelic policy has been based on the fact that there was a new player with a new culture of responsiveness and more than ready to debate Gaelic issues. In the Scottish government, the post of a deputy minister for Gaelic has existed for some time. This new attitude to Gaelic applies also to services—including the Scottish Parliament itself which functions partly in Gaelic—and to the allocation

of financial means, even if these are still by far too limited in the opinion of many Gaelic activists.

After the Gaelic Act had been passed, it needed another few years until the envisaged language plans for Gaelic development were created and partly implemented. In spite of this slow process, however, Gaelic has in total received attention from institutions and individuals throughout Scotland to a degree previously unknown. As in the case of the Sameting, however, it was of vital importance that the mainstream discourse no longer be dominated by minority-hostile attitudes. On the contrary, many voices were heard in the debate, even from people with a non-Gaelic background who stressed the importance of Gaelic for Scottish identity as a whole.

However, since the Gaelic language is a topic like any other within the Scottish Parliament and Gaelic speakers are citizens just like all other citizens of Scotland, there is in no sense a guarantee that matters regarding the Gaelic language and its speakers will be dealt with at all. Among some parts of mainstream society, a perception has been dominant that by passing the language act, sufficient tribute has been paid to minority language policy. The struggle in the wake of enacting these new normative documents has therefore focused on their implementation and further steps to follow. The lines of division today mostly run between supporters of stronger measures for Gaelic and people who do not want to take Gaelic policies any further—similar as in the Sámi case. In total, however, the establishment of the Scottish Parliament has had a clearly positive impact in terms of legal guarantees, raised awareness, and financial support for Gaelic. This is in spite of the fact that the language-planning-based model which was chosen is by far weaker than the rights-based approach adopted in Norway. Even if this is considered by many activists to be less than ideal, without the Scottish Parliament even these policy changes would have been much more difficult to achieve.

Gaelic policy in Scotland may therefore be a useful point of orientation for those territorial units in the Russian Federation for which a minority group plays a significant role in its identity, but where that group is not the majority of the population. This may apply, for instance, to the case of the Komi-Permyak (see Jääts' chapter "[Fallen III in Political Draughts](#)" in this volume) which shows how the negotiation of ethnic and linguistic identity may influence policies, and in particular how these may deteriorate once such a territorial unit is abolished. A contrastive view of practices may, on the other hand, also shed light on the differences to the examples given by Zamyatin (this volume), in particular with regard to the paradoxes of Russian language policy in its official perception and support of multilingualism.

3.3 The German Länder—Minority Issues in Regional Parliaments where the Minority is Not at the Heart of the Region's Identity

The parliaments of the German Länder of Schleswig-Holstein and of Saxony are similar to the Scottish Parliament in a territorial sense, even though their structural position with the Länder having their own constitutions within the German federal

system is different. In contrast to the Scottish Parliament, the regional parliaments (*Landtage*) of the German Länder have a long tradition of decentralized decision-making. They are lawmaking within the framework of the separation of powers between the regional and the federal levels in Germany. They are non-sovereign in the sense that they do not conduct their own foreign policy, although within the range of their authority they may establish relations with other political players.

What is common to both Länder—in contrast to Scotland—is the fact that the existence of minorities is to by far a lesser degree constituent for the regions' identities. Schleswig-Holstein is, with regard to the minority languages of North Frisian and Danish, an example of how an old structure with a weak focus on linguistic minorities has taken up minority issues. While the Danish minority in Schleswig-Holstein has enjoyed far-reaching cultural and linguistic support since the 1950s, based on a bilateral agreement between the Federal German and Danish governments to grant basic rights to their respective minorities, the Frisian language was long neglected. Nonetheless, the 2005 Frisian Language Act shows that—in contrast to the Sameting and the Scottish Parliament—also an established decentralized structure can generate new language policies. However, legislative guarantees are significantly weaker than in Scotland or Norway, and the way which has been chosen is neither rights-based nor promotes an active language policy, but is based on shaping the legal ground for voluntary individual efforts so that these cannot be questioned by reluctant mainstream politicians or administrators.

Political representation of the Frisian and Danish minorities takes place mostly through the South Schleswig Voters' Association (SSV in Danish/SSW in German), a political party which explicitly aims at representing these minorities, but which in recent years has increasingly gained votes also from non-minority voters. As a special rule in Schleswig-Holstein, the threshold which allows parliamentary representation only for those parties which gain at least 5% of the votes in an election does not apply to the SSV/SSW. Therefore, these minorities receive an almost institutionalized representation: they are not guaranteed any seats in the parliament as such, but the SSV/SSW has always succeeded in getting the necessary number of votes for at least one seat since this rule was established. The symbolic side of this is obvious, even though other symbolic aspects, such as the use of Danish or Frisian in parliamentary proceedings, do not take place. The passing of the Frisian Language Act was the culmination of the policy/legislation responsiveness regarding Frisian, and responsiveness in terms of service, expenditure, and debates takes place in line with all other activities by the Schleswig-Holstein Landtag.

One major reason for this weakness in legislation is the Frisian minority's lack of importance for the identity of Schleswig-Holstein. The debate around these issues never reached the dimensions of the case of Gaelic, let alone Sámi. Even those parts of the majority population that have been willing to deal with the issue do not see Frisian as an important part of Schleswig-Holstein's identity as a whole, but instead they continue to argue along the lines of "us" and "them", which became clear from the debate around the language act (cf. Marten 2008).

However, in spite of the weak support by the general public and the fact that the decentralized structures are only loosely related to minority language and identity

issues, the Schleswig-Holstein Landtag has still given much more attention to Frisian issues than the German national parliament (the Bundestag) or the federal German government have. In the federal government in Germany, within the structures of the Ministry of the Interior, there is a commissioner officially in charge of minority issues and also a government-supported council acting as a voice for the national minorities in Germany. However, the amount of attention that is dedicated to minority issues is illustrated by the fact that the minority commissioner is at the same time responsible for issues relating to ethnic Germans outside Germany. The impact of the minority council is limited; the lion's share of minority policies, including the allocation of funding, takes place within the structures of the Länder. In total, there has never been any truly coordinated approach to minority policies in Germany at the federal level, let alone any laws. In these structures, both representation of minorities and responsiveness to minority interests are much more likely to have an impact when they take place at the decentralized level. In the Bundestag in Berlin (or previously in Bonn), both Danish and Frisian issues would be too distant, and it would be very unlikely that a party would be able to gain the sufficient number of votes to be represented even if similar rules applied as to the Schleswig-Holstein parliament. The fact that the SSV/SSW has been part of the Landtag has, in contrast, contributed directly to the legislative framework of Frisian and towards the awareness of this topic in society. In this respect, even the weak tolerance-oriented law in Schleswig-Holstein is by far more than the federal level has ever generated for Frisian.

On the other hand, this approach has also led to a situation in which large parts of the mainstream population do not see a need to deal with minority questions. There is a widespread belief that the SSV/SSW will take care of these issues, and ultimately it depends on individual initiatives and strategies of conviction whether minority policies may be implemented. It has therefore been observed with great interest that in 2012, the SSV/SSW for the first time joined the Schleswig-Holstein government as the smallest partner in a coalition with the Social Democrats and the Green Party, and that the coalition treaty contains an—albeit rather unspecific—commitment to a more active minority policy (cf. *Bündnis für den Norden 2012*).

Comparable examples from the Russian Federation are territorial units where an ethnic or linguistic community is not seen as decisive for a region's identity. In Russia this would usually imply that there is also no tokenistic autonomy in the sense of an official republic which bears the name of the minority. In reality, however, it might be argued that many of those republics which are officially autonomous are, in terms of impact on language survival, rather more comparable to the situation of Frisian in Schleswig-Holstein than to the situation of Gaelic in Scotland: As Zamyatin (chapter "[The Evolution of Language Ideology in Post-Soviet Russia](#)" in this volume) shows in his examples of Udmurtia and Mari El, the concrete impact of existing policies is rather sporadic and just as limited as it has traditionally been for Frisian—even if the official labels would imply a different situation. Nonetheless, the territorial decentralization in such cases has also led at least to a certain level of attention for the minority languages, which may trigger limited efforts for preservation. In Schleswig-Holstein—just as in Udmurtia or Mari El—it would have been unlikely that such a situation could have been achieved if only the central state had been in charge.

Policies with a rather limited impact on the survival of a minority language have also dominated in the second example from Germany—the Land of Saxony with regard to the Sorbian language and its speakers. In contrast to Schleswig-Holstein, there is no substantial political party which represents the Sorbian population (although there is a Sorbian cultural umbrella organization which speaks on behalf of Sorbian issues). Instead, most Sorbs who wish to be politically active have chosen to participate in one of the mainstream parties. The culmination of this is that the current (2014) Prime Minister of Saxony, Stanislaw Tillich, is a Sorb. Tillich is a member of the Christian Democratic CDU and as such has led a coalition government since 2007, until 2009 with the Social Democrats and since the 2009 regional elections with the liberal FDP. On the one hand, this is in many respects a situation many other minorities can only dream of—a representative with a minority background in the highest office. However, it needs to be stressed that the fact that the Prime Minister of Saxony is a Sorb seems to be purely accidental. Tillich does not hide his Sorbian background and occasionally discusses it,² but Sorbian issues have never played an essential role in his political campaigns. He can therefore be considered to be part of mainstream society rather than an example of an explicit promoter of minority identity.

This situation obviously means that Sorbian representation is guaranteed on a very high level of (regional) political decision-making. This also applies to the symbolic side of the presence of a minority representative as a regional Prime Minister. Nonetheless, this symbolism has not extended to any symbolic use of the Sorbian language and is bound to disappear when a new prime minister is elected. In terms of responsiveness, it still depends entirely on the individual situation whether new policy or legislation initiatives are launched, and to what degree services, expenditure, and debates are directed towards minority issues. In the case of the Sorbs, there is a certain awareness among the mainstream population that there is a Sorbian minority in Saxony, but this existed before Tillich came into office and has not increased or changed substantially. It also needs to be stressed that, from an institutional and financial point of view, the situation of Sorbian policies is quite comfortable. There is a well-established network of organizations and funding possibilities for which the Landtag of Saxony has a large share of responsibility. However, there is no policy of active revitalization or any promotion of Sorbian beyond the direct response to individual wishes. Recent criticism of Sorbian policies has shown that the level of financial support would actually suffice for far more sustainable language survival or revitalization efforts (see Toivanen's chapter "[Obstacles and Successes](#)" in this volume). This criticism thereby shows that the institutionalized responsiveness is largely shaped by perceptions of the mainstream population about where and how Sorbian should be supported—but that a true spirit of actively promoting the Sorbian minority or creating a bilingual German-Sorbian environment does not exist.

² Cf., for example, an interview in the Berlin daily *Der Tagesspiegel*: "Die SED war ein ganz anderes Kaliber." Interview with Stanislaw Tillich. <http://www.tagesspiegel.de/politik/deutschland/die-sed-war-ein-ganz-anderes-kaliber/1384568.html>.

It is therefore legitimate to state that, as in Schleswig-Holstein, the attitude by the mainstream largely determines minority policies, and that in spite of relatively well-funded structures, language policies are hardly responsive to the demands for giving the Sorbian language and its speakers a more prominent position in society. All in all, the fact that a speaker of Sorbian is prime minister of Saxony has had hardly any impact on political decisions. It may be beneficial for creating a certain general awareness for Sorbian issues, but the individual's lack of willingness to make use of this potential and to make Sorbian language maintenance a prime policy issue has hindered any additional language policy efforts. In addition, the lack of any usage of Sorbian in the Parliament of Saxony is a missed opportunity to institutionalize the Sorbian language, thereby underlining the general attitude in Germany of treating minority languages as something exotic, something having a place only in a niche clearly separated from mainstream policies, even if funding for Sorbian cultural projects and education is rather generous.

The situation in Saxony is in many respects similar to the situation of those autonomous republics within the Russian Federation which are led by a politician with a non-Russian ethnic background, but where this has not resulted in considerable pro-ethnic language policies. Such situations are exemplified by the paradoxical policies which pay lip service to official support for minorities while at the same time protecting the Russian language in an increasingly nationalist climate. In spite of the criticism of existing policies, however, it also has to be stressed that the likelihood that a politician with a minority background—both in the German and the Russian examples—may succeed in gaining such a high position is much higher in a decentralized political entity than at the national level. At the same time, it is also rather unlikely that a member of a regional government with a minority background would openly encourage a minority-hostile agenda.

3.4 South Tyrol—Long-term Experience with Autonomy which Reverses Minority and Majority

The example of the predominantly German-speaking Italian province of South Tyrol (Südtirol/Alto Adige) is different to the cases discussed so far in that about 70% of the population of the region belong to the German-speaking minority. South Tyrol enjoys far-reaching autonomy within the Italian state, including the right to carry out its own policies in language, culture and education. In this way, the minority-majority relationship in the territory of South Tyrol for the areas of decentralized authority is reversed in relation to the dominant majority-minority relations in the Italian state. It is as such similar to other examples of areas with a dominating regional minority such as the autonomous regions in Spain (see the chapter "[The Impact of Language Policy on Language Revitalization](#)").

The regional parliament of South Tyrol is one of the strongest factors for guaranteeing the rights of the German-language population (here and in the following

cf., for example, Schweigkofler (2000); Eichinger (2002)). The 1972 South Tyrol autonomy statute provided a legal solution to a decade-long period of (partially violent) conflicts. The so-called “proportional system” guarantees representation of the language groups in administration according to their demographic strength in the region—a rule which applies to the speakers of German and Italian as well as to the small minority of speakers of Ladin (about 5% of the population). The regional parliamentary elections have resulted in the center-right South Tyrol People’s Party, which sees itself as a voice of the entire German-speaking population regardless of ideological preference, continuously leading the regional government. In the most recent regional elections in October 2013, the South Tyrol People’s Party, which had been shaken by a number of scandals in the previous legislature, lost its overall majority for the first time since World War II, but it continues to be the strongest party and the leader of the government.

Today South Tyrol is frequently considered to be close to a separate system within the Italian state in which the German-speaking population is largely satisfied with its status, one which is also not threatened by the relative success of smaller sectarian parties which demanded the (re-)unification of South Tyrol with the Austrian parts of Tyrol in the 2013 election. German is the dominant language in the regional Landtag, in which also Italian and Ladin are used. The Landtag as the place of discussion and decision-making unites aspects of representation and responsiveness, including on a highly symbolic level. It elects the regional government, which gives the German-speaking population direct power on allocating large parts of its expenditure. This system thereby guarantees the German-speaking population direct influence on all but a few issues which remain under the control of the central state authorities in Rome. Interestingly, it is widely acknowledged that this model has also been beneficial to the Ladin-speaking population, for the autonomy granted to the large German-speaking minority has raised awareness for minority issues in general, and the rights of such a smaller “minority within the minority” could not be ignored. Consequently, the number of speakers of all three languages has over the past decades remained largely stable.

With regard to regional identity, the difference is apparent to the cases discussed above in that the German language is constituent of the region. What is crucial, however, is the fact that the political measures have stabilized the situation as an equilibrium between both extremes: the proportion of the German-speaking population has remained stable during the past decades, and therefore the autonomy has led to an end of fears that the German language would be marginalized within the region. At the same time, also those voices which argued in favor of separation of South Tyrol from Italy and union with Austria have largely been calmed. In total, this model may therefore be considered to be highly successful. However, for its success it requires a territorial unit in which the minority is strong enough to gain a voice, and it also requires that the political will of the central state allow a high level of autonomy and not to interfere in regional affairs, which also in the case of South Tyrol was granted only after a long period of dissatisfaction and protests.

The situation in South Tyrol may therefore serve as a reference point for those republics of the Russian Federation where the titular ethnicity is also the

demographically and institutionally dominant group in the republic, such as in Tatarstan. However, the situation of the Tatar language and the influence that its speakers have on political affairs are considerably worse than the situation of the German language and its speakers in South Tyrol, not least because of the lack of a neighboring state which could speak in favor of the minority and internationalize existing problems, as the Austrian state long did for the German-speakers in South Tyrol. Even if Tatar is not endangered, the level of its institutional recognition and its use in official functions is by far not as prevalent as the use of German in South Tyrol. The dominant role of the Russian state authorities limits more favorable de facto policies. Nonetheless, when comparing the agency of speakers of both German in South Tyrol and Tatar in Tatarstan to other ethnic and linguistic minorities, it becomes evident that the existence of a territorial unit dominated by the speakers of one minority language seems to be the most favorable way to give voice to this minority. Where a linguistic minority becomes a majority—even if only on a regional level—politicians and organizations who are dedicated to creating favorable policies for that language are much more likely to become influential in shaping policies or allocating expenditure in the minority's interests. This however presupposes that the demographic situation—both in terms of absolute and of relative numbers of speakers of a minority language—allows for the creation of such a unit.

