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The Kola Saami Languages: Contemporary Sociolinguistic Situation

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ABSTRACT

This paper shows that the Kildin Saami language belongs to the group of critically endangered languages, which means that the youngest speakers are grand-parents and older. Family 'linguistic' connections are completely lost, the language is transmitted only by 'academics' (language courses) and used partially. To preserve the Kildin Saami language only the following can be done: change the status of the language through the formation of a language policy and create new opportunities for language functioning. My research is based on the framework that contemporary sociolinguistic situation should be studied from the following perspectives: number of native speakers, the language environment, language revitalization, the state's language policy, prestige of the language, existence of written forms of the language, and others.

Keywords: Indigenous minorities of the North, endangered languages, Saami languages, contemporary sociolinguistic situation.

INTRODUCTION

The Saami languages belong to the Finno-Ugric part of the Uralic family of languages and can be divided into western and eastern groups: the Western Saami languages (South Saami, Ume Saami, Pite Saami, Lule Saami, North Saami) and the Eastern Saami languages (Inari Saami, Skolt Saami, Akkala Saami, Kildin Saami, Ter Saami). The present Eastern Saami languages spoken in Russia can be divided into two groups: the mainland group (Skolt Saami, Akkala Saami) and the peninsula group (Kildin Saami, Ter Saami) [27]. The Kildin Saami language is the biggest group according on the number of speakers and it is based on the Kola Saami alphabet. The Saami, living in the northern part of Scandinavia and Finland and in the Kola Peninsula (Russia), are the only indigenous people in the European Union (EU) to have their own language, culture, means of livelihood and identity. The history of the Saami in the areas occupied by them dates back to the time prior to the formation of the present states in the region [32]. The Russian Saami people live on the Kola Peninsula. The term 'Kola Peninsula' is often used as a synonym for the Russian administrative area: the Murmansk region ('oblastj'). That is why the Russian Saami people are called the Kola Saami and the present Eastern Saami languages spoken in Russia are called the Kola Saami languages.

STRUCTURE AND ORGANIZATION OF THE PAPER

I organized this paper into two sections. The first section briefly presents the history of the study of the Kola Saami languages. The second section presents the results of my research on the Kola Saami languages, the current sociolinguistic situation from different perspectives. Analyzing these factors, I conclude that the situation with the Kola Saami languages can be regarded as critically dangerous.

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LITERATURE REVIEW

Such encyclopedic works as 'The Saami. A cultural Encyclopaedia' [32] and Pekka Sammallahti's 'The Saami Languages. An Introduction' [27] chart and systematize a wide range of information about the Saami culture and the Saami languages.

The history of the Saami languages is presented in the monograph of the Finnish scientist Mikko Korhonen 'Introduction to the history of the Saami language' [21]. The study of the Kola Saami languages has an important part in the Russian scientist's works. The study makes a serious contribution to the research on this indigenous people. The Kildin Saami language is described in details in the monograph and in the numerous articles by the Russian scientist Georgij Kert 'The Saami language' [18], the prominent researcher of the Saami language research in USSR and Russia, and in Galina Kostina's doctoral thesis work on the vowel system of the Kildin Saami language [22].

The description of the Akkala Saami language is presented in the monograph of the Russian scientist Pekka Zajkov 'The Akkala Saami language (phonological and morphological study)'[35]. The Ter Saami language, its phonology and morphological categories—noun and verb—is described in Sergej Tereshkin's doctoral thesis work [31].

There are dictionaries of the Kola Saami languages: the descriptive dialect dictionary by Toivo Itkonen [7], the dictionary edited by Rimma Kuruch (Kildin-Russian) [1], published by Georgij Kert (Kildin-Russian-Kildin) (Kert 1986) and Pekka Sammallahti and Anastassia Chvorostuchina (Kildin-North Saami-Kildin) (1991). Another Saami-Russian and Russian-Saami dictionary, created in 2009 with updates through the present, is the result of the work at Giellatekno, Centre for Saami language technology, at the Arctic University of Norway (http://giellatekno.uit.no/).

