

Novel approaches to contemporary minority language revitalization

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The challenges faced by minority languages in the contemporary linguistic landscape have been a relevant topic for several years. With global languages claiming an increasing share of speakers, smaller, community-based languages have been neglected in favour of a lingua franca. The paper aims to present a few possible ways in which this linguistic exposure can be transformed into a potential boon for language education and maintenance in smaller language communities, rather than this being a hinderance. The research relies on methods of scrutiny present in all forms of the media oriented towards achieving an increased usage and recognition of apparently neglected languages.

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1. Preliminary considerations

As language users, we are all theorists, although the discipline of sociolinguistics has particular responsibilities in fostering, through its theory, awareness of what happens at the interface between language and society, and in reviewing what we know and what we have not yet adequately explained.
(Coupland 2016)

The notion of typical language development has far too long been predicated on monolingual development. It is estimated that approximately more than half of the world's population speaks more than one language (Grosjean 2010). Multilingualism is the norm worldwide. Thus, the monolingual view to language development is inadequate for approaching language acquisition from a global perspective. In addition, the viewpoint that multilingual language development mirrors monolingual language when only one of the child's languages is considered is also a misguided assertion (Brice and Brice 2009; Grosjean 1989). Therefore,

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multilingual or multilanguage acquisition differs from monolingual development (Brice and Brice 2009).

Learning a second language (L2) or multiple languages is not a straightforward additive process to English. It does not involve a simple one-to-one correspondence. In 1989 Grosjean wrote that a bilingual speaker does not consist of two monolingual speakers. Rather a bilingual speaker is an individual who has access to two languages that interact with each other constantly, even when one language is the primary mode being activated (Grosjean 1989). When young children acquire two languages simultaneously from birth, their first language is “bilingualism”. Their two languages interact in positive and sometimes negative ways from the very first day they are exposed to the two languages (i.e., language transference and interference).

The concepts of language proficiency and language dominance are notions that seem to imply that one should consider each language separately not in a combined representation. Therefore, proficiency should be investigated in terms of communicative competence (Canale and Swain 1980) and proficiency utilizing a combined approach as is seen in vocabulary studies where total vocabulary and total conceptual vocabulary measures are obtained (Pearson and Pearson 2004). Dominance varies across speech and language domains (phonetics, phonology, morphology, semantics, pragmatics, etc.) and seems to vary within each speech domain. Grosjean’s (2010) notions of language modes fit this paradigm. Language modes refer to what extent L1 and L2 are activated and to the continuum of activation among the languages. Therefore, dominance in a multilingual child is not an overall ability assigned to L1, L2, or L3 but one that seems to vary according to language, language domain, and task.

There is increasing evidence of the benefits of mother tongue and multilingual education (Cummins, 2000) and, at the same time, an increase in the use of English as a medium of instruction across various levels of education globally (Dearden 2014). Mother tongues, as well as local languages, are often viewed as having value as languages of cultural identity, whereas international languages such as English are perceived as being valuable for social and economic mobility (Crystal 2003). Skills in different languages will thus be viewed as valuable for different reasons and the desire to develop skills in a particular language can influence the language policies adopted within education. The international development community has often come under criticism for giving little attention to language and language policy (Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas 2017; Skutnabb-Kangas 1997).

2. Language revitalization as a concept

The concept of language revitalization can be defined depending on the approach in question. Generally speaking, the concept is the action that aims to revitalize a language in specific areas in which linguistic decline is present, thus supporting the health and vitality of the language in question. Due to this, the concept also concerns itself with boosting the speaker base and increasing widespread usage of language within a number of domains, e.g.: home, school, friend circles, media, etc. (Fishman 1991).