3.5 Latgalian in Latvia—How a Lack of Regional Parliamentarism Affects a Regional Language

The final example discussed in this chapter is the situation of the Latgalian language in Eastern Latvia, a regional language closely related to Latvian, the only official language of Latvia. It shall serve as a contrastive example of how detrimental the situation of a minority language can be if any degree of decentralization is lacking. The Latvian state is highly centralist, and any notion of political regionalism is eyed suspiciously. The region of Latgale exists officially only as a planning region for economic development and as a historical cultural territory, even if the perception of a distinct Latgalian sub-identity within Latvian identity with its own traditions and the Latgalian language as one of its strongest manifestations is widespread among the population of Latgale. There are no regional administrative structures in Latgale, let alone a parliament which would help to prevent the marginalization of Latgalian in all domains of language use bearing an official notion or a higher level of prestige (Lazdiņa and Marten 2012; Marten 2012, cf. for a more detailed account of traditional attitudes towards Latgalian). The units of administration in Latvia formerly consisted of 26 provinces and 7 cities, supplemented by small parishes as smaller administrative units, but since the administrative reform of 2009 the provinces have been replaced by 110 counties (and there are now 9 province-independent cities instead of 7). This has created even more practical obstacles to cooperation between regional units which might find it

important to enhance a specific Latgalian identity and possibly conduct a language policy in favor of Latgalian. Even if the latest developments since 2012 seem to indicate that Latgalian is slowly receiving increased attention also from centralized political institutions, media, or educational authorities (cf. Lazdiņa 2013), these positive measures in support of the language entirely depend on decisions in the political center and the center's willingness to react to activist groups from Latgale. The situation of Latgalian is thereby similar to all those linguistic groups within Russia which lack any territorial or ethnic representation. Language policies in Latvia in this respect display paradoxes similar to those identified by Zamyatin for Russia (see the chapter "[The Evolution of Language Ideology in Post-Soviet Russia](#)")—Latgalian is squeezed in the ambiguity between a strong state language policy and public statements in favor of the preservation of cultural and linguistic heritage.

What theoretically could be done for Latgalian within a different structure with a regional parliament in Latgale? Shorter paths to decision-making would guarantee speakers of Latgalian more influence on issues which would be devolved to such a regional parliament. Discussions on the role of Latgalian would take place where decisions would be made, in contrast to the current situation where Latgalian is discussed mostly in Latgale, but decisions are taken in Riga. Speakers of Latgalian have regularly been elected to the Saeima, the Latvian Parliament in Riga, but Latgalian language issues are rarely discussed in the Saeima and it is highly unlikely that parliament members will vote in favor of some kind of legal status for Latgalian. Suggestions to use Latgalian in the Saeima have met with strong criticism, and in individual cases where members have made such attempts, these were quickly interrupted by the Saeima's President.

Wherever Latgalian has been awarded a certain role in education it depended until recently on a few local initiatives and on the goodwill of local authorities. A clear statement by a regional educational authority working under the auspices of a regional parliament would help to respond much more directly to the demands of Latgalian speakers in the educational sector. The same applies to the allocation of funding for other Latgalian issues such as scientific or cultural projects, which in a decentralized structure would not have to compete with applications from other regions. Finally, also the symbolic aspect of a regional parliament would be obvious. In a tradition of perceptions which frequently deny its speakers the right to call Latgalian a language in its own right, attitudes which consider Latgalian to not be "decent" enough to be used in highly prestigious domains would much more easily be questioned if a regional parliament existed which could demonstrate that Latgalian is just as suitable for use in more official functions as any other language.

It has only been recently that Latgalian has gained slightly more support and that attitudes slowly seem to be changing, with greater self-confidence among Latgalian speakers leading to a higher (economic and symbolic) value being assigned to Latgalian (cf. Lazdiņa 2013). This applies to the use of Latgalian in, for instance, tourism or culture, but also in education the status of Latgalian has recently received greater attention from central authorities. This change in attitudes was, among other factors, triggered by a 2012 referendum in Latvia on whether Russian should be

declared the second official language alongside Latvian. Voters in the referendum overwhelmingly voted against Russian as an official language, but Latgale was the only part of Latvia which voted in favor of the initiative. This result was widely interpreted as an outcry from the inhabitants of Latgale that their interests were too often ignored in central policy, and as a consequence, a few initiatives were launched in order to respond to the views of Latgalians. One of the results of this new trend has been a moderate inclusion of Latgalian into public school curricula. Unlike previous policies, this has been seen by many Latgalian activists as a large step forward, but it is still only considered a small step in the struggle for language maintenance. The idea of Latgalian becoming an official language in Latgale is still outside the agenda. In total, this example shows that, even if moderate policy changes in favor of Latgalian are possible under existing structures, these changes occur much more slowly than it would be possible if a regional parliament existed, and that responsiveness to Latgalian demands, in addition to requiring positive attitudes from local authorities, ultimately still depends on the central authorities. In the current situation, it has also been decisive that one highly dedicated member of the Saeima from Latgale, for whom the Latgalian language is an important part of his agenda, has continuously raised Latgalian issues.

4 Conclusion—How Can Parliamentary Decentralization Contribute to the Wellbeing of Minority Languages?

The examples given in this chapter have highlighted the variety of roles that decentralized structures, and in particular parliaments can play in giving voice to speakers of minority languages. It has tried to exemplify the opportunities and limits connected with different ways of decentralization. Table 2 summarize the main impact of these measures from the perspective of the core functions of parliaments as identified above. In this it should be noted that any such classification in a theoretical framework cannot pay tribute to the often highly complex situation of a language and its speakers when analyzed on a micro-level. Therefore, Table 2 presents only an approximation to an evaluation of the individual situations.

In summary, it is legitimate to state that decentralization of political structures and in particular of parliamentary representation can help speakers of minority languages to gain more influence in decision-making processes. It may therefore be an aim for minority groups to argue in favor of decentralized structures in a state in order to get more voice in, for instance, financial debates with regard to issues which are of relevance to them. The examples discussed have shown that there is usually a political dynamic involved where decentralization takes place. These may, in every individual case, result in rather different concrete ways of policy or legislation, of financing these policies, with regard to attitudes of the minority and majority populations towards each other, or to questions of identity. The concrete outcomes for the empowerment

Table 2 Functions of parliaments in prototypical examples of decentralized structures and their impact on the situation of the respective minority languages

Norway	Scotland	Schleswig-Holstein	Saxony	South Tyrol	Latgale
Sámi	Gaelic	Frisian, Danish	Sorbian	German, Ladin	Latgalian
Responsiveness: Policy/legislation					
Strong influence, partly indirect	Limited influence	Limited influence	No considerable increase; depends on individuals, but more likely than in national parliament	Strong impact and direct influence	Very limited influence
Responsiveness: Service					
Strong influence based on model agreed with national government	Present within limits	Limited influence	No considerable increase; depends on individuals, but more likely than in national parliament	Strong impact and direct influence	Only through central authorities, very limited attention
Responsiveness: Allocation/expenditure					
Strong influence based on model agreed with national government	Present within limits	Limited influence	No considerable increase; depends on individuals, but more likely than in national parliament	Strong impact and direct influence	Special attention given only in specific contexts through central authorities

(continued)

Table 2 (continued)

Norway	Scotland	Schleswig-Holstein	Saxony	South Tyrol	Latgale
Sámi	Gaelic	Frisian, Danish	Sorbian	German, Ladin	Latgalian
Responsiveness: Symbolic					
Strong symbolic impact on minority language	Symbolic presence	Little symbolic presence	Very high as an individual, little impact on language use	Strong symbolic presence	No symbolic language use and little awareness through parliament
Responsiveness: Making/scrutinizing governments					
Only indirect impact on government	Direct influence on government with limited impact	Direct influence on government with limited impact	Outstanding presence, accidental but more likely than in national parliament	Direct influence on government with strong impact	Latgalian presence in government possible but purely accidental and with unclear impact
Representation: Speaking on behalf of the minority population					
Yes	Depends on individual parliament members	Depends on individuals; quite likely because of minority party	Depends on individual parliament members	Yes	No
Representation: Representing the pattern of the (minority) population					
Institutionalized and differentiated	Accidental but much more likely than in the Westminster parliament	Accidental but because of special electoral rule and party, constant	Accidental but much more likely than in national parliament	Institutionalized and differentiated	In the national parliament, with little concrete impact

(continued)

Table 2 (continued)

Norway	Scotland	Schleswig-Holstein	Saxony	South Tyrol	Latgale
Sámi	Gaelic	Frisian, Danish	Sorbian	German, Ladin	Latgalian
Type of Decentralization					
Cultural autonomy of a linguistic/ethnic group	Linguistic minority is minority in decentralized territory, minority language important for regional identity	Linguistic group is minority in decentralized territory, minority language not considered to be vital to region's identity	Individuals with minority background with outstanding position in territorial unit within majority system	Linguistic minority as majority in decentralized territory	Only some degree of administrative decentralization of territory, without decentralized parliamentary body
Lawmaking					
No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	—
Sovereign					
No	No	Limited	Limited	No	—
Institutionalizing functions					
Multilingual Parliament (Sámi used regularly)	Multilingual Parliament (Gaelic used seldom)	Mostly monolingual German Parliament	Mostly monolingual German Parliament	Multilingual Parliament (German dominant)	Strictly monolingual Latvian national Parliament
General Impact					
Strong	Moderate	Limited	Very Limited	Strong	Very Limited

of minority language speakers and the survival of the language and culture may therefore vary.

In a decentralized political entity, there are obviously many different factors to take into account. A great deal depends on aspects such as the size of the minority group, their pattern of residence within the territory of a state, and ultimately also on individuals who may or may not seize opportunities to fight for improvement of structures when they arise. Also worth considering in this context is the question of how important the linguistic minority is to the identity of a region in total. Nonetheless, even where the impact by the minority on the region's identity is limited, it is still far more likely that a minority will be given a voice in a decentralized institution than in centralized structures. All in all, it therefore seems to be of great advantage to have stable decentralized structures in which both representation and responsiveness to the needs of a minority are closer to decision-making processes. At the same time, it has to be stressed that decentralization is not everything. It can provide opportunities, but these have to be seized by the users of a language.

A few general conclusions may also be drawn from the case studies discussed in this chapter. The examples show that both decentralization according to ethnic principles (as for the Sámi in Norway) and by territory (as in all other cases discussed) may generate language survival-friendly policies. How far they go depends ultimately on the willingness of the overall political framework and on mainstream attitudes. The juxtaposition of examples from the European Union (and Norway) on the one hand and Russia on the other shows that similar structures of decentralization may lead to very different results, and that attitudes by the Russian state to language policies, minorities, and autonomy play a decisive role in that. At the same time, the comparison also shows that demographic patterns and the importance of a language for the region's identity are most crucial: Where the demographic basis of the minority is strong, such as in South Tyrol, the chance of a successful minority language policy is highest. Where it is not strong, the importance of the language for the region as a whole is of outstanding importance, as exemplified by the case of Scottish Gaelic in contrast to Frisian or Sorbian.

The Latgalian example, finally, also shows how much more difficult it is for an ethnic or linguistic minority to gain a voice where a central state is largely opposed to decentralization and regionalism, and the degree to which any positive measures in support of the minority depend even more on the political center's willingness to react to political developments in a peripheral region and on dedicated individuals. In a decentralized state, there is a counterbalance to centralist attitudes, and it is more difficult for them to unfold their devastating effects on a minority where another, subordinate level of discussion and decision-making exists. This applies to all examples discussed, both from Russia and the EU/Norway: even where the impact of decentralization is low and the language situation is far from ideal, it is most probably much better than if the decentralized elements did not exist at all.

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The Evolution of Language Ideology in Post-Soviet Russia

The Fate of the State Languages of Its National Republics

Konstantin Zamyatin

Abstract This article explores the evolution of ideas around language in the politics of post-Soviet Russia in order to understand why the state languages occupy such a special position in its public discourse. For this purpose, the chapter examines policy documents and legal acts. Russian legislation on language is not quite explicit on the ideas that lie behind the goals of the country's language policy. The analysis demonstrates that in the early 1990s, the status planning of Russian and the titular languages of Russia's national republics raised some legal and political problems. Among the problematic issues is the controversy between the official status of the state languages and the idea of the equality of Russia's languages. In recent years, a new turn in the official ideology has led to an emphasis on valorizing Russian as the state language of the entire country, and the new political landscape problematizes the status of the state languages of the republics.

Keywords Language policy · Language ideology · State languages · National republics · Russian Federation

1 Introduction

The language policy of the state defines how ideas about the state and the language are conjoined in the political system, how they take the form of language legislation, and how they are enacted in public activities. Lenore Grenoble points out that, although marked by contradictions and inconsistencies, the Soviet language policy is considered as one of the most deliberate language policies in the world to further political goals (Grenoble 2003, 1). However, the policy goals were not transparent, and by the time of the dissolution of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR or Soviet Union), the accumulated linguistic problems were among the most debated. The collapse of the Soviet Union intensified the debates concerning the role of language in society in the newly emerged polities. The solution used most frequently

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in post-Soviet countries to harmonize the interests of the state with the public use of languages has been designating languages official status in pursuit of “linguistic state-building” (see Guboglo 1998; Neroznak 2002).

Writing about stages in the language policy cycle, (Spolsky 2004, 515) distinguishes between language practices, language ideology, and language planning. It was issues of language ideology that came to the fore in debates around Russia’s policy formation in the early 1990s. Ideology is typically defined as a set of ideas and aims of an actor that direct its policy goals, actions, and expectations in the respective field [see the discussion on language and ideology in Blommaert (2006)]. In Russia the emphasis was laid on the implementation of policy-makers’ ideas though language planning and not so much on whether the ideas actually reflected the sociolinguistic situation. This priority of ideology over language practices in forming language planning marked a “top-down” approach to management of linguistic diversity.

Therefore, even if, unlike most other post-Soviet countries, Russia did not become a nationalizing state in the early 1990s, the official status of some languages has also become the cornerstone of Russia’s language planning. In Russia, too, it was status planning which was at the core of language planning, while corpus and acquisition planning have remained in the background [for the types of language planning see Cooper (1990), 100–103]. Scholars typically divide language planning into the stages of policy adoption through legislative procedures, its implementation, and its evaluation (Kirkwood 1989, 2–5; Grin 2003, 47). In the early 1990s, status planning was initiated with the adoption of language legislation, notably Russia’s Language Law (October 25, 1991).

According to Russia’s Constitution (December 12, 1993), the country’s multinational people is the bearer of sovereignty and the only source of power (Article 3); Russian is a state language across the whole territory of Russia and Russia’s constituent republics have the right to establish their own state languages (Article 68.2). Today, since amendments to their constitutions have marked a policy shift towards recentralization and construction of a “power vertical”, the republics have preserved only two additional rights over other units of the federation: the right to have their own constitutions and the right to designate their state languages. The republics and the titular languages coincide and are based on the principle of territoriality.

Russia’s peculiarity is that its top-down language planning approach is not particularly balanced by the individual language rights approach: even the few established rights, such as the right to education in one’s own language, are typically not self-executing, that is, they cannot be invoked directly in court. While the government places the central role on legal and administrative regulations, Russia’s language legislation included only a few individual and collective language rights that remained abstract ideas rather than operational legal mechanisms. It should be noted that in the Russian context, these are not language rights but political actions that define the core of linguistic policy. Consequently, it was not the rights enforcement mechanism but the status planning of official languages that was at the core of the policy [cf. Sect. 4.1 in Zamyatin (2013)].

Furthermore, ideas such as the equal rights of languages which were expressed in Russian political rhetoric, were often not reflected in implementation actions (see Osipov 2012), giving grounds to speak about a discrepancy between *official* and

de facto language policy. In the view of Shohamy (2006), *official* policy, which is expressed in political statements and policy papers, often remains a mere official ideology and in many instances covers up *de facto* language policy. Russia's legislation is also not very explicit and consistent on policy aims and the ideas behind them. At the same time, the discrepancy between the proclaimed ideas and the *de facto* language policy of post-Soviet Russia inspires scholarly interest.

In recent years the status of Russian as the state language of the whole country has aroused a great deal of academic interest, primarily among domestic scholars (see e.g. Ljaščenko 2002, 2004). The official status given in Russia to the *de facto* minority languages has attracted less attention (see e.g. Dorovskich 2005; Voroneckij 2009). Also some international scholars have addressed the latter issue in the process of assessing Russia's readiness to ratify the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (see e.g. Vieyetz 2004). However, no interdisciplinary research combining legal-instrumental and political perspectives has been carried out on the phenomenon of the official status of the titular languages of Russia's national republics. What is the ideological basis of Russia's language policy and how does it accommodate the official status of the state languages of the republics?

The purpose of this article is to find out how contradictory ideas about languages and the state have been reflected and reconciled in the official status of the state languages of Russia's republics. As their status is fixed in a formal way, the method of diachronic analysis of the policy-defining documents and legal acts both at the federal and regional level allows one to reveal the trajectory in the evolution of ideas that were taken as its basis. Only some remarks highlight how status planning became the mainstream solution for linguistic issues in the late Soviet Union [for a detailed analysis of the link between sovereignization and the state languages see Zamyatin (2013d)].

This article has the following objectives: (1) to outline the initial formation of Russia's language ideology in the 1990s and to identify its contradictory issues, (2) to illuminate the potential for resolving the contradictions by structurally exploring the place of the state languages of the republics in Russia's political-legal system, and to examine whether these contradictions have found solutions at the regional level through case studies of the Finno-Ugric republics, (3) to give an overview of the initiatives proposed since the early millennium as a means of restoring the consistency of the language ideology and to assess the effect these initiatives might have on the position of state languages. The argument proposed in this article is that the co-official status that the titular languages hold in Russia's republics was not meant to solve contradictions in ideology but was rather a result of unplanned historical developments caused by uneven distribution of political forces.

2 Russia's Language Ideology in the 1990s—Contradictions and Their Implications

What are the origins of the ideas in Russia on the place of languages in society? These ideas stem from and can be historically traced back to two traditions in managing diversity: a "Western" tradition of eliminating differences vs. an "Eastern" tradition

of preserving diversity (Kreindler 1995, 345). At its heart, the difference in the two approaches could be best expressed in the dichotomy of individual and collective rights, although the term “rights” should not be mistaken.