A great contribution to the research of the Kola Saami languages is the works of Elisabeth Scheller, a researcher from the Arctic University of Norway. Her publications state that all the four Kola Saami languages are seriously endangered by a language shift from Saami to Russian. But a language revitalisation process has started particularly in the Kildin Saami language community in Lovozero, where most of the active and potential Kildin Saami language users live today. Lovozero appears to have good conditions that provide a relatively stable base for a language revitalisation and reintroduction of Kildin Saami as an everyday language of communication. However, today the Kildin Saami language community does not use all its resources effectively enough. Elisabeth Scheller's study was partly carried out within the framework of the project The Kola Saami Documentation Project (KSDP). The aim of the Kola Saami Documentation Project is to provide comprehensive linguistic, sociolinguistic and ethnographic documentation of the endangered Saami languages of Russia. The primary goal of the project to systematically record, transcribe, translate and archive the broadest possible variety of spoken language data from the Kola Saami languages. In addition to purely linguistic documentation, Saami language sociology and sociolinguistics are being evaluated with the help of questionnaires and interviews [25].

In my works I have analyzed how 'The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages' provisions are realized in Russia in relation to the Kola Saami languages [8]. I tried to show that in connection to the languages of the indigenous minorities ('dying' languages), orientation to cumulative language function is more perspective than communicative [12]. In the Russian monolingual environment there is no straight and unambiguous dependence between the level of speaking the Saami language and internal self-identification [11]. I have found that the Saamis recognizing the Saami language as their native language do not speak

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this language and do not want to study it [10]. My overview of the Kildin Saami language teaching in the Murmansk region at present and in historical perspective shows that the lack of language environment is the main problem for preservation and developing of the Kola Saami languages. I propose that developing a distance learning system for Kola Saami languages for the dispersedly living Saami population of the Kola Peninsula can solve the problem of studying the language [9, 16]. As a result of my field research with my doctoral students, the group of Saami traditional trade lexicon and lexicon of spiritual Saami culture was collected and analyzed [16, 13, 14, 15].

The United Nations World Conference on Indigenous Peoples, September 22-23, 2014, will sum up the results of the Second international decade of indigenous people of the world. In anticipation of the Post-2015 Development Agenda, it is important to define prospects and forecasts of development of such indigenous minorities of the North, as the Kola Saami.

ARTICLE FOCUS

According to the interactive atlas of endangered languages, published by UNESCO in 2009, the Kildin Saami language belongs to the group of severely endangered languages, which means that 'language is spoken by grandparents and older generations; while the parent generation may understand it, they do not speak it to children or among themselves (http://www.unesco.org/culture/languages-atlas/index.php). As my research shows, this definition does not correspond to the real situation with the Kola Saami languages.

My opinion is that the Kildin Saami language now belongs to the group of critically endangered languages, which means that the youngest speakers are grandparents and even older people, and they speak the language partially and infrequently (http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/endangered-languages/atlas-of-languages-in-danger/). Family 'linguistic' connections are completely lost, which means that the older generations do not speak Saami with the younger generations at home. The Kildin Saami language is transmitted only by 'academics' (language course) and used partially. Functioning of the Kildin Saami language is limited by the personal spheres. Only an 'external' approach can be used to preserve the Kildin Saami language, i.e., we need to change the status of the language through the formation of a language policy and create new opportunities for language functioning.

RESEARCH SUBJECT AND APPROACHES

In my article I examine the contemporary sociolinguistic situation that evolved itself with the Kola Saami languages. Two main questions motivated my study. First, I wanted to know what is the 'degree' of the Kildin Saami language vitality? What kind of linguistic and social factors are involved? What kind of additional factors, such as Europe integration, are important? Secondly, I was interested in resources of the Kildin Saami language, the way to estimate its potential and to use these resources.

I base my research on the framework that the contemporary sociolinguistic situation should be studied from the following perspectives: number of native speakers, the language environment (the neighboring languages), traditional Saami trades (Saami sources of livelihood), revitalization of the language, cross-ethnic marriages (between the Saami and other nationalities), the state's language policy, prestige of the language, existence of written forms of the language, and the role of mass media [34].

RESEARCH METHODS

The research was carried out by methods of Sociolinguistics: a field study, questionnaires, written surveys and interviews, expert survey and biographical approach (case study used to examine contemporary real-life). In my research I used the Saami archives and libraries of the Murmansk region. The method of the language situation modeling was used to examine its state and dynamics.

RESULTS

Quantity of native speakers. According to the 2010 census data, 1,771 saamis live in Russia (787–urban population, 984–rural population), 1,599 out of them live in the Murmansk region. the number of saamis in russia rose from 1,615 in 1989 to 1,769 in 2002 and 1,771 in 2010 [24]. Thus, compared to the 2002 data, the number of saamis increased by 0.12%, compared to the 1989 census–by 9%. it is important to emphasize that the average annual saami population growth from the 18th century during 147 years (1782-1929) was 4%, over these years the number of kola saamis grew by 47% [2] (Fig. 1).