To provide a notable example, much of this article is concerned with Saami languages, a group of Finno-Ugrian languages with speaker bases in central Sweden, Southern Norway, and some minor Russian territories with a total number of speakers estimated between 25,000 - 35,000 (Sammallahti 1998). While there are no major linguistic differentiations or boundaries between the languages, 10 dialects can be distinguished, with 6 having a written standard. As it is very often the case with minority languages, parents are likely to raise their children through the official or dominant language of the given region, in an effort to avoid future complications for them. Saami speakers have not been an exception in this regard in the past, with almost no new speakers entering into the speaker base - setting the language up towards decline and eventual linguistic death without intervention. As such, language revitalization in this regard is concerned with re-introducing the language into a speaker family where the language is partly or completely extinct - in essence, it is the application of Fishman's (1990,1991) the reversing language shift (RLS) model in an effort to slow down and prevent language decline.

Needless to say, RLS is a complex and multifaceted procedure, requiring intervention at both social and individual levels. On the social level, language revitalization is connected to the national and international legislation and cultural policy, culminating in the importance of language policies. On the individual level, language revitalization is affected by the attitudes, cultural heritage, and general environments in which the speakers of the language live, and the areas in which they use the language (Pietikäinen et al. 2010).

2.1. Linguistic identities on the English Isles

Regarding the notion that a region can only truly be united if they speak the same language, one can examine of the most prominent examples in this case: England.

English, Scottish, Welsh, Irish - quite a cavalcade of languages, cultures, and folk to take under a single umbrella, yet that is what the United Kingdom's very

notion did. Regarding its unique tribes, let us first examine England itself, followed by Ireland. Taking a look at mainland England, we can determine that the vast majority of the population speaks British English, and as such, the majority of people identify themselves as English - however, as we move towards the Northern edge of the island, there begins to manifest a sharp difference in both identity and language: Scotland stands ever firmly with its nigh-impossible to understand speech, and it is somewhat the characteristic disdain of the “Southerners”. As irrelevant as it may seem to some, Scottish Gaelic is in fact quite an important relic - even though their country basically is considered to be *de jure* an English-speaking one, they continue to this day to hold onto their unique language, accents, dialects and ways of speech. Based on the 2011 census (National Records of Scotland, 2015)³ ~60,000 people (roughly 1% of the population) reported being able to speak Gaelic, which is more than a thousand speakers less than in 2001. Despite the decrease on this front, the number of speakers under age 20 showed no decrease between 2001 and 2011. As insignificant as these numbers might appear at first, Gaelic essentially forges an incredibly tight bond between the speakers themselves - even if they mock and squabble among themselves, Scots will immediately come together should you criticise their country, make fun of their language, or God forbid dare to insult them. Without knowing one another, their only “identification” is that they speak Scottish English, or even in rare cases Scottish Gaelic. Of course, this argument can be made for almost any language in any region, regardless of what part of the world it happens to be situated in.

Along the same reasoning, there is of course more to the UK than just the Scottish tongue - even though it is not as common as it once was, the Welsh tongue is perhaps one of the most iconic ones to have challenged English in its region. Welsh has enjoyed a steady increase in the number of language speakers; based on data retrieved from the Annual Population Survey, the 2011 census (Office for National Statistics, 2012)⁴ reported 562,000 speakers above the age of 3 - this number has grown to 892,00 according to census data published in 2021 (Office for National Statistics, 2022)⁵. This massive growth in speaker numbers serves to

³ Scotland’s Census Report, 2015 https://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/media/cqoji4qx/report_part_1.pdf Accessed on 01/10/2022

⁴ Annual Population Survey data, 2012 <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Welsh-Language/Annual-Population-Survey-Welsh-Language/annualpopulationsurveyestimatesofpersonsaged3andoverwhosaytheycanspeakwelsh-by-localauthority-measure> Accessed on 01/10/2022

⁵ Annual Population Survey data, 2021 <https://gov.wales/welsh-language-data-annual-population-survey-2021#:~:text=Main%20points&text=For%20the%20year%20ending%2031,equates%20to%20around%20892%2C200%20people>. Accessed on 01/10/2022

validate the status of Welsh, which, as of 2011, is the only de jure official language in the United Kingdom, alongside English being the de facto one.