2.1 The Soviet Legacies and New Western Imports in Russia’s Language Ideology

The Soviet policy was to regulate through viewing ethnic entities as collectivities and through granting them “rights”, so the concept of individual rights in post-Soviet Russia was a novelty. The era of perestroika imported from the West, among other ideas, the concept of the non-interference of the state in the private affairs of individuals. In the package of emancipation brought into the country in the sphere of language, there was notably the free choice of the language one uses in private affairs, which restricted the scope of public language policy to the public sphere (cf. Sect. 6 in Zamyatin 2013).

At the same time, some ideas were legacies of the Soviet era. First of all, there was the idea of the equality of languages which, briefly stated here, is a reflection of the idea of the equality of peoples (see the next section) that had been postulated in the Soviet nationalities policy since the 1930s. The idea of language revival is connected with the previous idea and has the same pedigree. Somewhat later in the Soviet era, the idea of national-Russian bilingualism emerged. However, it was only in the mid-1990s that the idea of non-discrimination was introduced as inseparably linked to the free choice of languages and found its way into legislation. To complicate things further, the idea of giving languages an official status was introduced, although it was neither among the ideas inherited from Soviet times nor in the “Western” package. Paradoxically, designation of an official status was identified as a means of language revival (see Zamyatin 2013, 125–126). How and why has the designation of state languages become the main solution to language issues?

The answer should be sought in late Soviet and early post-Soviet history. A study of the policy-defining documents of that period would reveal the ideological solution that was chosen. The Soviet Union as a multinational state had its own devices for managing diversity. However, no separate documents were adopted specifically on language policy, because it used to be considered as a part of the nationalities policy (see Isaev 1979, 7). The Russian term *nacional'naja politika* is sometimes also translated as ‘ethnic policy’, ‘ethno-national policy’, or ‘policy towards minorities’, depending on the context of the country in question. Sometimes the terms *nacional'no-jazykovaja politika* and in recent years *etno-jazykovaja politika*, ‘national-language policy’ and ‘ethno-language policy’ respectively, are used to emphasize the conjuncture of the two fields of policy (Dorovskich 2008, 53). In the article it is referred to throughout as “nationalities policy”. Because of the

lack of separate documents on language policy, statements on language ideology are typically found in the documents on the nationalities policy.

In the Soviet Union, ethnic Russians constituted slightly more than half of the population. Russian was not formally attributed the status of the language of the state, which gave Soviet ideologists an opportunity to proclaim the equality of languages (Isaev 1970, 43–45). At the same time, given the actual language situation, Western scholars repeatedly claimed a covert function of Russian as the state language (*gosudarstvennyj jazyk*) (Haarmann 1992, 110–111).

When the era of *glasnost* arrived during *perestroika* in the late 1980s, some Union Republics, notably, the Baltic Republics, expressed their concern with the linguistic situation. By the spring of 1990, all Union Republics except the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR) had adopted their own language laws, where the titular languages were given the status of their sole state languages. The Union authorities recognized this step by adopting the USSR Language Law (April 24, 1990). The Law acknowledged retrospectively the practice of some Union Republics and gave all Union Republics (SSRs) and Autonomous Republics (ASSRs) the right to establish their own state languages, whereby it did not exclude that the titular languages could be designated as the sole state languages of the republics (see Zamyatin 2013d, 127–130).

No definitions of the terms were given in the Law, but the “state language” here referred to more or less the same phenomenon as what is internationally referred to as the “official language”. However, this term emphasizes the fact that the state exists and that the language functions as a symbol of national identity. Russian was given the status of the “official language” of the USSR without a link to national identity. Furthermore, it was recognized as the “language of inter-nationality communication”. In other words, its functioning in inter-ethnic relations was assigned not only to communication between Russians and non-Russians, but also to communication among non-Russians of different ethnic backgrounds. The third term, “titular languages”, was not used in the Law, but it also entered the political discourse, replacing the previously existing hierarchical Soviet terms “language of the SSR”, “language of the ASSR”, etc. [see the definitions in Neroznak (2002), 12–13, cf. also Sect. 1 in Zamyatin (2013)].

The RSFSR was the last of the SSRs to use its right to establish a state language in its 1991 language law. Designation of Russian as the only state language of the country came as no surprise after developments in other SSRs and also due to the fact that about four fifths of Russia’s population were ethnic Russians. Russia’s language law also recognized the right of its republics to establish their state languages. The situation in the RSFSR was complicated by the fact that there are more than one hundred languages spoken there and that only some of them could claim official status (see Zamyatin 2013d, 127).

Multiple sources of official ideology inevitably resulted in controversies built into the legislation. “Controversy” is a somewhat charged term that presupposes a need for change, but actually these paradoxes were a reflection of power relations. Being only one in a series of ideas touching on linguistic issues, the concept of state

language introduced in the Russian context had to be reconciled with competing ideas advanced by different group interests of the equality of languages, prohibition of discrimination on the basis of language, nationalist striving for language revival, and preferential support for the titular state languages as the elements of national statehood, as well as support for bilingualism and multilingualism as characteristics of a multinational society.

2.2 Hierarchy or Equality of Languages?

In line with the Soviet legacy, the holder of Russia's sovereignty was considered to be its "multinational people" that is composed of many nationalities or "the peoples of the Russian Federation". The peoples of the Russian Federation were considered irrespective of their size as equal-in-right collectivities. This constitutional construction justifies why "the languages of the peoples of the Russian Federation" were also considered as having equal rights for their maintenance and development. The Preamble of Russia's language law proclaimed that "the languages of the peoples of the Russian Federation are the national wealth of the Russian State". The Declaration on the Languages of the Peoples of Russia was adopted together with the language law and became the only policy document of the early 1990s that included statements exclusive to language ideology. Both the Declaration on the Languages and the language law proclaimed "language sovereignty of every people and person" and "equal protection and equal opportunities for all languages of the peoples of Russia".

At the same time, the tradition in Soviet policy of hierarchization of nations, peoples, and ethnic groups was also reflected in Russia's language policy. The Russian authorities introduced the Russian language as the state language across the whole territory of the country, while the republics designated the languages of their titular nations as the republics' state languages. In some cases, the languages of the "peoples of Russia" without the national-state or national-territorial units were also attributed some elements of official status. Because designation of languages as official languages means state protectionism, this hierarchy implies in fact an inequality of languages.

The adoption of the Declaration on the Languages and the language law in the late Soviet era has not ended the ideological debates on language issues. The emergence of Russia as an independent state intensified controversies on the place of ethnicity and language in it. The idea of the equal rights of the languages of the peoples was taken as one of the cornerstones of the draft Concept of the state program of national revival and inter-nationality cooperation of the peoples of Russia in 1992. This document was never in force as an official document, but it was recommended as the government policy draft at the All-Russian Conference "Federalism and Inter-Nationality Relations in Contemporary Russia", held under the auspices of the Federal Parliament and Government on May 27–28, 1994. The draft Concept tried to solve the problem of the actual inequality of languages by introducing the idea of cultural pluralism and the unity of cultural and information space. This should have meant that development of the state languages or any other languages could not become a

priority of the policy. In contrast to this, the draft Concept of the state program of the maintenance and development of the languages of the peoples of Russian Federation (Decree of the Supreme Councils' Presidium, June 1, 1992) assumed the priority of the state languages, while recognizing the need to harmonize their status with the idea of equality of languages, which was in line with the conception of Russia's language law [see the discussion in Dorovskich (2008), 55].

Among the policy principles of the Concept of the State Nationalities Policy of the Russian Federation (June 15, 1996), the main official policy document in the field, there are statements relating to the prohibition of discrimination on the basis of language and assistance in the development of the languages of the peoples of Russia. Among the policy goals are “ensuring optimal conditions for the maintenance and development of the languages of all peoples of Russia, use of the Russian language as the common state language” and “strengthening and improving the national general education schools as an instrument of the maintenance and development of culture and language of every people”. But apart from these general statements, the Concept is not focused on solving the problem of languages' equality or other language issues. The document connects languages to the context of the development of national culture and not consider them as a political issue.

Therefore, the *first paradox* within the language policy of the 1990s is that the idea of equality of the languages in rights (*ravnopravie jazykov*) and even of equal rights of languages (*ravnye prava jazykov*) was expressed, but at the same time, the state languages have a higher status than the other languages. Designating an official status for some languages makes the public use of these languages compulsory and might demand the knowledge of some languages but not others. This does not count as discrimination on the basis of language, but it is rather problematic if one insists on equal rights of languages.

2.3 Bilingualism and Multilingualism as a Goal or a Result of the Policy?

The Declaration on the Languages does not declare bilingualism and multilingualism as the priority of the policy. The document speaks only about the “desirability and necessity of mastering the languages of inter-nationality communication and of other languages of the peoples of the RSFSR, living on a certain territory”, that is, it welcomes personal bilingualism. Russia's language law declares in its preamble that “the State promotes the development of the national languages, bilingualism and multilingualism on the whole territory of the Russian Federation”. Russian was declared the main vehicle of inter-nationality communication first by the USSR language law and then in the original text of the Preamble of the language law.

In its original version of 1991, the language law also included a clause on bilingualism and multilingualism as the norm in Russia, but this was excluded by a 1998 amendment to Russia's language law. Moreover, the original text contained elements of official multilingualism for the state language of the Russian Federation and the

state languages of its republics (Articles 11–14), establishing that in some contexts non-Russian languages could be used in the work of federal authorities. However, these provisions remained only on paper: for instance, members of the Council of the Federation and deputies of the State Duma, two chambers of the Federal Assembly (the Russian parliament), never used their right to hold a speech in a language other than Russian either in parliamentary hearings or in the work of committees and commissions [Article 11 of the language law mentioned above; see Alpatov (2000), 148–149]. The 1998 amendment removed these provisions, and today Russian federal authorities are unilingual.

At the same time, the original provision of the law was that the status of Russia's state language is given to Russian, because it is "the main means of inter-nationality communication" (Article 3.2). This provision, if applied literally, would have precluded multilingualism, as other languages could be used only in communication between members of the same ethnic group (later it was also left out in the 1998 amendment). Furthermore, as one of drafters of the language law emphasized, the sustainability of "ethnic-cultural areas" with historical bilingual and multilingual language environments was an issue of concern for the drafters (Djackov and Mikhail 1993, 114–115). That is, the sustainability of the languages themselves was not an issue of concern.

The first above-mentioned draft Concept of National Revival named bilingualism and multilingualism as the main form of coexistence of languages in Russia. The draft Concept of Maintenance and Development called for full-scale functional bilingualism in multi-ethnic regions. The actually enforced Concept of the State Nationality Policy (June 15, 1996, Part VI) does not contain any policy goal or principle of multilingualism; it only directs regional programs of the policy on nationalities "to ensure [...] development and broadening of the domains of language use of the national languages, to affirm principles of cultural pluralism, bilingualism and multilingualism, through the integrating role of the Russian language".

Therefore, despite the fact that ideas of bilingualism and multilingualism were ideologically important in the process of elaborating the policy documents, the *second paradox* of the language policy is that there is no policy goal of bilingualism and multilingualism, nor is there any mechanism ensured for somehow achieving multilingualism as a result of policy. Multilingualism is not considered to be a characteristic of Russia's multinational society, but Russian's role as the language of inter-nationality communication, which had been assigned to it since Soviet times, precludes two-way bilingualism. There is no obligation for ethnic Russians to learn the other languages of the peoples of Russia, except for the compulsory learning of the titular state languages of some republics. It is the establishment of formal co-official status for the state languages which backs the idea of support for official bilingualism and multilingualism for this category of languages.

2.4 State Languages as a Part of Nation-Building or State-Building?

In the late 1980s, the ideology of nationalism and the concept of equality of peoples dominated public discourse on the formation of language policy. Ernest Gellner famously defines nationalism as a political principle which holds that “the political and cultural unit should be congruent” (Gellner and Ernest 1983, 1). In this context, political justifications for the official status of the titular languages in the Soviet Republics originate in the ideology of linguistic nationalism. If one of the main manifestations of a national identity is the national language, then congruence of the language and the state marked in the official status reinforces the national identity [cf. Sect. 8.1 in Zamyatin (2013)].

National movements were formed in the SSRs and ASSRs to express public concerns about cultural and linguistic issues such as language shift and ethnic assimilation. When national movements were institutionalized, the national and ethnic elites were able to formulate public concerns as political demands in the constituent charters of the national organizations. In looking for solutions, they often borrowed ideas from each other and typically presented the national revival of the titular peoples as their main goal while viewing language revival as its core. In every republic they demanded that regional authorities assign the national languages an official status as the state language (see Zamyatin 2013d, 124–126). The choice of the language status planning by the regional elites was, thus, predetermined by the importance of institutions in the Soviet context (see e.g. Gorenburg 2003).

Unlike some other contexts in different countries, protection of non-dominant languages was not used as the main justification for the designation of the official languages. The ethnic elites pursued preferential treatment on the basis of ethnicity and language for the sake of building the titular nations, which did not fit the context of language protection in the discourse on rights. This endeavor was opposed by influential Russian-speaking segments of the elites, who needed the state languages only as a justification for state building of an emerging polity and not as a tool of preferential treatment. Nevertheless, the lowest common denominator was that all segments of regional elites found a common interest in state building of the republics, which became the ground for a compromise (Zamyatin 2013d, 151–153).

In terms of this compromise, the regional authorities adopted the revival of the titular language as the aim of language reform and enshrined status planning as the way to achieve it. A new regional government policy became possible, *inter alia*, because the republics were reconstructed as a higher form of the national self-determination of their titular peoples. Most autonomous republics of Russia launched their own language policies in the summer and autumn of 1990, when they declared their sovereignty and proclaimed their state languages in the declaration of state sovereignty and/or in the language law. It is remarkable that Russia’s Declaration (June 12, 1990), adopted before them, did not contain any clauses on languages except for the provision on the freedom to use one’s native language. When Russia’s language law was adopted in October 1991, some ASSRs (Tuva, Chuvashia and

Kalmykia) had already designated their state languages in the language laws using the right provided earlier by the USSR language law (see Zamyatin 2013, 131–133).

As an effect of the compromise, an overlap of state-building, nation-building and language status planning led to the prevalence of political considerations over sociolinguistic ones in solving linguistic issues. This is true both at a federal and regional level. Russia's language policy aims at valorization of the Russian language by the federal authorities; and the language policies in the republics aim at valorization of the titular languages by the authorities in some republics, but not in others. In addition to being envisaged as the main path to reviving languages, the titular language's striving for official status was considered as the means of state-building and nation-building in at least in some republics. Thus, the *third paradox* with Russia's language policy is that simultaneous accomplishment of the Russian nation-building and titular nation-building projects, competing and contradictory, as well as of the republics' state-building projects was imposed upon the currently existing multinational and multilingual realities.

2.5 Official Status as the Means of Language Promotion?

Language planning was part of the processes of nation-building in the republics. Behind the idea of language revival was the need to ensure a privileged position to a titular language through its introduction as the sole state language, as it was done in the early 1990s in all former SSRs except Belarus and Tajikistan. In this situation, the privileged status of the titular language formally contradicted the principle of equality of languages. However, formal inequality was employed in these places as an affirmative action to redress sociolinguistic inequality and reach factual equality, that is, a state of bilingualism.

The regional authorities of the ASSRs also had the authority to decide in their language legislation a wide range of issues, including the possibility of establishing their own state languages. Theoretically, ASSRs could establish either a titular language or Russian as the sole state language or make them both co-official state languages. From a sociolinguistic perspective, a single titular state language would be the best option to achieve the aim of language revival [see Sect. 3.3 below; also Zamyatin (2013)]. In practice, however, among the ASSRs only Tuva, a remote republic with a titular majority that entered the Soviet Union late, was able to establish Tuvan as the sole state language of the Republic according to the Tuvan ASSR Languages Law (December 14, 1990, Article 1) and the Constitution (October 21, 1993), leaving the federal authorities to regulate the role of Russian as the federal state language. However, within a few years, an amendment to the language law (June 29, 1994) and a new Constitution introduced both the Tuvan and Russian languages as the state languages of the Republic (May 10, 2001, Article 5).

The other republics typically used their right by designating both titular and Russian as their co-official state languages. Sometimes, in addition to the language of the titular group and Russian, other languages were also designated official.

In Dagestan all languages of the peoples of the Republic were proclaimed as its state languages according to its constitution (July 26, 1994, Article 10). The peculiarity of the language situation in this republic is its multinational character with 14 major peoples, none of whom have a majority. In Karachay-Cherkessia there are five state languages and in Kabardin-Balkaria, Mordovia, Mari El there are three state languages, including Russian (see e.g., Solncev and Michal'chenko 2000). Only Karelia has not designated a state language either in its sovereignty declaration (August 9, 1990) or in the amendments to its constitution (May 30, 1978, amended by the Law of December 24, 1993; see Zamyatin (2013), 346). In 2001, according to the new constitution (February 7, 2001), Russian became the single state language of Karelia, while other state language(s) of this republic can be established by referendum. In other words, options for ensuring revival by means of making an official designation were mostly restricted to the co-official status of languages.

Only in some republics did the implementation of the language revival projects actually become a priority of state support. In that case it was backed by the ideology of "maintenance and development" of the titular languages. Nonetheless, even when state support gave the titular languages a priority, the highest status the elites could achieve in the former ASSRs after the creation of the new Russian state was their equal co-official status with Russian. Giving the titular languages sole official status was also theoretically attainable in the ASSRs (as the case of the Tuvan language demonstrates), but in practice it was unrealistic for political and sociolinguistic reasons, first and foremost because of the resistance of Russian-speaking regional elites (see Zamyatin 2013d, 134–136).