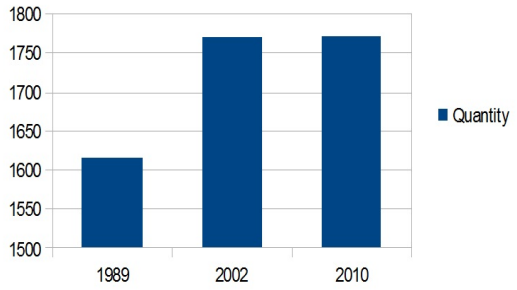


Figure 1: Evolution of The Saamis Population

The dynamics of the number of indigenous minorities in the Murmansk region (including the Saamis) after the year of 1989 is evident. Increase in the quantity is connected to the factor of national self-identity: more and more representatives of different ethnic groups identify themselves as part of their ethnic group and declare their nationality. A significant role in the quantity increase of the Saamis belongs to the economic factor: after Gorbachev's *perestrojka* many more possibilities for increased cooperation between the Saamis from Finland, Norway and Sweden and the Kola Saamis existed. However, indigenous peoples in the Soviet Union also had their benefits, e.g., no exams to enter a university.

According to the 2010 census data, the age distribution for the Saamis is as follows: 20-24 years old–154, 0-4 and 10-14 years old–139 people each, 35-39 years old–128, 30-34 years old–126, 50-54 years old–112, 25-29 years old–109, 55-59 years old–108, 40-44 years old–104 [24] (Fig. 2).

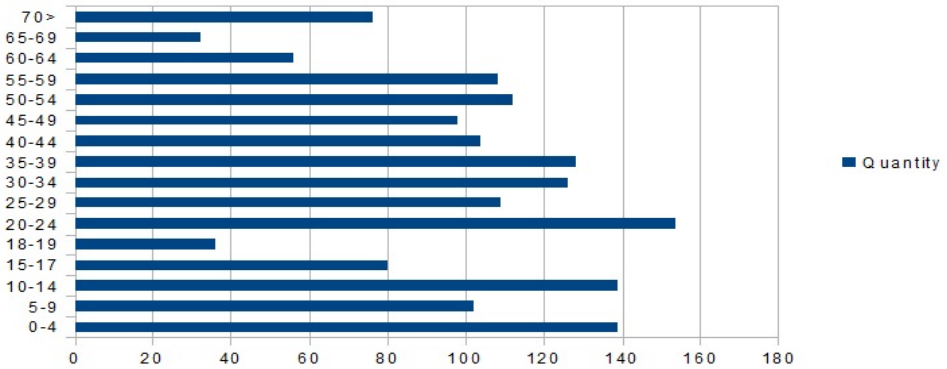


Figure 2: Age Distribution for the Saamis (2010)

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In terms of the education level, most of the Saamis have secondary or incomplete secondary education (252 and 285 respectively). Two people identified themselves as illiterate [24].

Of the people living in the Murmansk region, 315 speak the Kola Saami language: 18 of them are Russians, 7 are Komi, 1 is German and 279 are Saamis [25]. Thus, 15.7% of the Saamis speak their mother tongue.

The Kildin Saami language is spoken by 700 speakers, which is found to be rather optimistic. According to Elisabeth Scheller, we are likely to have 100 active speakers of the Kildin Saami language, these are people fluent in the Saami language and using it on different levels [29]. They form 5% of the Saamis living in Russia in 2010. Around 200 speakers are regarded as passive speakers of the Kildin Saami language: they understand everything or pretty much everything, they are able to speak the Kildin Saami, but do not speak it for various reasons [29].

The Saami population lives in the territory of the Kola Peninsula dispersedly, the areas officially densely inhabited by them in line with the Resolution of the Russian Federation Government dated 11.01.1993 № 22 'On the List of Areas Inhabited by Minorities of the North' are the Lovozersky, Kovdorsky and Kolsky areas of the Murmansk region. According to the 2010 census data, 873 of the Saamis live in the Lovozersky area, 112 in the Kovdorsky area and 201 in the Kolsky. Some of the Saami people live in the cities of the Murmansk region: Murmansk–139, Kola–83, Apatity–53, Olenegorsk–46, Monchegorsk–43, etc. [25]. A significant role in the Saami communication belongs to the geopolitical factor: the areas densely populated by them are located in a distance from the regional center. The insignificantly developed transport infrastructure and the high cost of transportation services is a great obstacle for the indigenous people to study in the regional center (Murmansk or other cities).