Last but certainly not least, we can examine the Irish, or *Gaelige* language for additional information regarding its position. Irish is recognised by the Constitution of Ireland as the national and as the first official language of the Republic of Ireland (English being the other official language). Despite this, almost all government debates and business are conducted in English. Based on data from the 2016 census (Central Statistics Office Ireland, 2017)⁶, 40% of the population, roughly equalling 1,761,000 persons over the age of 3 reported being able to speak Irish Gaelic. Further narrowing this data, roughly 600,000 speakers used the language less often than weekly, around 111,000 respondents claimed to speak it weekly, while the smallest speaker group comprised of about 73,000 individuals reported using the language every day.

A very peculiar bit of data that I happened to come across while performing research was the following: As of November 2016, more than 2.3 million people⁷ have started using the popular language learning app Duolingo in order to learn Irish Gaelic.

Despite only having roughly 100,000 native speakers who actively use the language in everyday life, this incredible boost in learners is very beneficial towards the maintenance of the language. Irish president Michael Higgins officially presented honours for several volunteer translators as a reward for developing the Irish course within the app, and also said that the push for Irish language rights remains an unfinished project.

2.2. Language revival attempts

The most relevant example of a successful language revival effort is that of Irish Gaelic in Belfast - the language was spoken natively in parts of Northern Ireland up until the 1950s, but then slowly disappeared from this area in the following years. By 1965 there were approximately 36 families still using the language for everyday conversations in Belfast, with the addition of 5 reported young couples choosing to adapt their families to Irish Gaelic, including raising their children with Irish Gaelic as their L1. None of them were native speakers, and almost all of them learned the language as a passion project in adulthood. Their collective efforts resulted in an Irish-medium primary school being established in 1971 (Maguire 1990).

⁶ Central Statistics Office census data, 2016 <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-cp10esil/p10esil/ilg/#:~:text=Open%20in%20Excel%3A,the%202011%20figure%20of%201%2C774%2C437>. Accessed on 01/10/2022

⁷ <https://www.thejournal.ie/duolingo-ireland-3100715-Nov2016/>. Accessed on 01/10/2022

Over the years the school developed steadily and eventually attracted children from other parts of the city, whose parents were language learners of Irish Gaelic. As the popularity of the Irish medium education grew, an additional Irish-medium primary school was established in 1987, with two more secondary schools and a number of nurseries having been set up in the following years; this surge was accompanied by a large number of Irish Gaelic language evening classes for adults, which were run by volunteers all throughout Northern Ireland in an effort to keep up with the demands (Mac Póilin 1997). A vibrant programme of cultural and social events regarding Irish Gaelic has also developed in later years, and an Irish language daily newspaper was printed from 1984 to 2008, with a modernized online version still being published to this day. There have been short daily Irish language broadcasts on BBC Radio Ulster since 1986 (Maguire, 1990) and an Irish language community radio station, Raidió Fáilte, was launched in 2002.

Subsequently, a new Irish-speaking community has been re-established in areas of Belfast and Northern Ireland. (Maguire 1990) Hindley (1990) argues that the revival of Irish in Northern Ireland has not been as successful as some enthusiasts claim, nor that it has much relevance or provides much hope for Irish Gaelic as a whole - this viewpoint supports the notion proposed by Carnie (1995), who regards Irish Gaelic as a sort of consolation prize - despite the official recognition, and status, the actual usage of the language falls very short of the expected numbers. In the Republic of Ireland, Irish Gaelic is an official language, has been a compulsory subject in Ireland's schools since 1922 and its mastery is required for a number of positions in civil service. Despite these points however, only a minority of those who study Irish Gaelic in schools become fluent, and many have negative impressions of the language (Hindley 1990). As indicated by contemporary census data discussed in previous paragraphs, this lack of everyday language usage is still a major problem for language revitalization efforts. Moreover, since the initial wave of Irish-medium education schools, the number of institutions has grown rapidly and there are now over 200 so called *Gaelscoileanna* (Irish-medium schools) throughout Ireland. However, despite the promising numbers, many such schools were started by local families as small-scale projects and have since then faced numerous difficulties in securing official recognition and funding (Ó Néill 2013).