The ethnic elites in the republics were able only to a certain degree to ensure formal equality of the state languages in their status or in their functioning. The possibility of achieving equality in the languages' status depended on a number of variables such as the absolute number of the titular group and its share in the republic's ethnic composition, the strength of the national movement, and the ability of ethnic elites to advocate for including linguistic demands in policy documents and legal acts (see Zamyatin 2013, 136–139). In those cases where the equal co-official status of the Russian language and the titular language(s) was declared at the republic level, one can apply the category of "leveled" languages (Vieyetz 2004). For example, equal rights and equal use of Tatar and Russian as the state languages of Tatarstan are guaranteed by this Republic's Constitution (November 30, 1992, Article 8). In addition to the establishment of the equal official status, there are specific language provisions on the content of this status, including provisions on non-discrimination, support for diasporas, languages of education, languages in courts, a language requirement for the post of the President (not in use), and languages of the presidential oath (Articles 14, 28, 34, 42, 56, 80, 91, 93). Nonetheless, even there it was only symbolic and not actual equality.

In most other republics, the Russian and titular languages are not "leveled" and the former is taken a priori as the more important state language, while the latter functions mostly as a symbol of national identity but not as a working language of the authorities. As a consequence, in the republics where equality of the state languages in their status or functioning was not declared, it proved harder for the titular languages

to compete with Russian and attempted revivals were often ineffective. The titular state language loses in the competition because it is not compulsory in many domains of language use. Even the formally equal status in the republics where the languages are “leveled” did not ensure success in attaining full-fledged bilingualism. Therefore, the *fourth paradox* is that, while the official status was intended as a means of language revival, the attained co-official status of Russian actually precluded it. That is to say, the official status of a language proved to be ineffective as a tool of language revival. Was this was a miscalculation of the policy effect or were there other rationales behind the designation of the state languages? In order to explore structurally these possibilities, the phenomenon of the official status of languages is discussed in the following section.

3 Official Status of Languages and Russia’s Language Policy

All four major contradictions in Russia’s language ideology are rooted in the official status of the state languages, which deserves, then, a more focused exploration. What is the scope of official bilingualism in Russia both from a vertical and horizontal perspective? In countries with a federative structure, competence is divided between federal and regional authorities. Jurisdiction in Russia consists of exclusive federal jurisdiction, joint jurisdiction of the federal center and regions, and regional jurisdiction. Russian federalism is characterized by strong central authorities and the supremacy of federal legislation over regional legislation in the legal system [cf. Sect. 3.2 in Zamyatin (2013)].

3.1 *Russia’s Federal Design and Asymmetrical Status of Languages*

Due to the asymmetrical character of federalism in Russia, the republics used to have more power in comparison to the other regions. As a rule, the republics as ethnically defined units received their titles after the name of the peoples that were autochthonous to their territories. In that sense the autochthonous groups are called the “titular peoples” of the republics. Since 1990, the republics have had asymmetrical and additional powers and rights, because they were re-established from former Soviet Autonomous Republics or Autonomous Regions as national-territorial units (*nacional’no-territorial’nye obrazovanija*) to Russia’s constituent republics as national-state units (*nacional’no-gosudarstvennyye obrazovanija*). In other words, they were now considered as a higher form of statehood of the titular nations. Some republics (Tatarstan, Bashkortostan) were explicitly established by their constitutions as states associated with Russia on the basis of a bilateral treaty (see Zamyatin 2013, 345).

In the early 1990s, along with the upgrading of the republics’ status, republican citizenship was established. Citizenship was a precondition for the possible

introduction of a titular language as a sole official language, because it enabled identifying a language status not only with a territory, but also individually towards the citizens. Even if the republics designated two official languages, their citizenship was still important, because it could justify the compulsory study of both for all citizens.

One reason for promoting minority languages in the public sphere can be substantiated by the need to provide public services to those minority members who do not possess (sufficient) knowledge of the majority language. In the final years of the Soviet Union and in post-Soviet Russia since the turn of the millennium, the core of the policy was the promotion of the Russian language (see Sect. 4 below). At present the use of Russian is obligatory in all public domains. Its compulsory study in school created a situation where this language is known by the vast majority of the population, including those of minority background.

The policy goals in many republics were the protection and promotion of the titular languages as the state languages, as well as the symbolic recognition of the titular peoples, but they were not so concerned with ensuring their political representation (Zamyatin 2013d, 155–157). The creation of the republics and designation of their state languages were, first of all, symbolic acts of recognition.

However, by 2000 a new shift was initiated in Russia's federative structure and political regime. Disputes about federalism resulted in an official emphasis on the undivided nature of Russia's sovereignty. The republics were no longer considered to be sovereign states. The clauses on republican (state) sovereignty were excluded from their constitutions and republican citizenship was abolished. The constitutional language requirement for the head of the republic and other language preferences were considered non-binding (see Zamyatin 2013, 359–360). Apart from some aspects of symbolic recognition, the status of republics was lowered to that of the other subjects of the federation. The state of Russian federalism increasingly resembles the Soviet Union, which was a federative state only on paper. This parallel becomes particularly striking if one studies the issue of decentralization and devolution of power to lower levels of government (see Marten's Chapter "[Parliamentary Structures and Their Impact on Empowering Minority Language Communities](#)" in this volume).

It is notable that in the Russian federal system, territories have an asymmetrical status also in the same category of territories, e.g. the political status of the republics differs and depends on their bilateral treaties with the federal center. Today 32 languages are counted in the category of the state languages of the republics (see Krugovych 2009, 26). Russia's language law laid the foundations for the official status of state languages. The republics elaborate the specific status of languages on their own. The amount of the fixed domains of official language use varies significantly from republic to republic and depends on such variables of the sociolinguistic situation as the absolute number of speakers in a republic, their share in the total population, etc. Despite this diversity and actual inequality in rights, the state languages of the republics are included in the same languages category in Russia's legislation.

Some Russian scholars consider the asymmetry of the federation's subjects as a problem. Indeed, it contradicts Russia's ideology that proclaimed the equality of peoples in rights, but it is also not an exception among multinational federal states (cf. Sect. 3.2 in Zamyatin 2013). In Spain, too, the Basque country has more

powers than the other autonomous regions (see Arzoz' Chapter "The Impact of Language Policy on Language Revitalization" in this volume). Will Kymlicka argues that "equality for individual citizens does not require equal powers for federal units" (Kymlicka 2001, 105). The spirit of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages also implies the asymmetrical situation of different languages. While not going into the details of this discussion, it is enough to state here that, as a consequence of asymmetry among the republics, the number of institutions and the content of domains covered by the official status in the republics of Russia differ. Therefore, what concerns the *first paradox* within the language policy is that, despite the proclaimed equality in rights of all languages of the peoples of Russia, these are not legally equal even in the same category of languages, that is, among the titular languages as the state languages of the republics.

3.2 *The Scope of Official Bilingualism in the Republics*

In Russia, the federal authorities are unilingual, whereas the republican authorities can be bilingual. Official language status and language legislation in Russia is either exclusively under federal jurisdiction or under the joint jurisdiction of federal and regional authorities.

Under the RF Constitution, the Russian Federation has jurisdiction over the regulation of human and civil rights and freedoms, i.e. rights in the linguistic and educational spheres, and determining the basic principles of federal policy with regard to the cultural and national development of the Russian Federation, an integral part of which is state language and education policy (Article 71, paragraphs c and f). Protection of human and civil rights and freedoms and general issues relating to education, culture and language as an integral part of those rights, however, come under the joint jurisdiction of the Russian Federation and its subjects (Article 72, paragraphs b and f). (Tishkov et al. 2009, 21–22)

It thus follows from the stated provisions of the RF Constitution that federal lawmakers have the right to establish the basic principles governing the legal regulation of languages of the peoples of the Russian Federation, including general issues relating to language policy, among them issues pertaining to the status of official languages of Republics in relation to the status of the official language of the Russian Federation. Thus, the status of official languages of federal Republics as affecting the status of the official language of the Russian Federation, the rights and freedoms of her citizens in the realm of education and culture, cannot be a matter for the federal subjects alone. (Tishkov et al. 2009, 21–22)

Historically this widening interpretation of federal jurisdiction became possible only as a part of the recentralization processes initiated under the Putin presidency. Still, as experts admit, "in practice, all matters related to the legal regulation of languages of the peoples of the Russian Federation and the status of official languages of Republics are within the competence of the relevant federal subject" (Tishkov et al. 2009, 21–22). In the foundations of the legislation on culture, "languages" and "dialects" are referred to as cultural values (Article 3). The regulation of the general issues in the field of culture falls under joint jurisdiction (Article 72, paragraph e).

As it was pointed out above, the federal Constitution and federal legislation have supremacy over regional legislation. The republics can have their own language legislation, but this remains subordinate to federal language legislation. David Cashaback argued with respect to Tatarstan that this design of Russia's federative structure was not a direct hindrance to Tatarstan's language policy: "its actions in the field of language policy have largely evolved within, rather than parallel to or outside Russia's federal and constitutional designs" (Cashaback 2008, 250). Cashaback explains the failure of the language revival project by the lack of motivation to implement it due to financial obstacles, organizational insufficiencies, institutional incapacity, and also a lack of internal political commitment of political elites themselves (Cashaback 2008, 258–260, 272). Nonetheless, restrictions of the federative structure could be noted in a structural analysis of the state power bodies and should not be underestimated.

Federalism, discussed in the previous section, provides vertical separation of powers, where federal authorities are unilingual and republican authorities can be bilingual. The official designation of the state languages of the republics and official bilingualism is done by the constitutions of the republics. But these constitutions, except for establishing a language requirement for the head of a republic in some cases, typically do not state exactly which authorities have to be bilingual. The horizontal division of power branches and their regional government bodies, namely the parliament, government/administration, and courts, should be further analyzed in order to understand the functioning of the state languages at the regional level.

The head of a republic and/or of a regional government used to be an overarching and often de facto regional supreme authority. The issue of a language requirement for the head of the republic was addressed in some constitutions. Today, language requirements are still present in the constitutions of eight republics, but these provisions are not in force, because from the late 1990s they were found to be contradictory to the principle of non-discrimination. According to the decision of Russia's Constitutional Court in the case of Bashkortostan (see its Ruling of April 27, 1998), restrictions on passive election rights can be introduced only by federal law or by authorization granted by federal law.

The official language status applies to the work of regional legislatures. The regional executive authorities typically govern the areas of competence in social, cultural, financial, and other spheres that are not regulated by federal authorities. Moreover, authorities such as the Department or Ministry of Nationalities Policy/Inter-Nationality Relations, the Department or Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Culture, the Department or Ministry of Printing and Mass Media would typically be headed by a person of the titular nationality. These authorities have to be bilingual according to regional language laws.

Some federal executive authorities have their regional branches that, however, remain under the federal jurisdiction. These are typically law enforcement authorities such as the regional Ministry of Internal Affairs (*MVD*), regional departments of the Federal Ministry of Justice, of the Federal Security Service (*FSB*), of the Federal Migration Service (*FMS*), Public Prosecutor's Office, etc. Consequently, they are unilingual.

In Soviet times, the judicial authorities were under the jurisdiction of the SSRs and ASSRs. In Russia today the courts and the judicial system as a whole are under the exclusive jurisdiction of federal authorities. So, the issue of language use in the judicial system is regulated by federal legislation. Among other things, this concerns language use in preliminary investigations and court procedure. According to federal legislation, court sessions can be held in the state languages of the republics. The right to interpretation and translation in criminal proceedings is guaranteed, but it is an issue of human rights provided to every individual and not a matter of a language holding official status.

Federal and regional language legislation regulates official language use by public institutions providing public services such as official mass media and public schools. There are federal, regional, and municipal public education institutions in Russia. It is noteworthy that higher education institutions are under federal jurisdiction and, thus, unilingual.

Formally the system of the bodies of local self-government is not a part of the state apparatus and is yet another level of power division. Nevertheless, a language's official status also applies to municipalities. According to Russia's language law, in addition to the state language of Russia and the state languages of the republics, municipal authorities can also use in some public domains in the capacity of official languages the non-titular languages in areas densely populated by individuals having a minority background.

Thus, one can see that the federative structure itself sets restrictions on official language use by authorities at the regional level. Only regional and municipal authorities have to be officially bilingual, but not federal authorities operating in the appropriate areas. This means that even for the "leveled" languages, equality is restricted to some public institutions, otherwise Russian is used. As was noted above, Russia's language policy theoretically allows simultaneous implementation of Russian and titular nation-building projects, which are competing and contradictory, but in practice the federal design sets institutional restrictions on the status planning of the titular languages (the *third paradox*).

3.3 Co-official Status as an Obstacle for Implementation

In all republics the constitutions and/or language laws recognize Russian as another state language of the republic. It could have been argued that as long as Russian is the state language of the whole territory of Russia, there is no sense in reintroducing Russian as yet another state language at the regional level. Historically, in some former ASSRs in Russia such as Chuvashia, Bashkortostan, and Tatarstan, this argument was raised in the political debate. It was presented in the context of a discussion about the possible introduction of the titular language as the sole official language, a similar solution to that taken in the former SSRs (Gorenburg 2003, 210–212).

Taking into consideration the deficiencies of co-official status for a minority language, the introduction of an official status exclusively for a minority language in a particular territory is considered by some scholars as the only effective tool for language protection and promotion. Will Kymlicka argues that

it may not be enough [...] for the minority simply to have the right to use its language in public. It may also be necessary that the minority language be the *only* official language in their territory. If immigrants, or migrants from the majority group, are able to use the majority language in public life, this may eventually undermine the predominant status, and hence viability, of the minority's language. (Kymlicka 2001, 79)

Dmitry Gorenburg believes that the major cause for failure in the case of Tatarstan as compared to the developments in the Basque country and Catalonia is that “the status of Tatar vis-a-vis Russian has not increased greatly since the language revival began” (Gorenburg and Dmitry 2005, 283). Gorenburg speaks about “status”, but arguably he means “social status” and “language prestige” by this. One could elaborate on his argument and claim that the language prestige of the minority language did not rise vis-a-vis the prestige of the majority language despite the co-official status of both languages or precisely because of Tatar's status as co-official and not the sole official language. This argument reinforces the above-mentioned position of Kymlicka on the desirability of awarding the sole official status to the minority language to enhance its vitality.

A decision on the sole official language would have implied that the work of all regional authorities would switch to the titular language as their language in office and that all sessions and proceedings would have to be conducted in the regional language only. Still, apart from political issues, from the perspective of entrenching language practices there is the need for time for creating conditions for a language to function in the capacity of an official language. Independent states like Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan still grapple with this problem after more than two decades of independence.

Out of sociolinguistic and political considerations, the legislators also in Tatarstan decided on co-official status (Zamyatin 2013d, 135–136). Language revival was justified there by the need to achieve actual equal functioning of the state languages, and for that reason these languages are proclaimed to be equal in rights, but also their equal functioning is guaranteed. In a republic such as Tatarstan, the titular language is typically listed first and then Russian. In a republic such as Udmurtia, the sequence could be reversed with Russian symbolically mentioned as the first language (see the next section). Even in the latter case, where the state languages are not established as “leveled”, legally there is no distinction in status between the state languages of a republic. This means that there is no “first official language” and “second official language” (as, for example, in Ireland), although these terms are sometimes used. Furthermore, there is no official term “co-official status of languages”. However, in some republics, such as Bashkortostan, the titular language was proclaimed to be the main target of state support. Also in the other republics the measures of the implementation of the language policy were de facto directed at promotion almost exclusively of the titular languages.

Nevertheless, in practice the titular languages, “leveled” or not, officially prioritized or not, remain far less widely used in the public sphere than Russian. According to Vieyetz (2004), “what seems to affect the contents of officiality is not so much the shared nature of such status but the non-existence of an area within the same state where the language has an exclusive official status”. If in a republic a titular

language were the only official language, authorities would have no excuse but to use it. Since the federal and regional legislation almost always uses the term “state languages of the republics” and Russian is one of them, there is an implanted mechanism which allows one to not use in practice a titular language as the functioning state language. This means that the titular languages of the republics have only a limited official nature. This kind of official bilingualism results in a sociolinguistic situation of functional distribution of diglossia, when it is nearly impossible to expand the use of a language with the lower status (Fishman and Joshua 1967; the author is indebted to Tove Skutnabb-Kangas for this point).

This is how formally proclaiming bilingualism and multilingualism as a norm, such as a non-prescriptive but permissive legal norm, in fact creates a gap which many republican authorities use to escape implementation of the official status of the titular languages in practice in many domains of the public sphere. The limited character of the official status is built into the language policy, but remains its covert element. Furthermore, it undermines the principle of official bilingualism and multilingualism. Therefore, official bilingualism and multilingualism is not a policy goal (the *second paradox*), but rather a consequence of the federative structure and of the co-official status of languages. Furthermore, status planning was intended to promote titular languages, but in practice it favors use of Russian in the public sphere (the *fourth paradox*).

3.4 Language Ideology at the Regional Level—the Finno-Ugric Republics

One could hardly describe Russia’s language policy of the 1990s as unified or even coherent and one should, instead, consider the federal and regional language policies separately. While federal legislation has supremacy, existence of controversies created the field for maneuvering to regional authorities. Perhaps the contradictions have been resolved at the regional level? In fact, the situation was even more complicated in the republics, because the valorization of the titular languages by the authorities in some republics met strong resistance both from the federal center and within the political process inside the republics.

In order to understand what solutions to the ideological contradictions were proposed at the regional level, the policy documents of the Finno-Ugric republics are compared in this section. These republics present an interesting selection of contrasting cases, ranging from “leveled co-official status”, as in the Komi Republic, up to the failure to introduce the titular language as the state language in Karelia. Similar ideas concerning language status planning were present in the public debate in all Finno-Ugric republics. International Finno-Ugric co-operation played an important role in the dissemination of ideas among ethnic elites about ways of national and language revival. These ideas, however, had to be tested in concrete situations with unique distributions of political resources in every republic (cf. Sects. 2.3 and 4.4 in Zamyatin 2013).