Language Environment. According to 2010 census data, Russians still remain the most numerous nationality in the Murmansk Region (89%). The Ukrainians make 4.8%, the Byelorussians–1.7%, the Tatars–0.8%, the Azerbaijanians–0.5%, the Komi–0.2%, 0.1% of them are the Komi-Izhem, the Mordovians–0.2%, the Saamis–0.2%, and the Karelians–0.2% of the population [24]. In 2002 there were 1,995 representatives of indigenous minorities registered in the Murmansk Region, which is 0.19% of the total population: the Kets (the Ostyaks with the Ket Language), Koryaks, Kumandins, Mansi, Nanais, Nenets, Saamis, Ulchis, Khanty, Chuvans, Chukchi, Shortsi, Evenkis (Tungus with the Evenki Language), Evens (Tungus with the Even Language), Yukagirs. The largest group is the Saami which in 2002 made 88.6% of total quantity of indigenous minorities of the North. The Nenets–8.1%, the Evenkis–0.6%, the Khanty and Shortsi each make the 0.5% of total quantity of the indigenous smaller people of the North, the Mansi–0.3%, the Kumandins–0.25%, the Kets and Chukchi–0.2% each, the Evens–0.15%, the Koryaks–0.1%, the Nanais, Ulchis, Chuvans and Yukagirs–0.05% each.

The Saamis on the Kola Peninsula have always been surrounded by a Russian-speaking environment. According to Ivan Ushakov, the 1785 surveys showed that 100% of the male Saamis and 70% of the female Saamis spoke Russian (colloquial Russian). The Lapps (in the old tradition the Saamis were called the Lapps) knew many Russian songs, tales, and proverbs. Despite the fact that the Saamis took much from the Russians, they continued to have their native language and unique culture [33].

According to the 1995 data, the majority of Saami respondents living in the village Krasnoshchelye and the village Revda named Russian as their native language (85% and 75% respectively). 92% of Saami respondents said that the school children should be taught in the Saami language and in the Russian language.

In terms of speaking Russian, the quantity of the Saamis is insignificantly increasing over the past few years: 2002–99.8% of the Saamis, 2010–99.9%. Only one person living in the village does not speak Russian according to the 2010 census data. In general, we can say that all the Saamis speak the Russian language. The Russian language replaced the Kola Saami languages in all spheres (formal and informal).

Saami Sources of Livelihood (Traditional Trades). Saami sources of livelihood are reindeer husbandry, fishing, hunting, and handcrafts.

Reindeer herding is considered the core of the Saami ethnographic identity. It is closely connected to seasonal migrations and the unique social organization, the so-called *siida* ('Lapp village, reindeer-herding community'), which has common sources of livelihood and common usufruct territories [32]

The Saami sources of livelihood are based on respect for nature. The Saamis never took more fish or game than necessary for the needs of the family. These factors formed the Saami ethnographic identity.

The traditional livelihood of the Kola Saamis was based on a semi-nomadic hunting economy. The rhythm of life was determined by the working year. The cyclic Saami traditional economic system existed until the beginning of the twentieth century. This system was destroyed during the 1930s 'collectivization' which the Soviet regime called 'way-of-life pastoralism', forcing families to live in villages [32].

Nature and Saami traditional trades were seriously affected by the industrial development ('industrialization'). The Saamis, according to Georgij Kert, have been isolated from their natural environment: the Saami small unprofitable sectors of the economy were combined into state collectives where the property belonged to the state and did not bring sufficient income to the Saamis.
In the 2000s in the wave of the *perestrojka* reindeer husbandry revived with the move to a free market economy. Some hope emerged that the Saami traditional economic activity would remain and develop.

According to the report of the Federal Service for State Registration, Cadastre and Cartography in the Murmansk region 2011 and 2012, there are two reindeer husbandry cooperatives called *Tundra* and *Olenevod*, clan community (obshchina) *Piras*, *Chentembalj* (from the Lovozersky area) and kolkhoz *Belomorskij ribak* (from the Tersky area) (http://to51.rosreestr.ru). In 2013 the target program 'Reindeer husbandry in the Murmansk region 2012-2015' was accepted. This means that more than 80% of the reindeers are concentrated in the two reindeer husbandry cooperatives Tundra and Olenevod. In recent years the quantity of reindeer has decreased significantly (http:// agro.gov-murman.ru). According to the Murmansk Region Government, in 2008 the quantity of reindeer in the Murmansk region was approximately 66,000 heads. By 2011 the herd had thinned to around 50,000 and by 2013 the number was down to 42,000 head (http://www.rg.ru/2013/08/20/reg-szfo/saami.html).