In the following paragraphs, several examples will be presented as examples of other notable language revitalization efforts. In North America, a place where most of the indigenous languages are vulnerable, endangered or already close to language death, there are revival movements for many of them (Zepeda and Hill 1991). In many cases Native American languages are well in their terminal stages of decline by the time language revival efforts begin, notably that generational

exchange has ceased, most or all of their speakers are elderly, or even if the language is present, it is restricted to fringe cases of usage. In more concise terms, they have reached stage 7 or 8 of Fishman's 1991 Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (GIDS) (qtd. in Lewis and Simons, 2010) or fall under the endangered classification according to the UNESCO criteria (UNESCO 2003).

In areas near Montreal, the Mohawk language lost more than half of its speakers during the mid-1900s, and as such, cross-generational exchanges all but disappeared from the speaker base. During the 1970s Mohawk lessons were first introduced in local schools, and Mohawk-medium education began in its earliest manifestation towards the end of the decade. In contemporary times, roughly half of the community send their children to Mohawk-medium education institutions, alongside which the parents are required to sign an agreement to participate in activities organised by the institution and are actively encouraged to speak the language at home with their children, while also being offered courses to learn the language themselves, should they not speak it (Williams 2013). Thanks to these efforts and initiatives, Mohawk is now considered a viable language, despite its small speaker base (Williams 2013).

Another example of a vulnerable language is Cornish, which largely disappeared as a communal language by the later stages of the 18th century. When the Cornish revival began in the early 20th century, the revived language was based on fragments of Late Cornish, which had been based on surviving documents or remained in people's memories, alongside Middle Cornish literature, and words borrowed from or modelled on Welsh and Breton. No recordings exist of native Cornish speakers, so the pronunciation of the revived versions of Cornish had to be reconstructed based on surviving texts (Hicks 2005). According to MacKinnon (2000), today Cornish boasts no more than a few hundred active speakers, plus several thousand people with some knowledge of the language; it is taught in some limited capacity in schools and in language classes for adults; people are writing poetry, songs, short stories and novels in Cornish, and there are regular, short radio broadcasts in Cornish. One of the biggest setbacks of the Cornish language revival effort is the presence of multiple variations of the language. The most notable one, Common Cornish, is the most widely spoken and studied (Hicks 2005).

Immersion education for children is used to a different extent in many language revivals and revitalization processes. In New Zealand, for example, hundreds of the so called *Kōhanga Reo*, or language nests, are used as a contemporary example of the workshop-based approach to revitalization, where young children are immersed in the Māori language (King 2001). In some revitalization efforts, the programmes are not exclusively aimed at younger generations, but are also inclusive towards adult speakers as well. An example of

this lies in the Basque country, where the language is still relatively strong, therefore it is possible for civil servants to spend a year or two learning the language while on full pay - if the speakers achieve fluency after their studies, all their tuition fees are refunded. There are also numerous small gatherings of adults with shared linguistic interests, who meet regularly and speak Basque as often as they can. Such groups are usually spearheaded by one or two native speakers, who volunteer to spend time helping learners to improve their language skills. Thanks to these and other initiatives and language efforts, the speaker base of the language has been steadily gaining more and more traction. Another major factor in the successful implementation of the Basque revitalization efforts is linked to the willingness of the people to invest money in the language, not just for education, but also for general language infrastructure such as signs, product labels, and so on (Hualde 2007).

2.3. Elfdalian – A major victory for revitalization

The ancient Viking language of Elfdalian has been threatened with extinction for the better part of its contemporary lifespan, with an estimate of roughly 3,000 people in a tiny community in central Sweden keeping it alive. Now, speakers fight to revive the historic tongue by bringing it back to schools and the digital world before it vanishes completely (Sapir 2005).