The major documents on language policy in the republics were first sovereignty declarations in 1990 and since 1992 constitutions and language laws (see further on the republican constitutions Zamyatin 2013b and 2013c on the language laws). The Komi Declaration of State Sovereignty (August 29, 1990) proclaimed two state languages as functioning equally in the Republic (paragraph 15). The language law (May 28, 1992) confirmed the principle that the state languages function on an equal footing (Article 2). The Komi Constitution (February 17, 1994) did not mention the issue of the equality of the state languages of the Republic (Article 67). At the same time, the Komi language was proclaimed in the Preamble as an object of particular state concern and enjoyed its protection. The 2002 amendment to the law removed mention of particular support and guaranteed instead the maintenance and development of the Komi language and other languages of the peoples.

A wave of regional concepts of the nationalities policy followed the approval of Russia's analogous Concept in summer 1996. The Komi Concept (October 10, 1996) had as the policy goal and priority in the political sphere the constitutional provision on "(2.3.) maintenance and development of the Komi language, culture, and traditional lifestyle according to international principles and norms concerning indigenous peoples", that is, it pursued the policy of promotion of the Komi language. As in the case of the respective provisions of the Constitution (see Zamyatin 2013, 349–350), the Public Prosecutor protested in 2003 (May 12, 2003) against the provisions of the Concept containing the claim of sovereignty and the goal of the maintenance and development of the Komi language, culture, and traditional lifestyle according to international principles and norms concerning indigenous peoples. The Concept was amended and the protested provision on the policy goal formulated as the new goal of "(2.3.) preservation and development of the language, traditional culture, and lifestyle of the Komi and other peoples residing in the Republic" by a decree of the Republic's State Council (June 5, 2003).

The other language policy goals established by the Concept in the cultural sphere were "(3.1.) state support of the language programs of the national organizations, creation of conditions for learning the state languages", "(3.2.) ensuring of the right of the peoples for the preservation and development of national cultures and languages", "(3.3.) creation of the conditions for the development of national schools, receiving education in the national (native) language". In the original text a goal was mentioned on "(3.5.) preservation and development of culture and language of the Komi people, the creation of a system of Komi national education." By the 2003 amendment to the Concept this latter goal was excluded. Thus, equality of the peoples and their languages became prevalent over promotion of the Komi language. There were no statements on bilingualism and multilingualism in the legislation.

The Declaration of State Sovereignty of the Mari SSR (October 22, 1990, paragraph 5) guaranteed the equal functioning of the Mari language (in its Hill and Meadow varieties) and the Russian language as the state languages of the Republic, whereas the language law (October 26, 1995, Preamble, Articles 38 and 58) gave them equal rights.

In Udmurtia, not the formal equal status, but only the equal use of the state languages has to be ensured by the language law (November 27, 2001, Article 5).

Furthermore, the Russian language is listed first, and then Udmurt, in the Declaration of State Sovereignty of Udmurtia (September 20, 1990), later in the constitution (December 7, 1994) and in the language law. Officially, there is no “first” or “second” state language (see Sect. 3.3 above), yet the laws list the languages in different order, and this order in which they are listed matters. Usually, in the policy documents of the other republics, the titular language would be named first and then Russian. Therefore, the different order of listing them has a symbolic meaning (see the previous section). The latter circumstance is one of the examples that demonstrate how the official status of the titular languages is also asymmetrical among the republics.

The language law preamble states that the Republic of Mari El “ensures the maintenance and development of the Mari language as the basis for the national culture”. However, “in the Udmurt Republic the maintenance and development of the language and culture of the Udmurt people, the language and culture of the other peoples [...] is guaranteed” says its Constitution (December 7, 1994, Article 1).

The Concepts of the State Nationalities Policy in the two Republics do not mention equality of languages. In the Mari El Concept (December 13, 1997) the policy goal is “to create necessary conditions for study and broadening the social functions of the Mari (Hill and Meadow varieties) language as the state language of the Republic of Mari El, to develop national preschool institutions and national schools as the instrument of maintenance and development of the Mari language”, while the policy goal for Russian is “to ensure optimal conditions for its development as the state language and the language of inter-nationality communication”. In the Udmurtia Concept (February 6, 1998) the policy goal is “to ensure optimal conditions for development of the Russian language as the common state language and the language of inter-nationality communication, the Udmurt language as one of the state languages of the Udmurt Republic, and the languages of the other peoples living in the Republic”.

Neither do the two concepts list bilingualism among the goals and priorities of the nationalities policies. The Udmurtia Concept directs the policy implementation programs to include measures “to broaden the sphere of use of national languages, facilitate development of state bilingualism and social multilingualism by the integrating role of the Russian language”. The Mari El Concept directs the implementation programs to include measures “to facilitate the implementation of the language law of Mari El”. The language law of the republic of Mari El reassured the republican “support for the development of the national languages, bilingualism, and multilingualism”. Both the language laws and the concepts replicated and later maintained the original statement on “bilingualism and multilingualism as the norm” of the preamble of Russia’s language law. Formally it would be accurate to say that there is official bilingualism in the Republics, established by the co-official status of the state languages.

The national movement in Mordovia was peculiar in that the idea of developing two-sided Russian-ethnic and ethnic-Russian bilingualism was persistently sustained and included among the decisions of the Congresses, even if it was not taken seriously by the authorities. The first All-Russia Congress of the Mordvin (Erzya and Moksha) People in its resolution (March 15, 1992) presented the demand of parietal

bilingualism. Arguably, the striving for unification and creating a united Mordvin language was justified by the need in promoting bilingualism to offer Russians just one language to learn (Mosin 2008). However, the Draft Concept on the Main Direction of the Implementation of the State Nationalities Policy in Mordovia was made public only in 2011 (December 15, 2011). The language legislation in Mordovia does not proclaim either equality of the state languages or particular support for the titular languages, nor does it mention bilingualism as the goal.

Despite numerous attempts by the local ethnic elites to change the situation, Russian remains the sole state language in Karelia. A policy document was passed only in 2007 under the title of basic directions for the implementation of the state policy in the sphere of the national development, inter-nationality cooperation, and interaction with religious organizations (December 31, 2007). The assistance for the development of national cultures and languages of the peoples and ethnic groups is listed among the policy principles. One of the basic directions in the political sphere is prioritized support for the preservation and development of language, culture, traditional livelihoods, and the lifestyle of the “indigenous peoples of Karelia” along with the (regular) support for the preservation and development of the language and culture of the peoples and other ethnic entities traditionally living in the territory of the Republic of Karelia. The implementation mechanism of these provisions consists of the measures prescribed by the Law on State Support of the Karelian, Veps, and Finnish languages. In the conditions of the sole state language there is no equality and promotion of the titular language(s), despite the “prioritized support” declared. There is no goal or any mention of multilingualism.

Therefore, the republics’ policy documents laid the foundations for the official status of their state languages that largely reflected the ideas of equality, language revival, bilingualism and multilingualism that had been laid down in the federal policy documents, such as the 1991 Declaration of the Languages and later the 1996 Concept of Russia’s State Nationalities Policy. As the analysis of the policy documents demonstrates, the regional authorities were not able to overcome the inherent ideological contradictions. Moreover, the early choice of the official designation of languages as the means of language revival could have itself restricted the range of ideas at hand and, thus, might have been a source of contradictions (see Zamyatin 2013). In line with one more policy shift in the early 2010s, the republics will draft new policy documents which will undoubtedly reflect the new Strategy of the State Nationalities Policy of the Russian Federation Up to 2025 (December 19, 2012; see also next section).

4 Russia’s Language Ideology after 2000—Unity in Variety?

Russia’s nationalities and language policies go hand in hand, because ethno-linguistic communities are accommodated in Russia’s political-legal system not as linguistic minorities but as “peoples”. The aims of language policy coincide or at least depend on the aims of the nationalities policy. Substantial changes have taken place in the

nationalities policy of Russia, which are linked with the changes in the federalism policy and regional policy since Vladimir Putin became the Russian president in 2000. Putin's plan for recentralization and rearrangement of the "power vertical" has led to a principal transformation of the political regime towards the dominance of the federal center and considerable reduction of regional powers. Federalism as a model for accommodation of ethnic diversity began to be presented as a temporary compromise. The ethnically defined units of the federation are being challenged, their nation-building projects discouraged, and the Soviet understanding of nations deconstructed. Ethnicity was declared to be a cultural and not a political issue. The future of Russia was envisaged as that of the nation-state (see Zamyatin 2013).

4.1 Russia's Nation-Building Agenda, Nationalities and Language Policy

Behind the heated political debates provoked by the turn in the federalism and nationalities policy, Russian federal authorities preferred to implement their own nation-building agenda covertly through a reform in education. Already in 2001 a Concept of Modernization of Russian Education was approved that envisaged a decade-long reform process (December 29, 2001). Simultaneously, the Draft Concept of the State Ethno-National Educational Policy was worked out in the Institute for Problems of National Education at the Russian Ministry of Education, although the agenda was still hidden at that time and was presented only in 2004. In the scientific substantiation of the document, institute director Mikhail Kuzmin stated that this Concept should have been developed at the same time as the 1996 Concept of Nationalities Policy as its sub-document in the field of education. The draft document recognized that the "ethnoses" have their own needs that sometimes are alternative to the needs of the state, which creates a conflict of interest between the dominating "ethnos" and other "ethnoses". However, instead of providing reconciliation for this conflict, the document positively assessed the 1960s–1970s Soviet policy of an accelerated drawing together (*sbliženie*) and merger (*slijanie*) of nationalities into a single "Soviet people" with Russian as a "second native language" (see Zamyatin 2012, 29–30).

Within two years the Concept of the National Educational Policy of the Russian Federation was approved by the order of the Russian Minister of Education (August 3, 2006). This was done to escape political debate, which followed only with the adoption in 2007 of the amendments to the Law on Education. In fact, the Concept, which by its name should have been restricted to the nationalities policy in education, in many ways actually substituted the 1996 Concept. This was the first policy document that explicitly aims at nation-building and namely at "spiritual consolidation of the multinational people of the Russian Federation into a united political nation". Even though formally there is still a general principle of equal rights of the languages of peoples of the Russian Federation for their maintenance and development, the document intends to "overcome negative tendencies of the last decade and

avoid, among other things, that educational institutions with native (non-Russian) and Russian (non-native) languages of instruction be turned into an instrument of ethnic mobilization.” In other words, implicitly nation-building in the republics is considered as an obstacle in the politics of identity, and language revival in education is assessed as unwanted (see Zamyatin 2012, 30–31).

A new leading document in the field, the Strategy of Nationalities Policy Up to 2025 was recently approved by a Presidential decree (December 19, 2012). The significance of this document cannot be overestimated, because it probably marks the beginning of the next and third stage in the nationalities policy of post-Soviet Russia. However, in its aims the Strategy is again not entirely consistent and it remains unclear what kind of nation will be built. According to the document, the policy aims at: “strengthening the all-Russian civic identity (*obščerossijskoe graždanskoe samosoznanie*) and spiritual unity of the multinational people of the Russian Federation (Russian nation)” (*rossijskoj nacii*); “maintenance and development of ethno-cultural diversity of the peoples of Russia”; “harmonization of national and inter-nationality (inter-ethnic) relations”; “ensuring the equality of rights of man and citizen regardless of race, nationality, language, attitude towards religion, and other circumstances”; “successful cultural and social adaptation and integration of immigrants” (paragraph 17, author’s translation).

If until recently Russia’s political leadership envisaged construction of a civic nation as the policy aim, which is listed as the first aim in the document, then in the last two years authorities have modified the nation-building project. In the light of a recent rise in Russian ethnic nationalism, it is no wonder that the “civic” and “political” attributes of the nation have been toned down lately in the public discourse. A new feature of the document is a special role assigned to the ethnic Russian people (*russkij narod*) among the peoples of Russia, which should be considered as an attempt to accommodate the demands of Russian nationalists. Among their demands was the recognition of the state-forming role of the ethnic Russian people. Although the Strategy has not defined ethnic Russians as “the founding nation of the state”, it states, *inter alia*, that

The Russian State (*rossijskoe gosudarstvo*) was created as a unity of peoples that historically had the Russian people (*russkij narod*) as its system-forming kernel. Thanks to the uniting role of the Russian people, to centuries-long inter-cultural and inter-ethnic interaction, a unique cultural variety and spiritual commonality of different peoples was formed on the historical territory of the Russian State. The Russian State is united by a single cultural (civilizational) code that is based on the maintenance and development of the Russian culture and language (*russkoj kul’tury i jazyka*), on the historical-cultural heritage of all peoples of Russia and that is characterized by a special pursuit of truth and justice, by respect to distinctive traditions of the peoples living in Russia, and by the ability to integrate their best achievements into a united Russian culture (*rossijskiju kul’turu*). (paragraph 11, author’s translation)

Therefore, despite a certain move towards a more coherent policy, the 2012 Strategy of the Nationalities Policy has not answered at the level of ideology the question of what the Russian nation is. Several scenarios in building the Russian nation, civic and ethnic Russian, Eastern Slavic and even Russophone, continue to coexist in a

status quo of purposeful ambiguity serving various political ends (see Shevel 2011). Ambiguity in the ideology has already resulted in a number of inconsistent state policies, and one example of this inconsistency is listed in the first section on the early formation of Russia's language policy with all its paradoxes. However, the range of nation-building scenarios supposes a certain vector of developments in language policy which in effect may reduce the number of inconsistencies.

4.2 *Overcoming the Contradictions in Language Ideology*

The implementation of the nation-building project and particularly of the nation-state project in Russia is complicated, among other things, by the plenitude of its languages, cultures, and religions. Indeed, cultural, linguistic, and religious diversity could be a challenge for the unification of a nation. The selection of a nation-building scenario is influenced by the need for diversity management. Language policy could provide devices for unification by undermining the principles supporting diversity such as equality, state support of language, and bilingualism.

The attempts to overcome the paradoxes discussed in the first section of this article have not marked a milestone of official language policy, but rather were pursued in a routine manner of de facto application. One example of this creeping process in policy development is devaluation of the concept of equality of languages. According to the recent opinion of experts, trusted to express statements on the official policy, the equality established in Russia's language law should be narrowly interpreted only as "functional equality", that is, equality *only* among the languages in their status of "the languages of the peoples of the Russian Federation" as opposed to languages of migrants or foreign languages, but not in other statuses (Tishkov et al. 2009, 19–20; Petrov et al. 2012, 50).

To develop this distinction, the term "legal regime of language" was proposed instead of the term "official (legal) status of language", where the former term is attributed the benefit that it does not consider languages as actors and denies their capacity of having rights [10–11 Dorovskich 2005, cf. also Sect. 2 in Zamyatin (2013)]. So far the definitions of the terms "legal regime of language" or "official status of language" have not found their way into legislation, but in practice different legal regimes for languages are enforced:

1. "the languages of the peoples of the Russian Federation";
2. "the state language of the Russian Federation";
3. "the state languages of the republics"; and
4. "the native languages".

Thus, in solving the *first paradox* on the equality of languages, its scope is narrowly interpreted in the official discourse nowadays only as "formal equality", "symbolical equality" of rights, but not equality of opportunities for languages.

The 2012 Strategy of the Nationalities Policy contains only a few vague provisions on the language policy, even if it includes management of linguistic diversity within the field of nationalities policy (cf. Zamyatin 2013). The document is quite detailed, which is why omissions of some topics are symptomatic. Among the striking omissions in the otherwise quite detailed document is the absence of any reference to the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. It is remarkable that the Strategy does not mention equality of languages but only emphasizes equality of citizens regardless of their knowledge of languages, which in effect promotes Russian as the state language, because its compulsory use following from this status cannot be restricted by the principle of non-discrimination on the basis of language. One interpretation of equality is, therefore, employed by its link to the prohibition of discrimination on the grounds of language. In response to international criticism on the absence of a comprehensive anti-discrimination provision in many pieces of Russian legislation (e.g. Second Opinion on the Russian Federation, April 26, 2005) the need for the separation of the state and ethnicity has been advocated (cf, e.g. Osipov and Sapozhnikov 2004; Tishkov et al. 2009; Stepanov 2010).

Addressing the issue of bi- and multilingualism that was denoted in this study as the *second paradox*, the 2006 Concept of the National Education Policy admits that “official bilingualism presupposes state support for the functioning of two languages in the state and social sphere”. Furthermore, it recognizes the need to develop programs for general education institutions on a bilingual basis. However, it does not proclaim bilingualism as its goal and does not intend to promote bilingualism, but only to monitor “the tendencies in development of processes directed at satisfaction of the ethno-cultural educational demands in regions of the Russian Federation, including the processes in the sphere of national-Russian and Russian-national bilingualism”. In other words, the Concept treats bilingualism as a mere societal characteristic and not as a guide for action.

The 2012 Strategy of the Nationalities Policy does not envisage bilingualism as a goal or as a result of the policy. The idea of bi- and multilingualism have found their place only in the field of education that included the tasks of “the improvement of the system of teaching in the general educational institutions for the purpose of maintenance and development of cultures and languages of the peoples of Russia” and “the usage in the education system of bi- and multilingualism as an effective way of maintenance and development of ethno-cultural and linguistic diversity of Russian society” (see paragraph 21 f (e)). Actually these provisions were added only when the draft strategy, sent to federal and regional authorities for consultation, was criticized in the regions for its lack of a mention of state support for public schools with teaching in and of non-Russian languages.