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The Saami and non-Saami youth can learn reindeer husbandry at the state educational institution of initial vocational education 'Vocational School № 26' in Lovozero since 1974.

Language Revitalization. The language transfer from parent generation to the children's generation is interrupted, because the Saamis do not speak their own language in the families. Several generations of the Kola Saami lost their language. It is frequent now that nobody talks to a child in the native language. Even if the family has members of the older generation who speak the language, often they live separately, and therefore are not able to constantly communicate with their grandchildren. For example, the famous translator, the Kildin Saami language teacher, the creator of 'Saami ABC', social activist Alexandra Antonova lives in Lovozero. Her granddaughter Veronica lives in another city (Murmansk) and does not speak the Saami language.

Academic reproduction path of the Saami language is represented by two periods: before and after *perestrojka* 1991.

In the Soviet times, before *perestrojka* 1991 everything was determined by the state and the reproduction of the Kildin Saami language made some progress. According to Alexandra Antonova, in the 1970s 50% of the Saami children spoke their mother tongue. The Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation decided that the Saami children should learn their mother tongue at school as a compulsory discipline. At this time municipal comprehensive boarding school 'Lovozero Boarding School of Secondary (Full) General Education' received the 'national' status. Since 1982 Alexandra Antonova's 'Saami ABC' was used for the Kildin Saami language teaching at schools.

Despite this, in some cases, there was a gap between practical necessity and administrative ways of solving problems. In 1985 the 'Saami-Russian Dictionary' (edited by Rimma Kuruch) was published by the Publishing House of the Russian Academy of Sciences (Moscow) in the quantity of 1,720 copies (Alexandra Antonova's 'Saami ABC' had only 500 copies). According to the public opinion, it was necessary to publish not the Saami-Russian dictionary but the Russian-Saami dictionary because the Kola Saamis spoke the Russian language perfectly which was not the case for the mother tongue [30]. This requirement was partially fulfilled in 1986 when the 'Saami-Russian and Russian-Saami dictionary' by Georgij Kert was published. However, it was designed for primary school children and was used infrequently in the Saami schools.

The situation changed after 1991. The boarding school in Lovozero with 160 students and classes for 15-16 people was closed and its 'national' status was taken away. Alexandra Antonova's 'Saami ABC' has not been used at schools since 1987. According to public opinion, the new Saami textbooks destroyed the connections established between the Saami generations. As a result, the previous generations that were taught using Alexandra Antonova's 'Saami ABC' did not understand the younger generation that was taught using the new Saami textbooks including the different principles of the Saami graphics system.

At present in the Murmansk region the children and the youth are taught the Kildin Saami language only in one educational institution: municipal comprehensive boarding school 'Lovozero Boarding School of Secondary (Full) General Education'. The school is situated in Lovozero—in the center of the areas densely populated by the Kola Saamis.
The elementary school classes of the 'Lovozero Boarding School of Secondary (Full) General Education' teach Saami classes one hour per week. In everyday life the school children do not

use the Saami language, they are not taught the theory of Saami language but only the spoken language. There was Saami language teaching in the elementary classes of school № 9 in Murmansk in 2003 for half a year.

In some municipalities training of grown-ups in the Kildin Saami language is arranged as private initiatives of Saami community leaders. Such courses are given on a non-systematic basis, have no methodology and teaching support, and take place for a very limited number of trainees. The focus of such courses is to develop speaking skills only.
According to Alexandra Antonova, the problem with teaching the Saami language is that teachers are focused on spoken language, not grammar.

In the post-perestroika period, both the state and the Saami public play an important and growing role in the revitalization of the Kola Saami language. The Saami activists propose active measures to initiate the revitalization of their language (the creation of language centers, the Center for the Saami knowledge, clubs and courses in the Saami language).

Researchers and the 'Kola Saami Documentation Project' (http://saami.uni-freiburg.de/ksdp/RU/) staff contributed significantly to the process of revitalizing the Kildin Saami language: they organized a language center where a real language environment was created, and found specialists and native speakers for teaching the Saami language. The Kola Saamis highly appreciated this contribution to the revitalization of the Saami language.

Currently the Saami community believes that now it is necessary to react on an emergency basis to revitalize the Kola Saami languages and use a technique called 'language nests', when a language is used both in the process of education and communication. This technique has really helped to revitalize the North Saami language in Norway. This technique is used in the Saami language teaching in Finland (http://www.rosvesty.ru/1958/guest/).