The ancient dialect of Elfdalian (*älvdalska* in Swedish and *övdalsk* in the language itself) was in a much better place in terms of language usage up until the latter part of the 20th century. With its novel and unique sounds, those listening to Elfdalian would often be reminded of languages like that of the Elves from J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of The Rings* - despite the language being based on Old Norse (Sapir 2005). Unlike other Scandinavian languages, Elfdalian is unique in some ways - different tones and sounds, even its grammar and vocabulary are very different compared to Swedish. As such, while speakers of the three major Scandinavian languages (Swedish, Norwegian, Danish) can generally understand each other, this is not the case with Elfdalian. Despite originating from the same region, it is completely unintelligible even for the Swedes in the area. The language originated in the forested region of Älvdalen, Sweden, and retained a robust status for centuries - it served the local populace in all general areas - as trade and economic networks were mostly local - so there was little need for a different tongue (Garbacz and Bondi 2015).

However, this isolation would not hold up in the 21st century. With the majority of languages, and society itself shifting towards the internet and the online world, Swedish would slowly but surely make its way into this small community. With the influence and general push of the Swedish language, Elfdalian

was eventually drowned out in contemporary life - schools shifted to teaching the curriculum in Swedish, which has become the preferred common tongue, even giving Elfdalian a stigmatization that almost all minority languages face.

In an effort to save the rapidly disappearing language, a number of activists weaponized the very source that was threatening the language - the digital world. Starting an online awareness and revival campaign, the group, called *Ulum Dalska* ("We need to speak Elfdalian") have garnered much needed support, which granted them some measure of success in their long-term goal to stabilize and revitalize the language. To include a new generation of speakers, a number of children's books have been translated into Elfdalian, and numerous programs have been introduced in schools encouraging and incentivizing the learning of the language (Sapir 2005).

Elfdalian has been taught in Älvdalen's schools since 2015. The revival tendency had been strengthened by the First Conference on Elfdalian in Copenhagen, raising awareness of the language which acts as a window into bygone times. With that in mind, in 2016 the language saw its first major victory when it was assigned an ISO language code (ISO 639-3), officially classifying it as a language on the internet. This milestone meant that future efforts would be much more achievable in the digital space - which would come into fruition the following year. A course was offered in the Älvdalen area of Dalarna County in Western Sweden to a group of international participants from countries including the USA, Czech Republic, Germany, Norway, and Denmark. This further international recognition gave the language an even greater reach, and perhaps it was this extended reach which led to the second major event in 2017. The language reached an even wider audience when it was introduced to the popular online game Minecraft, through the in-game recreation of the village of Älvdalen, alongside an added option to switch both text and audio to Elfdalian.

2.4. Different approaches to language revitalization

When considering approaches to language revitalization efforts, one of the most important aspects is the state of language's speaker base. While normally the school system can be relied on to facilitate language acquisition, some fringe cases where the speaker numbers are in a critical low might require a different approach. As is the case with a one of the Sámi variants, Inari Sámi has less than 1000 speakers (Sapir 2005) and as such is almost impossible to approach it according to the traditional school-based method. Despite this seemingly minute speaker base, the language has managed to retain relevancy in the regions where it is used, even steadily increasing the number of speakers through a number of unique language

projects. These language workshops are community driven initiatives and events, aiming to combine language with the communal, societal aspects - in essence, this results in events which are mainly aimed at language education, while at the same time reinforcing the Sámi social and cultural identity. It is important to note that these workshops are not exclusive to one specific age groups, rather they are organized in a way that the entire family can attend - and as such, not only does it bring in a new generation of future language speakers, but also revitalizes or re-introduces the language in adult speakers who might have experienced large-scale language attrition or decline. This suggests and reinforces two vital points, discussed in relevant literature: language education is possible regardless of the age group, and that for smaller-scale indigenous languages, the most reliable way to preserve them is to rely on localized events and methods, rather than attempting to solve the issue through official school education (Hornberger 2008; Kuokakken 2003). As for teaching itself, it is debatable which approach would be more efficient: starting from the ground up via target language teaching or relying on bilingual education instead.

Much like other school-based methods, bilingual education also has the downside of generally suffering from a lower degree of reinforcement from familial and communal circles. While the education itself creates an optimal situation in which the language may be used, these are very often limited to the classroom itself; children have little to no motivation or reason to use the endangered language outside of school, be it with their friends or with their family. On the flip side, if bilingual education is used in an area / community where there is already a communal effort with the intent of using an endangered language, then a well-thought-out bilingual education approach can serve to reinforce the language and community itself, by furthering the already existing goals of the speaker base. In this sense, bilingual education may better be suited as a tool for language maintenance, rather than revival.