Furthermore, the idea of the formal equality of languages is re-introduced as an argument against the preference for state languages of the republics. According to the expert narrow interpretation, Russian as the state language at the federal level and the titular languages in their capacity as state languages at the regional level do not enjoy equal status, which should by their logic solve the *third paradox* regarding the competition of the nation-building projects. The unwritten idea, which nevertheless can be easily deduced from the Strategy, is that Russian as the state language is more

important than all other languages, among other things because it enjoys the exclusive function of the language of inter-nationality communication. In other words, promotion of Russian as the dominant language is more important than support for multilingualism. Moreover, the state languages of the republics are not in an equal position even among themselves. In line with asymmetrical federalism, they have an asymmetrical official status. This is another unwritten idea, which is reflected in legislation, that the state languages are still legally more important than “the languages of the peoples of the Russian Federation” with no official status.

Most importantly for the current study, if in the 1990s it was the co-official status for the state languages of the republics that backed equality of languages in this category, official bilingualism, and the ability to pursue the nation-building of the republics, then neither the 2012 Strategy nor the 2006 Concept ever mention the very words “the state languages of the republics”. Therefore, these documents imply an unambiguous solution for the *fourth paradox* consisting in the virtual impossibility of using the official status as a means of language revival. There is still no consensus among Russian legal scholars on whether the state language is an indispensable attribute of the State. Some authors (e.g. Ljaščenko 2004), count the state language as one of the main attributes of the State, while others (e.g. Voroneckij 2009), consider it to be an optional attribute. Still others deny any significance of the state language as an attribute of the State. There are voices that propose substituting the term “state language” with “official language” (cf. Vasil’eva 2007, 6) or removing it altogether, because there can be no state language without the State.

4.3 Valorization of the Russian Language

Concerns about the worrying position of Russian in some of Russia’s republics and about its international decline have been expressed officially for more than a decade and the corresponding need for the protection and promotion of Russian has been advocated. A public campaign resulted in amendments to Russia’s Language Law (Federal Laws of July 24, 1998 and December 11, 2002) and the adoption of the Federal Law on the State Language of the Russian Federation (June 1, 2005). These documents together with the regularly renewed federal target program “Russian Language” ensured a privileged position of Russian over all other languages in Russia, because Russian is seen as a tool of ensuring cultural unity, combating minority nationalism, and preventing regional separatism (e.g. Ilišev 1997, 180).

Despite the formal maintenance of the duality of the goal in its new formula of “unity in variety” (Russia’s Third Report 2010), the implementation of the nation-building project will inevitably lead to a move towards unification at the expense of diversity. Despite a noticeable attempt to balance linguistically the use of the terms “Russian” and “the languages of the peoples of Russia”, the 2012 Strategy of the Nationalities Policy lists in the section on support of the languages [paragraph 21 g (zh)] more specific tasks directed at the promotion of Russian among the languages

of the peoples of Russia, because it is “the state language of the Russian Federation, the language of inter-nationality communication, and one of the official languages of international organizations”. In addition, some tasks are directed at an exclusive promotion of Russian among migrants and abroad [paragraph 21 h (z) tasks 1 and 6 and k (l) task 2].

In the elaboration of the Strategy, a three-year Action Plan for its implementation was approved (July 2, 2013) and the Federal Targeted Program “Strengthening of the Unity of the Russian Nation and the Ethno-cultural Development of the Peoples of Russia (2014–2020)” (August 25, 2013). While the Action Plan contains a bundle of measures corresponding to the policy goals defined in the Strategy, many of the measures are assigned with budgetary funding through the Federal Program. Among the measures for the promotion of Russian was the re-establishment in November 2013 of the Council of the Russian Language within the Russian government.

Along with domestic transformations, alternative visions of the Russian nation force the authorities to intensify their support for the Russian language abroad, inter alia, through activities of the Federal Agency for the Commonwealth of Independent States’ Affairs, Compatriots Living Abroad, and International Humanitarian Cooperation under the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Petrov et al. 2012, 45–47). By 2020, the Agency plans to establish over one hundred “Russian Centers of Science and Culture”, which aim to offer courses in the Russian language, promote Russia’s literature and culture abroad, and organize related events. These later developments enhance the Russophone and ethnic Russian version of nation-building.

Further discursive shifts could be expected at the ideology level. Criticism of the late Soviet formula “Russian as the language of inter-nationality communication”, that accompanied discussions on the position of Russian in some republics, might have a certain impact on policy. It is argued that, as a result of the titular language revival in such places, both Russians and non-Russians find themselves in a disadvantaged situation because they lack a perfect knowledge of Russian. The argument states further that a poor command of Russian derives from its role only as a limited tool of “inter-nationality communication” and from its teaching to non-Russians for the narrow purpose of such communication, while it should be taught for full proficiency (which sounds similar to the old Soviet formula of a “second mother tongue”, see Haarmann 1992, 111).

In recent times an “innovative” slogan has been proposed which claims that Russian has become the national wealth (*nacional’noe dostojanie*) not only of the Russian people, but also of the peoples of Russia (Guboglo, Mikhail, and Julian Bromlej 1984; Ljaščenko 2002; Guboglo 2007). This line of argument challenges the widespread idea (particularly among the ethnic elites of larger peoples) that the Russian language was a tool of Russification, and insists that it has (also) been a tool of maintaining cultures by translating them into Russian and, via its mediation, to the world. The proposed criterion to measure if Russian has already become the national wealth of a people is a simple one: if Russian is reported as the native language by more than half of the representatives of a people (e.g. Karelians) then it has become the property of this people. This idea is backed by the statistics that practically all Russian citizens today know Russian.

Another newly proposed ideologeme regarding the role of the Russian language in society as the all-civic language of solidarity (Guboglo 2007) corresponds to the civic vision of the nation. Alternative versions call the Russian language “the wealth of all Russia and the basis of the State’s unity” (Petrov et al. 2012, 54). For the first time at the top level, emphasis was laid recently on “Russian as the language of the Russian nation” in a paper for the session of the Russian State Council, an advisory body to the Russian head of state, held in Ufa in February 2011 and devoted to the nationalities policy (see the Russian State Council Report 2011).

5 Conclusion

Different ideas simultaneously exist in any society about the languages and the state. At a given time a certain set of ideas might become predominant on the political agenda and cause a turn in the language policy. Depending on the dominating ideology, it is possible to distinguish stages in the development of language policy. In Russia, a turn in the nationalities policy and language policy has taken place three times within the last two decades: in the early 1990s, around the year 2000, and with Putin’s re-election in the early 2010s.

The most obvious contradiction of the early 1990s was between one’s freedom of language choice and the compulsory use implied by an official status of languages, marking the line between the private and public spheres of language use. In the public sphere, the first contradiction was between the proclaimed equality and the hierarchy of languages also established by their official statuses. Furthermore, preferential state support of some languages, usually titular languages with an official status, raised among other issues the matter of prohibition of discrimination on the basis of language. While expansion of compulsory use of titular languages in the public sphere was chosen as the main tool of language revival, the co-official status of Russian and titular languages in regions largely prevented this expansion in many domains. Finally, despite language revival as the policy goal, multilingualism was posited neither as a goal nor as a result of the policy. As one can see, the official status of a state language lies at the heart of all contradictions.

The freedom of language choice, the principles of equality of languages, multilingualism, state support for language revival, and anti-discrimination clauses, which are all proclaimed in Russia’s language law, have not changed the dominant position of the Russian language over other languages. As one can see from the analysis, the ideological statements on equality and multilingualism were only vaguely reflected in the real implementation of the language policy both at the federal and regional levels. They rather remained only a separate “world of ideas” estranged from a “world of things”. Language status planning was chosen as the main path of the language policy. Due to a still prevalent Soviet-style legal culture, there were only a few individual language rights set in the legislation. Regulations are mostly of a “top-down” character and contain a policy-based approach.

The Russian state and the languages were linked through introduction of the state languages. The hierarchy of the official statuses of languages was fixed in the Russian constitution. The official status of Russian as the state language of the Russian Federation and of the titular languages as the state languages of the republics is central to Russia's language legislation. The federal design constrains language policies in the republics. Despite the absence of a formal regulation on the matter, since the adoption of the federal constitution there has been an unwritten rule that only both Russian and titular languages could be designated as the state languages of the republics, but not the titular language alone. By this, a device was planted in the policy mechanism which covertly allowed not using in practice a titular language in its parallel functioning as one of the state languages in the republics.

In effect, only a limited officiality was achieved for the titular languages despite the equality of the state languages originally implied and even formally proclaimed in some republics. The official status of titular languages might have had an impact in raising their prestige, but it has not been an effective tool for extending their use in the public sphere. Great efforts still had to be invested in the implementation of concrete measures in various domains of public language use, in order to influence language practices. Otherwise, the co-official status of the titular language(s) on a par with Russian in practice favored the use of Russian.

All-in-all, language legislation of the 1990s did not try to solve contradictions in ideology inherited from the Soviet times. It was a compromise and merely reflected the current state of the art and trends in policies on nationalities and languages, which were considered only part of a broader political battle going on in Russia. Both the protection and promotion of the titular languages as the state languages and the symbolic recognition of the republics as the nationhood of titular peoples were the main justifications for the language policy in many republics. The policy of language revival and the policy of recognition were at the core of dynamics in linguistic politics at that period.

Around the year 2000, when the threat of the disintegration of the Russian state had passed, the ideas of Russia's rebirth as "a world power" and the corresponding need to restore a "power vertical" were re-introduced into the public debate. At the turn of the millennium the process of bringing regional legislation "into compliance" with federal legislation was initiated. As a result of amendments to the constitutions of the republics, the reference to their sovereignty was dropped, which challenges the status of their state languages as well. The Russian language started to be presented as a tool of ensuring the cultural unity of the Russian nation.

In the beginning of the second decade of the new millennium, Russian nation-building became an official policy with the approval of Russia's Strategy of the Nationalities Policy and its accompanying package of documents. However, recent years have also been characterized by the rise of Russian nationalism. As the latter is irreconcilable with scenarios of a political or civic nation, in a longer term the project of a "Russian nation" might fail, becoming associated with Putin's authoritarian regime in the same way as the project of building a "Soviet people" became associated with the Brezhnev era of stagnation (cf. Zamyatin 2013).

These policy shifts of the 2000s and 2010s largely complicated the implementation of language revival projects in the republics. The reluctance to implement them, or even opposition to doing so, became a hidden agenda of the federal and some regional authorities. The regional policies of language revival and the protection of the titular languages as the state languages started to be challenged. These projects began to be openly evaluated as obstacles to the new policy of identity. Insufficient implementation of national revival projects is in line with the logic of the implementation of the competing nation-building project of the united Russian political nation.

Nowadays the official status of the state languages in the republics is still an element of institutionalized ethnicity and an element of the stabilized political regime. Inconsistencies and contradictions in language ideology allowed diametric turns in language policy. In line with the last turn in Russia's language policy, marked by the 2012 strategy, the official status could be challenged, because the authorities could consider it an obstacle to Russia's nation-building. Consequently, most scenarios of nation-building assume the removal of the official status of non-Russian languages.

Therefore, exploration of the status planning of the state languages in the republics would further contribute to understanding what the policy actually is, how official bilingualism works, and what influence the official status has had on minority languages. If the metaphor describing dynamics around nationalities affairs in Russian politics as the political pendulum is correct, then someday another diametrical turn in Russia's policy could be expected. So far, it seems, the swing of the pendulum has not yet reached its zenith.

List of International, Soviet and Russian Official Documents and Legal Acts

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- 1990 Declaration of State Sovereignty of the RSFSR of 12 June 1990.
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- 1992 Council of Europe's European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages of 5 November 1992, ETS No. 148.
- 1992 Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the Russian Federation On the Draft Concept of the State Program of the Maintenance and Development of the Languages of the Peoples of Russian Federation of 1 June 1992.
- 1992 Law of the Russian Federation On Education of 10 July 1992.
- 1992 Foundations of the Legislation of the Russian Federation On Culture of 9 October 1992.
- 1993 Constitution of the Russian Federation of 12 December 1993.

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- 1990 Declaration of State Sovereignty of the Karelian ASSR of 9 August 1990.
- 1990 Declaration of State Sovereignty of the Komi ASSR of 29 August 1990.
- 1990 Declaration of State Sovereignty of the Mari SSR of 22 October 1990.
- 1990 Declaration of State Sovereignty of the Udmurt Republic of 20 September 1990.
- 1990 Law of the Tuvinian ASSR On the Languages in the Tuvinian ASSR of 14 December 1990.

- 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Tatarstan of 30 November 1992.
- 1992 Law of the Komi Republic On the State Languages of the Komi Republic of 28 May 1992.
- 1992 Resolution of the first Congress of the Mordvin (Erzyan and Mokshan) People of 15 March 1992.
- 1993 Constitution of the Republic of Tyva of 21 October 1993.
- 1993 Law of the Republic of Karelia on the Amendment to the Constitution of 24 December 1993.
- 1994 Constitution of the Komi Republic of 17 February 1994.
- 1994 Constitution of the Republic of Dagestan of 26 July 1994.
- 1994 Constitution of the Udmurt Republic of 7 December 1994.
- 1994 Law of the Republic of Tyva On the Amendments to the Law of Tuvinian ASSR On the Languages in the Tuvinian ASSR of 29 June 1994.
- 1995 Law of the Republic of Mari El On the Languages of the Republic of Mari El of 26 October 1995.
- 1996 Concept of the State Nationality Policy of the Komi Republic, approved by the Decree of the State Council of the Komi Republic of 10 October 1996.
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- 1998 Concept of the State Nationality Policy of the Udmurt Republic, approved by the Decree of the Government of the Udmurt Republic of 6 February 1998.
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The Impact of Language Policy on Language Revitalization

The Case of the Basque Language

Xabier Arzoz

Abstract The assertion of language rights recognized on behalf of speakers of a non-dominant language requires a sustained long-term language planning. This chapter will analyze the impact, on the revitalization of the Basque language, of language policies implemented in the Basque Country after the proclamation of the Spanish constitution (1978) and the transformation of Spains authoritarian unitary regime into a decentralized democratic state. It will focus on two key areas of language revitalization, education and public administration. The Basque experience shows the effectiveness of selective intensive policies that focus on those segments of population most engaged and supportive of social change.

Keywords Basque language · Language rights · Language policy · Decentralization · Language revitalization

1 Introduction

In recent times, many language activists and sociolinguists have put much hope in the recognition and development of language rights, with a view to protect and promote endangered languages and even to contribute to their revitalization. Certainly, the rights discourse has proven very useful for many vulnerable groups in recent decades.

Nevertheless, language rights on behalf of non-dominant languages are not freedom rights that demand simply non-interference from state authorities, but rights require from authorities a positive, long-term sustained activity to assert them (Arzoz 2009). They do not merely imply the transfer of public resources as it is in the case of socio-economic rights, but also the changing of social and personal attitudes. In particular, the recognition of a right to use a non-dominant language in relationships with public administrations and courts requires the organization, formation, involvement and commitment of public servants that may have first to acquire

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that language and, then, be persuaded to effectively speak and write in a language that it is not their mother tongue; even if it is their mother tongue, they may not have been educated in that language and/or be used to employ it in formal contexts. Equality of languages, especially if one of them is a non-dominant language, cannot be achieved without adequate language planning.

This chapter will address the impact, on the revitalization of the Basque language, of language policies implemented in the Basque Country after the proclamation of the Spanish constitution (1978) and the transformation of Spain's authoritarian unitary regime into a decentralized democratic state. The focus will be on public policies, rather than on work carried on by non-governmental actors (on non-governmental actors, cf. Tejerina (2006)).

I will begin by outlining the foundations of the institutionalization of minority languages and cultures within the Spanish constitutional order, and the declining situation of the Basque language at the end of the 1970s. I will then analyze the implementation of language policy regarding two key areas of language revitalization, education and public administration. The impact of language policy on language revitalization will be shown with some empirical data. Finally, some conclusions will evaluate the results of the Basque language planning and the factors of its relative success.

2 The Spanish Linguistic Model

Since 1978, the protection of minority languages is constitutionally enshrined in Spain. Article 3(3) of the Constitution of 1978 declares that '(t)he richness of the linguistic modalities of Spain is a cultural patrimony which will be the object of special respect and protection'.

The constitutional 'linguistic model' has two basic aspects. The first aspect is unilingualism at the central state level: Castilian is the official language of Spain. This implies that the characteristics of the traditional unitary state may be largely preserved and that the whole panoply of state institutions continues to operate only in one language. The second aspect is formal bilingualism at the regional level in certain autonomous communities. Regional or minority languages have been given official status (so-called 'co-official languages') within their geographical areas, in addition to the official language of the state [(on official-language rights as a normative category of language rights, cf. Arzoz (2010)]. Unlike some federal states, under Spanish constitutional law and under language legislation passed by autonomous communities, all authorities located in a bilingual territory are deemed to abide by the co-official status of the respective language: the co-official status has territorial character.

Consequently, six officially bilingual territories (Castilian-Basque, Castilian-Catalan/Valencian or Castilian-Galician) have emerged in the Autonomous Communities of the Basque Country, Balearic Islands, Catalonia, Galicia, Navarre and Valencia, while an extended and continuous territory remains Castilian-speaking only



Fig. 1 Territorial autonomy and officially bilingual autonomous communities in Spain

(see Fig. 1). In contrast, languages and linguistic modalities that are spoken in other autonomous communities tend to be merely protected in a non-rights-based approach (cf. Arzoz 2009b): the languages are not considered official and their speakers do not generally enjoy linguistic rights, although the relevant autonomous communities may facilitate some uses of them in specified social settings (for instance, in Asturias).