In December 2009 members of the initiative group on preservation and development of the Kola Saami languages proposed establishing a 'Center of Practical Language' in Lovozero to the Murmansk Regional Duma (Murmansk Regional Parliament). The objectives of this center include language courses and trainings for groups of different ages, to organize language meetings, discussions, camps, and hikes.

In July 2009 the Kola Saami language Summer Camp was held on the island of Charvin in Lovozero [6]. This project was supported by the 'Kola Saami Documentation Project' staff, including the material support: for participating in the camp the Kildin Saami native speakers received a 'salary'. As a result of the 'Kola Saami Documentation Project' the online study materials 'Do you want to learn or improve the Kildin Saami language?' and the Kildin Saami grammar and vocabulary textbooks were published on the Murmansk State Regional Universal Scientific Library's site (http://www.mgounb.ru/land/vy_hotite_izucha/).

The issues surrounding the revitalization of the Kola Saami language have been actively discussed during the regional public meetings, seminars and conferences.
Cross-ethnic Marriages. Assimilation of the Kola Saamis depended on peoples the Saami connected with in their economic life (the Russians, the Finnish, the Komi-Izhems, the Samoyeds, the Norwegians, and the Karelians). According to V. Alymov's research from the 1920s, the Saamis had communicated with the Russians throughout the Kola Peninsula, but communicated with other nationalities only on a certain part of the Kola Peninsula. With the Norwegians and the Karelians, the Saamis were in economic and cultural relations since ancient times, but by the early 20th century this relationship weakened. From these contacts

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the Saamis lost more than they gained (lost lands and pastures, the transition to settled life, had the cultural influences in the clothing, household goods, and food).

It has always been customary for the Kola Saamis to marry Russians, and there is almost always the loss of Saami tribal traits as a consequence. A Saami woman, married to a Russian or a Finn, ceases to be a Saami. A Saami man, who begins to have a settled life and married to a Russian woman, soon becomes a Russian. A good example, according to Vasilij Alymov from the 1920s, is the Saamis from the East of the Kola Peninsula: by the transition to settled life and marriage with Russians a significant number of the Saamis became Russians. If representatives of peoples having a sedentary life, married to a Saami, they did not change their life, they did not go to the tundra. They considered nomadic life a life of a lower quality than their own life [2]. Now about 50% of all the marriages are between the Saamis and representatives of other ethnic groups [23]. According to the 2000 annual report of the State Committee for Environmental Protection in the Murmansk region a young Saami family today is a rare case. About 80% of the Russian Saamis under 50 years old were born in mixed ethnic families. That is why the native language is forgotten, attitude to the national trades is indifferent, and as a result lifestyle is lost. Unfortunately, many of the Saamis remember that they belong to the Saami nationality only when it comes to governmental benefits. Only a Saami family can be a guarantee of preservation of the Kola Saami ethnicity (http://www.murman.ru/ecology/ comitet/report00/).

State's Language Policy. According to the Constitution of the Russian Federation, the state language of the country is Russian. Article 26 of the Constitution and Article 2 of the Law 'On Languages of the People of the Russian Federation' (edition 2002) provides a general right for people belonging to national minorities to use their own languages (http://www.internet-law.ru/law/smi/iazyk.htm).

In Russia in the Northwest Federal district which the Murmansk region belongs to, the Advisory board concerning indigenous people is created and also the creation of the position of the representative protecting the rights of indigenous people in the Northwest Federal district is discussed. In 2009 the Council of Representatives of Indigenous Minorities of the North of the Russian Federation is created at the Murmansk Regional Government. In 2012 the departmental target program 'Economic and Social Development of the Indigenous Minorities People of the North of Murmansk Region' for 2012-2016 is developed.

The main objective of the Council of Indigenous Minorities of the North of the Russian Federation is to participate in the preparation and acceptance of government bodies exercising executive decisions on the development and realization of a state policy in the sphere of protection of the primordial habitat, the traditional way of life, management and crafts of the Saami.

At the last meeting of the Advisory board concerning indigenous people on December 9, 2013, the question of the preservation of the languages of indigenous people of the Northwest of Russia was discussed. During this meeting it was emphasized that in the Murmansk region public authorities and Murmansk Regional Government give support to the actions directed on preservation and use of the Kola Saami languages. There is research on the languages of the indigenous people at the highest educational institutions. The factors negatively influencing the use of the languages of the indigenous people are: urbanization, negative demographic tendencies in the environment of indigenous people, absence or low motivation of young generation to study native languages, contradictions in the federal legislation in

education, and in the sphere of support of social and economic and ethno cultural development of the Indigenous Minorities of the North. It was decided to consider until April 1, 2014, the possibility of introducing additional measures of stimulation of teaching and studying of the languages of the indigenous people and training in the native languages in preschool, average and highest educational institutions. It was decided also to consider until June 2, 2014, the possibility of implementing interaction with research institutions of the additional actions for documenting the languages of the indigenous people of the Northwest of Russia, including the Kola Saami languages people. Measures of support, including grants and subsidies, target projects of the non-profit non-governmental organizations directed on preservation and expansion of the usage spheres of the languages of the indigenous people of the Northwest of Russia (http://szfo.gov.ru/council/korennienarodi/prot20131209).