When dealing with language revitalization and maintenance, it is not enough to only focus on the future generation of language speakers - it is imperative that adult language programs be developed as well, that all age groups are given a chance and opportunity to participate in their language's future. One of the most common kinds of program in this category are evening classes, for adults or in some cases for entire families. These classes rarely try to achieve immersion, rather focusing on a more direct approach to language education. With this, the methods covered are shifting away from the classroom, and more towards a workshop-based approach to education as illustrated by an analysis of the Inari Sámi language. According to the research, native speakers organized a workshop-based linguistic education on a local scale, aimed at children and adults in equal measure. It seems

plausible to investigate possible usage of these localized, smaller scale “language bases” as a tool to nurture language growth in more areas simultaneously, as the Sámi example has proved to be very much efficient in doing so.

As for the possible integration of these methods into other language areas which are in need of revitalization (mainly concerning Gaelic language revival efforts in Ireland and Scotland), it seems plausible to investigate possible usage of these localized, smaller scale “language bases” as a tool to nurture language growth in more areas simultaneously, as the Sámi example has proved to be very much efficient in doing so. Despite having a large number of native speakers, Irish Gaelic always seems to remain in the shadow of English in terms on linguistic usage and popularity (Muller 2010) - in an effort to combat this, integrating Gaeltacht regions into the language education efforts with the “Sámi method” might prove to be the tipping point in this conflict. It must be noted however, that the attempt of using this method might prove to be incompatible with the aforementioned languages, as this approach is heavily reliant on a communal drive behind the initiative itself - should this collective desire for language revitalization be absent, this approach might prove to be fruitless; even so, it might provide potential future research opportunities to fine-tune the method.

3. Media as a tool for endangered languages

The media of minority languages are widely considered to be a critical element in the revitalization of endangered or declining languages. As a widely used and easy to access part of everyday life, these media elements are regarded with the potential to expand the domains of endangered languages, while increasing awareness and improving the means and motivation for the usage of these languages (Cutter 2001). This clear potential makes them a vital tool for indigenous people, as they seek ways to partake in the media, and produce media of their own in an effort represent themselves, while also constructing an image of their community and nation via these tools - all of which serve to preserve vitalize the endangered language.

3.1. Sámi media

In contemporary times, where almost every language and culture is simultaneously exposed to the global world throughout technology, it is imperative that a linguistic and cultural group has its own sphere of influence in this regard. As such, the Sámi media has been a critical communal and linguistic resource - not only this sphere, but also legitimizing it. Often one of the most notable hurdles for a minority

indigenous language is modernization; establishing the language on the digital plane is one of the most important first steps towards recognition (Skogerbø 2003). This “infancy” is very much present in the mediascape: the most used medium is radio, whereas the press is made somewhat unreachable due to lack of resources. On the other hand, TV programmes in either Sámi languages, or produced by and for Sámi peoples are rare but very much exist and developing. On the contemporary end of media, widespread general usage of the internet is of course an invaluable asset in terms of media potential.

To further explain the two biggest used mediums, establishing and developing the Finnish Sámi radio within Finland’s public broadcasting company was achieved only after a constant, persistent push by the Finnish Sámi community to bring its own radio into existence - once again reinforcing the notion of communal desire and general dedication towards the language as a cornerstone of vitalization and development. This has come a long way from sporadic side programmes in 1936 to having its own main channel with a range of programmes, clocking in at roughly 48 hours weekly.

The Sámi languages have also established a foothold in the online world, with various organizations and groups actively developing their own websites; additionally, a number of radio programmes and TV news broadcasts are also accessible in these tongues. As the most prevalent platform in the contemporary world, it is safe to assume that this presence will only get larger and more dominant as time progresses, and these communities fully embrace the infinite possibilities offered by technology.