The constitutional framework leaves open many options. There is no common ('federal') legislation on the use of co-official languages, as this is a matter constitutionally devolved to bilingual autonomous communities. The linguistic model and the territorial model are intrinsically linked. Spain is a decentralized state divided into 17 autonomous communities with legislative and executive competencies shared between these two levels of government. The legislation on and the protection of co-official languages are issues generally devolved to the relevant autonomous communities. The power to legislate on the extent and legal effects of the co-official status is a competence of so-called horizontal character: on the one hand, public authorities belonging to any level of government (regional, local, central) located in a bilingual autonomous community are obliged to comply with the language legislation and subordinate legislation in accordance with their respective powers and duties; on the other hand, the specific competencies of the central government cannot hamper or restrict the exercise of that legislative power (Vernet et al. 2003, 97–101).

3 The Basque Country and Its Language

The Basque Country has an area of 20,742 km² and a population of approximately three millions. It comprises seven territories, three North of the Pyrenees and four in the South. The three territories North of the Pyrenees are Laburdi (Labourd), Nafarroa Beherea (Basse Navarre) and Zuberoa (Soule), and belong to *Département Pyrénées Atlantiques* in France. The Southern four territories constitute two administratively distinct Spanish autonomous communities: the Basque Autonomous Community (made up of Araba (Álava), Gipuzkoa (Guipúzcoa) and Bizkaia (Vizcaya)) and Navarre.

Euskara (the Basque language) is an isolate language that has managed to survive in an Indo-European environment and surrounded by two powerful Romance languages, Spanish and French. Living within a Latin and Romance environment for the last two thousands years has exerted influence on its vocabulary as well as phonology and grammar (cf. Hualde and de Urbina 2003).

The Basque language was used in most areas of the current Basque Country, but in early times it started to retreat, first very slowly and later, in relatively recent times, faster, due mainly to the increasing of communications, the generalization of education, the apparition of mass media, a strong Spanish-speaking immigration which accompanied industrialization, and the prohibition and repression during Franco's dictatorship (1939–1975). To confront social processes connected with modernity, the Basque language has had some intrinsic weaknesses: first, the language was never very widely used at the institutional level; second, it possessed a weak written tradition, since priority was granted to oral literature; third, the language was divided in many dialects, and language standardization did not start until 1968 and it has not finished so far (Hualde and Zuazo 2007).

Both language marginalization and revitalization are linguistic processes driven by socio-political factors. The main socio-political factors impinging on the revitalization of the Basque language in historical perspective are the following. In 1895, a Basque nationalist party was grounded; this was the starting point of ethno-political mobilization. Initially Basque nationalism was strongly racial and Catholic fundamentalist in character, while language played a subordinate role. Basque nationalism achieved some political success during the Spanish second republic (1931–1939). However, the Franco's dictatorship put an end to the Basque self-government chances opened by the second republics constitution of 1931. Basque nationalist discourse became predominant after the restoration of democracy.

The second relevant factor is the emergence of a linguistic consciousness and the cultural renaissance from the 1950s and 1960s onwards. On the one hand, Basque nationalism started to be reformulated predominantly in linguistic terms [on nationalism and language, cf. Tejerina (1992), Odriozola (2008)]. This development opened the doors to the incorporation of old and recent immigrants into the Basque national community, at least of all those willing to do so, as far as language acquisition was fostered and propagated by the ethnocultural revival as being central to Basque identity. On the other hand, the cultural renaissance contributed to the apparition of a

plethora of ethnocultural organizations and popular initiatives, such as children and adult schools, a summer university, language standardization groups, etc.

The third factor is the recognition of territorial and cultural autonomy on behalf of the nationalities and regions within Spain's new constitutional order (1978). Nevertheless, this led to the creation of two autonomous communities, the Basque Autonomous Community (BAC) and Navarre, within the territory of the Basque language. In addition to territorial and cultural autonomy, the constitution of 1978 recognized official status to languages other than Spanish in the relevant autonomous communities [on the legal status of Basque, cf. Cobreros (1989), Arzoz (2006), Urrutia (2006)]. The recognition of territorial and cultural autonomy has allowed the institutionalization of a language policy in both autonomous communities through the respective Basque Language Acts, the Basque Language Act of the BAC of 1982 and the Basque Language Act of Navarre of 1986 [on Basque language policy, cf. Kremnitz (1991), Cenoz and Perales (2001), Mateo (2005), Tejerina (2006), Gros i Lladós (2007a, b)].

Nevertheless, the political and administrative division of the Basque Country conditions the influence of the mentioned socio-political factors. On the one side, Basque nationalism has not achieved to be an influential political force in the French Basque provinces and only limitedly at the local level in Navarre. On the other side, territorial or cultural autonomy as such has not been recognized in France, but a weak form of administrative decentralization on behalf of big territorial divisions.¹ Consequentially, only the BAC has developed an enduring and sustainable language planning, while language policy in Navarre has been rather discontinuous and even regressive in the last 12 years (cf. Arzoz 2004, 2006, 2008; Gros i Lladós 2007a) and in France it has started only recently and in a rather rudimentary way (cf. Urteaga 2004). Therefore, in the next pages I will focus on the language policy implemented in the last two decades in the BAC in two specific fields, non-university education and Basquization of public servants [on language policy in higher education, cf. Arzoz (2012)].

4 Basque Language Policy—A Combination of Rights and Planning

Basque language policy was gradually constructed by successive political decisions from 1979 to 1983 (in the field of education) and from 1979 to 1989 (in the field of public administration). The Statute of Autonomy for the BAC (1979) recognized the right of all citizens to know and use both official languages, and it ordered public authorities,

¹ The Basque-speaking French provinces make up with *Béarn* the *Département Pyrénées Atlantiques*. This and four other *Départements* belong to Aquitania, one of the French regions. Therefore, the Basque-speaking provinces not only do not coincide with any existing administrative division, but they also constitute a very small part of Aquitania, both in demographical and in territorial sense.

according to the sociolinguistic diversity of the Basque Country, to take the necessary measures and to provide citizens with the means to guarantee that right. It further established the prohibition of discrimination on grounds of language (Article 6). This provision already seemed to imply that citizens would be recognized the right to receive Basque-medium education, and that the public administration would have to transform to be able to assert citizens language rights. As the statutes of autonomy of other autonomous communities, the Basque statute declares Basque as *lengua propia* (i.e. the Basque Countries own language). This goes beyond a symbolical recognition of the attachment of the Basque people with their vernacular language, because it might be legally relevant, for instance, to justify affirmative actions on behalf of the Basque language.

The Basque Language Act of 1982 is the legal basis of the language policy and planning developed in the BAC. While both Spanish and Basque are official languages according to the constitution, the main purpose of the Basque Language Act is to put Basque on an equal foot with Spanish, the traditionally dominant and official language of the state.²

The Basque Language Act combines two legal techniques to advance the status of the Basque language: the recognition of language rights and the establishment of language planning to gradually give full effect to those language rights. The list of language rights explicitly recognized by the Language Act covers only the main areas of interaction with public authorities and within society. It is not a punctilious or extended catalogue, but one addressing basic needs in form of ‘fundamental language rights’. Those ‘fundamental language rights’ are:

- The right to address any public administration located in the territory of the BAC in both official languages, in writing and orally;
- the right to receive education in both official languages;
- the right to receive information through the medium of Basque (press, radio, TV broadcasting and other media);
- the right to develop professional, political and trade union activities in Basque;
- and the right to express oneself in Basque in any meeting.

The legislature was well aware that the exercise of language rights would require sustained language planning on the part of regional authorities. The main part of the Basque Language Act actually concerns the specification of measures public authorities have to adopt to guarantee the exercise of language rights. Many provisions stress the notions of gradualism and progression towards equality (cf. Article 6(1), Article 15 and Article 22).

Gradualism was reasonable given the sociolinguistic context. The Basque Language was a declining language coming out of a long period of marginalization and repression and spoken only by 21.5 % of the population (1981 census). The Basque language had been preserved very differently across the territory of the BAC

² In Spanish politico-legal jargon, the objective is called *normalization*, that is, the establishment of a situation in which speakers of non-dominant languages are effectively granted the same chances of using their languages in both public and social contexts.

and it had even disappeared from many areas. Furthermore, almost one third of the population was not born in the BAC; another 20 % of the population had at least one progenitor that was born outside the BAC (Mezo 2008, 314). It must be noted that the linguistic distance between Spanish and Basque is as big as between, say, Finnish and Italian. Since the Basque public administration had started from scratch in 1980, the recruiting of enough bilingual staff and the acquisition of Basque by public servants would involve a huge, long-term effort on the part of the Basque administration.

On the basis of the Basque Language Act of 1982, the Basque authorities have designed and implemented language planning sector by sector (education, public administration, justice, police, public health system, private sector, etc.). In contrast, a decision was made quite early on to establish an entirely new public broadcasting service (TV and radio) fully operating in Basque from the very beginning: this was done by recruiting and training the necessary bilingual staff. In other sectors, language planning was required. In any case, in the planning agenda priority was given to language acquisition. The main tasks of the language planning have been language acquisition (so-called Basquization) of public servants and meeting the increasing demand of Basque-medium education. In contrast, other fields have been neglected or simply postponed.

5 Language Policy in the Field of Education

Education was seen a crucial area for the revitalization of the Basque language (Etxeberria 1999; Mezo 2008; Urrutia 2005). The Basque Language Act of 1982 established some requirements concerning the future language policy in the field of education: compliance with the right to receive education in Basque or in Spanish; compulsory teaching of the second official language in every public and subsidized private school; the goal that students must achieve sufficient practical knowledge of both official languages at the end of the obligatory education; the geographical distribution of school models in accordance with the parents' wishes the sociolinguistic situation of each zone.

Although pre-existing in practice, a Basque Governments Decree of July 1983 definitively established the three "linguistic educational models", which have been in use for almost three decades. Those models were later legally entrenched by the Public School Act (1993). The three models are: Spanish as the medium of education, with Basque as a compulsory subject ("A" model); both Basque and Spanish as mediums of education ("B" model); and Basque as the medium of education, with Spanish as a compulsory subject ("D" model). The aforementioned Decree explicitly recognized the principle of free choice of linguistic educational models. The Basque authorities definitively rejected the criteria for the assignment of children to the different linguistic models which they had previously been considering: the mother-tongue of pupils and the sociolinguistic environment. It must be noted that the three

Table 1 Evolution of school models, 1982/1983–2011/2012

Language of instruction	1982/1983 (%)	2011/2012 (%)	2011/2012 ^a (%)
Spanish	72.8	11.0	7.0
Spanish and Basque	10.5	23.3	27.0
Basque	16.5	65.0	65.3

^a Enrolment data for primary education

Source own elaboration

models are functionally separated, but not necessarily geographically separated in different centers.

The evolution of the school models shows the impact of the recognition of educational language rights in a context in which social attitudes were very much in favour of the acquisition of the Basque language. In 25 years, the distribution of children among the school models has changed radically. In 1982/1983, 72.8 % of the students were enrolled in the “A” model, 10.5 % in the “B” model and 16.5 % in the “D” model. In 2011/2012, the distribution is 11, 23.3 and 65 % in the “A”, “B” and “D” models, respectively (see Table 1). Now, Basque prevails as the language of instruction in all levels of instruction, save in vocational training: here, the demand of Basque-medium instruction has been traditionally less strong and the offer has been not very much fostered by the authorities (see Table 2). The decrease in the number of children of about 60 % because of the fall of the birth rate facilitated the huge transformation of the education system: it was made easier for education authorities to redistribute teachers and schools among the three models and to plan in advance the gradual extension of the Basque-medium models; at the same time, teachers could be given paid leaves to learn the Basque language without the need to recruit new staff to cover those temporary vacancies (Mezo 2008, 149,236–237).

The figures of enrolment in the “B” and “D” models at the primary education in the last years are still more favourable. In 2011/2012, 65.3 % of the children were enrolled in the “D” model, 27 % in the “B” model and 7 % in the “A” model (see Table 1).

After three decades of implementation, education through the medium of Basque is no longer an aspiration, but a firm reality. The right to receive education has been guaranteed by public authorities. However, the whole process has perhaps been implemented too fast, and quantity has been prioritized to the detriment of quality. In particular, many doubts had been expressed in the last decade about the linguistic competence in Basque of students (Zalbide 2002, 2010, 166–168).

In 2005, the Basque Institute for Education Research and Assessment, a body attached to the Basque Government, published the results of a study conducted to assess the linguistic competence in Basque of students at the end of compulsory education (fourth year of secondary education). Only students from the “B” and “D” models were included in the study: that is, only students that had had Basque totally or partially as the language of instruction. Students had to pass an exam which corresponded to B2 in the European reference system: a level of knowledge between the basic level and proficiency (equivalent to the First Certificate degree in English

Table 2 Distribution of students by linguistic model in all educational levels, 2012/2013

	Total	A model	B model	D model	X model ^b
Total	355.737	57.548	73.136	233.032	2.021
Pre-primary school	95.880	3.512	20.211	71.694	463.000
Primary education ^a	122.184	7.370	31.537	82.425	852.000
Special primary education ^a	454.000	323.000	53.000	78.000	–
Secondary education ^a	74.046	9.271	20.291	43.964	520.000
Special secondary education ^a	241.00	115.000	61.000	65.000	–
High school	29.787	12.309	475.000	16.817	186.000
Vocational training, basic level	13.131	10.073	138.000	2.920	–
Vocational training, advanced level	19.553	14.2850	346.000	4.922	–
Special education, vocational training	461.000	290.000	24.000	147.000	–

^a Compulsory education

^b The so-called “X” model is not a real model. It refers to the number of students that are legally exempted from taking Basque as a subject as far as they are staying only for a limited time period in the Basque Country

Source <http://www.eustat.es/>

awarded by the University of Cambridge). Only 57.2 % of “D” model students passed the written part of the exam and 68 % the oral part. Students from the “B” model cast worse results: 27.5 and 32.6 %, respectively (ISEI-IVEI 2005).

The aforementioned study demonstrated that students linguistic competence in Basque depends on which is the language used within the students family, on the linguistic educational model attended by the student and on his or her sociolinguistic environment. Students that speak Basque either with the mother or the father passed the exam by 72.6 %: 34 points more than students whose family language was not Basque. 57 % of “D” model students passed the written exam: 29.7 points more than “B” model students. While the sociolinguistic environment does not exert much influence on students whose mother tongue is Basque, it is very relevant for students whose mother tongue is Spanish: only 34 % of students from a Spanish sociolinguistic environment passed the exam, while the percentage of students from a Basque sociolinguistic environment is 72 %. Among the factors with minor relevance are gender (11.2 points distance to the detriment of boys), the private or public character of the school (8.1 points distance to the detriment of private schools) and the parents level of studies.

These results showing a poor linguistic competence made a strong impression on education authorities. Results were not consistent with the legal requirement that students must have “enough practical knowledge of both official languages at the end of compulsory education” (Article 17 of the Language Act), or “effective capacity to

understand and express themselves, orally and in writing, in both languages, at least as to use them as ordinary languages of communication and interaction” (Article 18 of the School Act). It must be noted that, according to the legislation, linguistic educational models are “instrumental in character, appropriate means to reconcile the objective of language normalization established in Article 18 with the objective of transmitting the curricula content inherent to any school system” (Article 20 of the School Act).

In sum, the successful extension of the Basque-medium education did not avoid a dramatic non-compliance with the fundamental objective of creating bilingual citizens through the school system. The Basque Ministry for Education developed plans for a simplification of models: instead of three rigid models there would be one but flexible model, in which Basque would be the principal medium of education, and schools would be granted autonomy to adjust that model to their needs, specially to their sociolinguistic context (Milian Massana 2007; Urrutia 2006). However, touching upon the traditional school models was beyond political consensus, and even the government coalition partners of the Ministry for Education party were not supporting such fundamental revision of the educational language policy. When, as a result of regional elections in March 2009, the socialist party took the office of the Basque Government, the preservation of the existing three school models was reaffirmed. The new Government, the first completely non-nationalist one in 30 years, announced instead its interest in promoting a single, flexible trilingual model (Basque–Spanish–English), in which each of the three languages should be awarded at least 20 % of the teaching. The return of the moderate nationalists to the Basque Government in 2012 has put an end to that possibility.

6 Basquization of Public Servants

The right to use both official languages in interaction with public authorities cannot be guaranteed if those authorities are not, collectively, able to communicate with citizens in both languages. With Basque being the hitherto marginalized language, the issue was acquisition of enough linguistic competence in Basque by the staff of the public authorities located in the BAC. In principle, there are two ways to achieve that objective: the recruiting of (new) bilingual personnel and the acquisition of the Basque language by the existing personnel. Both ways have been practiced, but because of several institutional and legal constraints the emphasis had to be put on the second one. This, again, required sustained language planning efforts on the part of the Basque administrations.

The regional Basque administration was created in 1980, although a preparatory autonomy regime had been introduced, with few real powers, three years before. The regional Basque administration was a completely new level of government, but it could not be bilingual or operate bilingually from the very beginning due to several constraints. First, the new Basque regional administration was devolved the existing personnel of the previously state-run and now devolved services (industry,

agriculture, education, health service, etc.) (Castells 1987). The majority of that personnel lacked linguistic competence in Basque. Most municipalities and province administrations were in a similar, much more aggravated situation: their entire personnel had been recruited before the recognition of official status and with no regard to their knowledge of the vernacular language.

Second, during the 1980s the knowledge of the Basque language could not be established as a requirement nor valued as a merit in recruiting public servants. The Spanish Supreme Court held repeatedly the position that requiring or valuing the knowledge of Basque as a merit was a break of the constitutional principles of equality and of Spaniards' equal access to public posts (Cobrerros 1989, 81–84). However, the Constitutional Court insisted once and again that the need for a bilingual administration derived from the official status constitutionally recognized to languages other than Spanish, and that the demand of a certain level of linguistic competence was not a violation of constitutional equality if it was reasonable and proportional to the linguistic needs of each post. It must be stressed that, neither now nor before, the knowledge of the Basque language (of both official languages indeed) has been established as a legal requirement in order to join the service of the Basque administrations (Agirreazkuenaga 2003, 162–163).