In the Murmansk region today there are 8 Saami public associations and 29 Saami clan communities of the Indigenous Minorities of the North of the Russian Federation. Their activity is directed on protection of the rights and legitimate interests of indigenous people, preservation and development of traditional types of the economic activity, a traditional way of life and culture. The quantity of the Saami clan communities increases in the Murmansk region.

Despite administrative measures, the serious legal base, the developed system of cooperation between public organizations and the authorities, results of language policy concerning the Kola Saami languages are quite insufficient. We can mention some facts of the government bodies paying attention to the Kildin Saami language. Emercom (Murmansk region, Russia) intends to prepare interactive editions on safety precautions in the Kildin Saami language. According to Emercom, promoting languages of the Indigenous Minorities of the North of the Russian Federation and increasing awareness of people in safety precautions becomes the purpose of issuing interactive posters and leaflets in Kildin Saami. The leaflets will be issued in Kildin Saami, and include translation into Russian and English. Safety precautions and the rules of behavior in mountains are the main subject of these interactive publications. Though the efficiency of these attempts is doubtful. On one hand, it is difficult to overestimate their attention to the Kildin Saami language, on the other hand, use of such publications in this language is almost impossible, because of the fact that there are not many people who are able to read the Kildin Saami language.

In my opinion, the main thing that should be taken into account in the policy of preservation and revival of the Kola Saami languages is that we need to change the language status. This will cause an increase of people studying the language, and will change their motivation to study the language. The factors that create the language status are its functioning, use in society, etc. They become real measures which are offered by the Saami public and the researchers dealing with the problems of the Kola Saami languages: to expand household function of the Kola Saami languages by means of real functioning of language groups, to create workplaces with use of the Kola Saami languages, to adjust functioning of mass media in the Kola Saami languages. These measures, certainly, have to be carried out in parallel with process of training in the Kola Saami languages. Thus the state too has to accept additional obligations.

I have examined how 'The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages' provisions are realized in Russia in relation to the Kola Saami languages and what obligations the Russian Federation should accept. The Kola Saami languages is not in the list of minority languages in the database of the Charter of the Council of Europe. There are Saami languages in Norway, Finland and Sweden, but there are no Saami languages in Russia according this list.

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When the government of Finland ratified 'The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages', the government accepted 59 obligations in relation to the Saami languages in Finland. The Russian Federation has not yet ratified this Charter, and therefore does not accept any obligation.

In my research we use the method of language situation modeling to examine the state and dynamics of the Kildin Saami language. According to the results of this research, to change the situation with the Kola Saami languages it is necessary to recognize these languages as an expression of the cultural wealth, to act to promote the Kola Saami languages in order to safeguard, encourage the use of the Kola Saami languages, to develop flexible and innovative measures for their preservation, to create university courses and programs for the Kola Saami languages. So, the Kola Saami languages are not recognized as an expression of the Saami cultural wealth, and there is no law in the Murmansk region directly concerning the preservation of the Kola Saami languages as a unique cultural heritage. It is necessary to create certain conditions for public usage of the Kola Saami languages. It means first of all functioning of mass media in the Kola Saami languages. One condition of teaching of the Kola Saami languages at schools it is necessary to start teaching the Kola Saami languages at universities that is now done only at the Herzen State Pedagogical University of Russia, St. Petersburg.

Prestige of the Language. The prestige of the native language among the Saamis is unfortunately quite low. There is a variety of reasons for that: economic, social and political. It is possible to add the psychological health of the people and the psychological climate surrounding them in the society. So, if officially the state always supported preservation of the Kola Saami languages, the informal policy of the state for many years was in certain cases was to suppress these languages. A direct ban on studying a native language, of course, never took place, but the fact of obligatory employment of the population promoted its oblivion. The concept of a 'housewife' for the Saami women did not exist during the Soviet period. Parents were obliged to work and to send children to kindergarten or to a boarding school. Even during the summer children could not go with their parents to the tundra, they had to go to a summer camp in the southern regions of the country. As the kindergarten teachers did not speak Saami, parents were asked to speak Russian at home. It was prestigious to speak Russian, and to speak Kola Saami was considered to be shameful.