The presence of globalization in the everyday life of an indigenous community has both pros and cons for the community, alongside several inevitable outcomes for language revitalization and endangerment. Globalization is a double-edged sword in this regard: while it supports and encourages transnationalism, a phenomenon that is described by Cormack (2005) as a process where previous borders, whether geographical, cultural, or linguistic are blurred transformed and renegotiated; at the same time, it points to an increase in interconnectedness on social, political, and economic processes amplified by the increased communication technology and media.

This interconnectedness is an essential part of the Sámi media not entirely because the programmes in question must be aimed at a multilingual Sámi audience across a number of borders, including a larger audience in significant Sámi diasporic communities in southern cities, but also because the media itself can be described as a balancing act between the true, or “original” Sámi practices, and the general global media formats, genres, and practices. This inevitably results in tensions in matters of language revitalization and loss, as there is a notable

disparity in discourses on what is considered important and newsworthy. The sheer ability of the media to bring together people and reinforce a shared sense of belonging and community has made it invaluable as a tool for the establishment and preservation of indigenous communal identities, much like conventional national media still plays a key role in the framework of establishing a national identity on a larger scale. At the same time, the negative aspects must also be taken into consideration.

With the carefully mediated, discursive construction of a common Sámi identity and nation, the media has also indirectly and unintentionally accelerated cultural hybridisation. The programmes present other ways of seeing and doing things; manifesting themselves in different genres, visualities and journalistic practices, just to name a few. To begin with, even though all non-Sámi language usage is translated and voiced over, the visual representation and genre may still be decidedly “alien” for the Sámi audience. For example, Sámi television news teams work together with Inuit and Māori television organisations, in a joint effort to exchange news clips. According to Sámi policies regarding news, important indigenous news worldwide is covered also in the main news programme, thus bringing whole new worlds, including different genres, visual representations, and discourses of other indigenous people into Sámi living rooms. Furthermore, both the Sámi radio and TV operate under the jurisdiction of national broadcasting companies, meaning things such as funding, broadcasting times are all regulated. This presents a clash of interests: three different news values and criteria are present among the Sámi media circles; the journalists working on the Norwegian side of Sámi tend to be heavily influenced by the Norwegian Broadcasting Company’s news values and practices, whereas those working in Finnish and Swedish sides are influenced by their respective national broadcasting companies’ styles respectively. The daily practices of producing Sámi TV broadcasts have resulted in very different views on what is considered as news and how the news should be produced and presented.

The presence of cultural hybridisation in media translates also into a serious competition for audiences. On the one hand, due to technological advancements and modernization, these Sámi TV programmes can be watched online from any part of the globe. This presents potentially limitless possibilities for Sámi media to address and gain new audiences, both indigenous and foreign. At the same time, audiences’ loyalties and tastes are tested and lured by an ever-increasing number of new global genres, products, and possibilities to use the media; this hybridisation of media enables, at least to an extent, the media users to choose their own media mix, something that will unavoidably result in the “dilution” of their own indigenous media presence.

4. Conclusions

Ancient histories and languages will always be there to remind people of what once was - and what one day could be. There may very well be other areas of life which are heavily influenced by the cultural aspects of the respective population - with that said it is my belief that the two most influential areas nowadays are music and TV series, both of which are experiencing an ever-increasing number of indigenous, folkish contents.

Considering the rapidly changing and evolving current world, measures which once might have seemed inefficient or otherwise unworthy of exploration may very well become proven and effective methods for language revitalization and maintenance. By introducing the general public to a depiction of a certain region's linguistic history, the viewer may very well be influenced in a positive way by the music, artworks, series, customs, just to mention a few; prompting an increased interest towards the language in question. With the rising number of ways that people can connect with one another, many believe that communities that are based on the old ways will thrive, as they can get their message out to a much wider audience - possibly bringing new individuals into the fold. All things considered, it seems only natural that one should first and foremost be concerned with one's own language, culture, historical background, and spiritual belonging - such sacred attributes are to be untouched by the global message. Whether this phenomenon will go on to continue for many years to come, or simply disappear - only time will tell.

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