In 1989, the foundations for a language planning in all Basque public administrations (regional, provincial and municipal) were agreed by main political forces, nationalists and socialists. The current framework of that planning is ruled by Decree 86/1997.

Four different linguistic requirements were defined for all public posts, according basically to each posts' interaction with citizen: from LR1, the lowest level, to LR4, the highest one. Linguistic requirements are not immediately binding. In each planning period of five years, a percentage of posts will have to comply with their assigned linguistic requirement. In other words, the corresponding linguistic requirements will be binding for specific posts according to the provisions of the Basquization plan (Erkoreka 1996). There is a formula to calculate that percentage. The percentage of posts that must comply with their corresponding linguistic requirement in a planning period must be equal to the percentage of Basque-speakers in the given territory (region, province or municipality) plus the percentage of passive Basque-speakers divided by two. Data of speakers are collected from census and, therefore, are adjusted every five years according to the evolution of the number of Basque-speakers.

The mentioned formula allows adaptation to each administrations own sociolinguistic context, as there are municipalities with a high number of Basque-speakers and others with a low one. Each Basque public administration approves its own plan in accordance with its own sociolinguistic data. That plan has to implement the outcome of the above-mentioned formula: if the outcome is, say, 28 %, it has then to decide which specific posts have to comply with the corresponding linguistic requirement. To that effect, all posts existing within the relevant administration must be treated equally and proportionally, without discrimination on grounds of administrative rank, position or degree. The plan for the following planning period establishes which specific posts will have to comply with the assigned linguistic

requirement by the end of the five years planning period. From that moment onwards, anyone willing to take any of those posts will have to comply with the corresponding linguistic requirement. The sum of all those posts with a compulsory linguistic requirement has to meet the outcome of the mentioned formula (28 %, according to our example). For the rest of posts that do not have yet the obligation to comply with the assigned linguistic requirement, the assigned linguistic requirement will serve as a merit when adjudicating eventual vacancies.

If, at the end of a planning period, a linguistic requirement becomes binding for a given post and the public servant which occupies that post does not comply with it, he or she could be theoretically removed from the post (Castells 1996). Nevertheless, the duty of complying with the assigned linguistic level is not just put upon the shoulders of the public servants. The public administration has to give the chance and provide the means to achieve the objectives of the language plan. In practice, it has involved many intensive and extensive courses offered to public servants, both in and after work hours. Reasonable exemptions have been recognized on behalf of people over 45 or with a recognized linguistic inability.

In 2012, the fourth planning period established in Decree 86/1997 ended (see GV 2012). 53.62 % of all the posts must comply with a linguistic requirement (L1 to L4), mostly with either L2 or L3³: 56.58 % of the civil servants in posts that must comply with a linguistic requirement already comply with their corresponding linguistic requirement or with a higher one, while 5.47 % have achieved a lower one, 4.47 % have not achieved any recognized linguistic ability at all and 5.72 % have got one. The remaining 27.77 % of the posts with a linguistic requirement were not definitively occupied. If we consider the compliance with the linguistic requirements regardless of the definitive or the provisional position of the civil servants occupying the posts with a linguistic requirement, the level of compliance is relative high: around 82 %. Among the posts whose linguistic requirements are not yet binding, 23.5 % have achieved the corresponding linguistic requirement and 12.3 % a lower one.

Special sectors of the regional administration carry out language planning at their own pace speed: education, health service, higher education, Basque police, and justice. In the field of education, the Basquization of teachers went faster, since they had the function of guaranteeing the right to receive education in both official languages. Two linguistic requirements were established in 1993 (Urrutia 2001). Here, not the sociolinguistic data of each area, but the school model(s) assigned to each center (an issue depending on the social demand of each model) were the relevant criterion to decide when a teacher had to comply with the assigned linguistic requirement. Given the increasing expansion of the “B” and “D” models, education has been the only field within the Basque public administration in which, as a rule, from 1993, new teachers can be only recruited if they know the Basque language, regardless of the model they would be teaching (Article 26 of Decree 197/1998). The

³ 52.57 % of posts in local administration, 58.47 of the posts within provincial administration and 44.32 % of posts within the regional administration must comply with a linguistic requirement. The figures for the local and the provincial administration are an average: The sociolinguistic context varies enormously from the South to the North and from the West to the East.

date in which linguistic requirements in the field of education definitively become binding for all teaching positions with a linguistic requirement was 2004, ten years after the passing of the relevant piece of legislation; in any case, the majority of “A” model teachers were excluded and have remained so. Meanwhile, a huge training program (IRALE) of the Basque Ministry of Education yearly allowed hundreds of teachers from public schools (and to a limited extent, also from private schools) to acquire the corresponding linguistic requirements while enjoying paid licences. There is probably no similar linguistic recycling and training program of teachers on behalf of a minority or regional minority anywhere in Europe. As a result of both the training program and new recruitments, 77.3 % of teachers (out of 16,000) have accredited the superior level which allows for teaching one’s subject in Basque.

In contrast, public servants working in the health system, the regional police or in the justice follow slower planning rhythm. Language planning on behalf of the health service only started properly in 2005; their planning periods are of six years. Only the LR1 and LR2 are applicable to the staff involved in medical care, while the most demanding LR3 and LR4 are reserved for those carrying out administrative functions within the Basque health system. By now, 5,548 public servants (out of 22,000) have obtained some linguistic level (on language planning within the health system, see Manjon 2011). Similarly, the Basquization of the members of the Basque police has been quite neglected. Only 30 % of the 7,500 agents have accredited the lowest linguistic level (LR1), and the establishment of LR2 has been postponed once and again.

In the last decade, the Basque Government has devoted much effort to the Basquization of the justice system, the only branch of government that remained completely alien to the official status of the Basque language. At the end of the 1990s, the Basque Government was devolved executive competences regarding justice personnel other than judges, public prosecutors and court registrars. At the beginning, the state administration put many obstacles to Basque initiatives to introduce those public servants within the language planning. More recently, obstacles seemed to be removed, and Decree 152/2008 established a planning for ten years, divided into two periods (2008–2013, 2014–2018). Personnel included within the scope of application of Decree 152/2008 have been assigned either LR2 or LR3.⁴ In addition to sociolinguistic data, several criteria of priority have been established to decide which posts and when will have to comply with the assigned linguistic requirement. The highest degree of priority concerns public information offices in general; the second highest one, offices, units, services and civil registers located in areas where the Basque-speakers are over 65 %; the third highest one, offices, units and services located in areas where the Basque-speakers are between 50 and 65 %, as well as civil registers with no higher priority; the fourth highest priority, notification joint units and units that deal with offences committed by minors and family issues and are located in areas where the Basque-speakers are less than 50 %; and so on.

⁴ However, in October 2009 the High Court of the BAC annulled that assignation of LR2 and LR3 to justice posts as long as that assignation had not been individualized.

As far as judges, public prosecutors and court registrars are concerned, the Basque Government is promoting the voluntary acquisition of the Basque language by them by virtue of agreements with the state administration, which is the public authority responsible for that staff. However, the state has not introduced yet any scheme to consider the linguistic skills that judges, public prosecutors and court registrars should meet either when they are appointed or when they are assigned to posts within bilingual autonomous communities.

7 Explaining the Impact

30 years of language planning in the BAC have produced some positive results. First, the linguistic competence of population has increased notably, even in spite of a regressive demography and a recent strong immigration from 2000 onwards. In the period between 1991 and 2011—the years of the first and the fifth sociolinguistic survey commissioned by the Basque government (BG 2012)—the number of full bilinguals has increased from 24.1 to 32 % among the population of sixteen-years or over (see Table 3). It must be noted that the percentage of non-native Basque-speakers in 2011 is 11.7 % of the population.

If we consider the other Basque-speaking territories, the impact of the language planning implemented in the BAC is evident: the number of full bilinguals in the North Basque Country (on the French side) is 21.4 % (26.4 % in 1996) and in Navarre 11.7 % (9.5 % in 1991). Linguistic competence by age group shows more clearly the impact of the education system in the BAC: in the age group 16–24, 59.7 % are full bilinguals and 23.2 % passive bilinguals (see Table 4). The impact of the education system might have been even greater if the birth rate had not been so extremely low, although, as we argued before, this circumstance facilitated the transformation of the education system. It must be emphasized that censuses and sociolinguistic surveys do no test the linguistic competence of the population, but collect the subjective opinions of the interviewed individuals.

Second, the visibility of the Basque language has increased enormously. Basque language is widely visible in the linguistic landscape: street and road signs, advertisements, external activities of public administrations and of many private firms, etc. In particular the Basque-medium media has consolidated with a public regional TV

Table 3 Changes in the number of full bilinguals. BAC, 1991–2011

Full bilinguals	Population age 16 or over				
	1991 (%)	1996 (%)	2001 (%)	2006 (%)	2011 (%)
Araba	7.0	11.4	13.4	14.2	16.8
Bizkaia	16.0	20.9	22.4	23.0	25.4
Gipuzkoa	43.7	46.0	48.0	49.1	49.9
Total	24.1	27.7	29.4	30.1	32.0

Source (BG 2012)

Table 4 Language competence by age group. BAC, 2011

Age groups	Population age 16 or over		
	Full bilinguals (%)	Passive bilinguals (%)	Non-Basque speakers (%)
> 65	23.3	9.5	67.2
50–64	22.9	14.2	62.9
35–49	29.8	19.7	50.5
25–34	44.5	25.0	30.5
16–24	59.7	23.2	17.0
Total	32.0	17.4	50.6

Source (BG 2012)

and radio holding, a private regional TV chain, many local radio stations, a private daily newspaper as well as other weekly or monthly printed media.

The proclamation of official status, the recognition of language rights and the language planning activities conducted so far have contributed to move from the paradigm of linguistic conflict into a paradigm of linguistic coexistence.

Certainly language planning has not been able of fulfilling all promises made in 1982. On the one side, language rights are non-complied with in many occasions, and non-compliance persists generally in services depending on the state administration. On the other side, the use has not increased proportionally to the linguistic competence. Some formal uses have improved, others not. Therefore, the ideal of living fully in Basque still remains an aspiration, and probably it cannot be otherwise in a bilingual society which has still Spanish as the dominant language. The objective must be safeguarding the Basque language enough opportunities and spaces to develop itself. In this sense, concern should be directed not only to remedying the violation of language rights, but also to analyzing the causes of the slow increase of the use, which is not matching the increase of the linguistic competence of the population.

The factors of the relative success of the Basque language planning include the following. First, Basque language policy was based on a broad political consensus. The Basque Language Act (1982), the establishment of educational linguistic models (1983/1993) and the Basquization policy of public servants (1989) were agreed by main political forces, including the biggest two parties, the moderate nationalists (PNV) and the socialists (PSE-EE).

Second, language policy explicitly insisted in the gradual character of rights recognized on behalf of Basque-speakers. The legislature was well aware that guaranteeing citizens language rights recognized in 1982 would require a consistent long-term planning and policy design on the part of the public administration.

Third, language policy took into consideration the sociolinguistic reality. The basic agreed principle was the legal entrenchment of the right of parents to choose the language of instruction. Educational linguistic models were introduced and expanded in accordance with the wishes of parents. This gave confidence to the more reluctant

and ‘distrustful’ segment of the society, while the Basque-medium education could be offered to everyone willing it.

Compensatory measures were designed in the existing three types of school: public schools, private traditional schools (mostly owned by the Church) and private schools organized on a cooperative basis with the exclusive aim of providing Basque-medium education (*ikastolak*). The introduction of the Basque language as a compulsory subject in all education levels was not a burden merely imposed on schools and/or teachers. In public schools, the education authorities recruited new teachers or assigned existing qualified teachers to teach Basque or in Basque; private traditional schools were also granted financial assistance to recruit Basque teachers to teach Basque as a compulsory subject. On the other hand, financial resources were intensively allocated to the *ikastolak*, and to the promotion of language acquisition by teachers, public servants and interested adults. The promotion of the Basque language was not directly detrimental to the rights and aspirations of Spanish-speakers, although, logically, it might have consequences in the long term (in form of jobs and schools available to them).

When the social demand for Basque-medium education or administrative services also expanded in the public sector, teachers and public servants, specially those facing a binding linguistic requirement, were granted enough time and assistance to achieve the proficiency required by their posts through generous programs (including paid leave up to three years).

In a recently published comparative research on the causes of the failure of Irish language policy (1922–1939) and the relative success of Basque language policy (1980–1998), Mezo (2008) has argued that, at the beginning of Basque autonomy, the Basque nationalists responsible for the design of a language policy had a handicap and an advantage which seem to be lacking in the Irish case: on the one side, a minority that was suspicious of a strong, compulsory language policy; and on the other side, a minority very much engaged in the revitalization of the Basque language. Since a big part of the population (the majority of the immigrants or descendants of immigrants in the Basque Country) did not have and could not have links with Basque language and culture, it could be presumed that they would not accept an immediate and general compulsory policy of Basquization of the education system and the public administration, even if such a thing had been immediately feasible (which can be doubted). Therefore, being aware of that handicap, Basque language planners had to forget the apparently easiest way of a general compulsory Basquization policy and had to opt more carefully for selective intensive policies promoting the introduction of the Basque language as the language of instruction and the acquisition of the Basque language by teachers and public servants. Paradoxically, the handicap turned out to be a luck at the end: non-compulsory, selective intensive policies of promotion targeted the linguistically and culturally most conscious segment of population, the ‘engaged minority’, mostly mother-tongue speakers well organized and running an extended network of private Basque-medium primary and secondary schools. The ‘engaged minority’ extended successfully the use of Basque as the language of instruction in their schools and it made Basque-medium education very attractive, both in linguistic and in pedagogic terms, for more and more parents. This brought more social demand

for Basque-medium educational models also in public schools and even in traditional private schools, now competing for the same pupils in a demographically regressive context; and at the end it generated the critical mass of people necessary to achieve social change.

According to Mezo (2008), the Basque experience shows that selective intensive policies may contribute more effectively to transform the education system: selective intensive policies allocate scarce resources where they are more useful and necessary, that is, to those segments of population that wish to generate and endorse social change; therefore, those policies may effectively change the preferences of a sufficient number of individuals, which can produce a chain reaction and encourage more people to follow the same path.

8 Lessons for the Russian Federation

The Basque experience shows the importance of decentralization of authority, the proclamation and implementation of language rights and the involvement of wide segments of population for the success of a minority language revitalization policy.

First, the decentralization of authority is determining for the legal institutionalization of linguistic groups, at least for those groups whose number and geographical concentration justify some level of self-government.⁵ The institutionalization of minority languages and cultures can play a significant part in creating a framework in which regional or minority languages and cultures can flourish, as the case of the Basque Autonomous Community shows. But the argument is a highly conditional one. It turns on the central requirement that the linguistic group be effectively institutionalized, that is, that rulers and speakers share a notion of the intrinsic value of their vernacular language. If that breaks down, then the significance of institutional arrangements is reduced to an empty framework of protection: autonomous authorities tend to water down and minimize constitutional and legal obligations. This is what happens in the other Basque-speaking Spanish autonomous community (Navarre), and what may also happen in many Russian republics or regions where the titular people do not constitute the ethnic majority of the republic or of the region.

Second, the proclamation of language rights without a language policy to implement them remains just a piece of symbolic legislation, something politicians may even be proud of and show in international forums but nothing else. Criticism has been expressed with regard to the limitations of rights discourses and the obstacles that remain for the maintenance of smaller, less-used languages of indigenous peoples or of non-standardized languages (Patrick 2005; Wright 2007). Certainly the number of speakers of a minority language matters when it comes to design and implementation

⁵ On decentralization as a tool for minority language maintenance, see Marten's Chapter "Parliamentary Structures and Their Impact on Empowering Minority Language Communities" in this volume.

a feasible set of language rights, specially a scheme of official-language rights.⁶ Therefore, I tend to believe that the Basque experience is relevant preferably for those linguistic groups of the Russian Federation that are demographically important and are recognized in some form of self-government (for instance, the Tatars).

The relative success of the BACs Basque language policy has been possible not only by the positive features of the policy itself (moderateness, gradualism and selectivity), but also because of favorable socio-political factors. On the one side, the ethnopolitical element appears to be crucial in the Basque experience: nationalist parties have been in office in the Basque Government for 30 years (1979–2009). Since language is a strong marker of ethnic/national identity, the revitalization of the Basque language has been and is a priority for nationalist political forces. In any case, Basque nationalism was very influential, but never wholly hegemonic: there has been a basic consensus between nationalist and non-nationalist political forces on the objectives and means of the Basque language policy. On the other side, it must be stressed that Basque regional authorities have wide competences: not only over cultural and language issues, but also financial autonomy; huge funds were available and could be mobilized for the sake of language revitalization, in particular for the creation of a Basque public media and for the Basquization of the education system and of the public servants, even in the context of a severe industrial crisis in the early 1980s.

Last but not least, when the Spanish constitutional development allowed for the creation of a regional government and for the formulation and implementation of a regional Basque language policy in the 1980s, the new authorities efforts could rely on a web of committed social groups, organizations and individuals that were involved and already working in the revitalization of the Basque language. This might be lacking in the small and even medium-sized language communities of Russia.

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⁶ I am not arguing that a certain number of speakers is important, or even the most important criterion, to anticipate language survival or death, but a different issue: that the number of speakers is relevant when it comes to design and, above all, to implementation a feasible scheme of language rights in public administration, education, justice, media, private sector, etc. On the relationship between the number of speakers and the probabilities of survival of a language, see Barreña et al. (2007).

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