Existence of Written Forms of the Language. The first attempts of creation of a written form of Kola Saami were made at the end of the 19th century. Systematic research work on studying the questions of creation and development of written forms of Kola Saami began in 1926-1927 when the North Faculty at the Leningrad East Institute names after A. S. Enukidze as a part of the Leningrad University was organized.

The Latin graphics was the basis for spelling. Since 1937 the written forms of Kola Saami, as well as written forms of other languages of Indigenous Minorities of the North of the Russian Federation, were transferred to the Russian alphabet (Cyrillic) [19].

In 1982 Alexandra Antonova developed a new alphabet for the Russian Saamis based on the Russian graphic (Cyrillic). Absence of the consensus between the experts in the description of the phonologic system of the Kola Saami languages and in the way of the graphic representation of some sounds led to still continuing disputes. It is a serious obstacle for practical work on the preservation and development of the Kola Saami languages [3].

Recently we find single opinions on the possibility of returning to the Latin graphics system as the Cyrillic basis of spelling makes the Kildin Saami language not prestigious for studying. This is the opinion of the Kola Saami youth, for this reason many of them prefer studying the North Saami language (language of the Norwegian Saami). It should be also emphasized that, according to some representatives of the Saami public, now the Kola Saamis are often perceived by western (non-Russian) Saamis as 'strangers'. If the Kola Saami languages use Latin graphics, the Russian Saamis and the non-Russian Saamis will better understand each other and this fact will strengthen national consciousness of the Kola Saamis [4].

Literature in the Kola Saami languages exists. There are 18 Saami poets and writers, 5 of them write in the Kola Saami languages (in Kildin and Ter Saami languages), the others write in Russian.

The Role of Mass Media. Mass media in the Kola Saami languages does not currently exist. The project 'Kola Sámi Radio' which was started in 2003 deserves a special attention. The Saami Council, a voluntary Saami non–governmental organization with Saami member organizations in Finland, Russia, Norway and Sweden, and the Sámi Radio, Saami-language broadcasting from Sweden, Norway and Finland were its initiators. The project 'Kola Sámi Radio' received funding from these initiators and from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs (Norway and Finland), the Nordic Council of Ministers, Eurasia Foundation, The Saami Parliament (Sameting) of Norway, the Norwegian Barents Secretariat and programme Interreg (financed by the European Regional Development Fund). The radio broadcasting station is situated in Lovozero where more than half of the Russian Saami lives. In 2005 the 'Kola Sámi Radio' was broadcast in the Kildin Saami language three times a week for ten minutes. The broadcasting station had a staff of six people. Now the 'Kola Sámi Radio' has economic difficulties: in January 2010 it was declared that the 'Kola Sámi Radio' employees have not been paid a full salary since a long time. This project was not the first attempt to organize broadcasting in the Kildin Saami language in the Murmansk region. Since 1990 the broadcasting in the Kildin Saami language was carried out by the office of the State TV and Radio Broadcasting Company Murman (GTRK) in Lovozero, but in 2000 this broadcasting was stopped. Daily or weekly newspapers and regular broadcasting in the Kola Saami languages do not exist.

STRUCTURE AND ORGANIZATION OF THE PAPER

As my research on the current sociolinguistic situation shows, the Kildin Saami language already belongs to the group of critically endangered languages. The reasons for this are the loss of the Saami traditional trades and the Saami traditional way of life, dispersion of the Saami accommodation, lack of the educational environment, no demand of the Kola Saami languages between the Saamis, and duration of the impact on the Kola Saami languages.

The situation of the Kola Saami languages in comparison to the other Indigenous Minorities languages of the North in Russia is particular. On the one hand, the statement that the Kola Saami languages are 'dying' has already become quite common. On the other hand, real revival of the feeling of the ethnic consciousness causes confidence in the Kola Saamis that movement for a revitalization of the Kola Saami languages will lead to some notable results. Awareness of the fact that language 'can mean much more to its ethno culture than just languages in general or than the language capacity with all humans are endowed' [5] begins to emerge in the Russian Saami community. The Kola Saami's confidence in the revival of their own language and culture is supported first of all by a positive example of the Finnish, Norwegian and Swedish Saamis, with who the Kola Saamis have very active contacts. The Saami community of the different countries after 1991 has close and intensive contacts at different levels: economic, political, social and humanitarian. So, following the example of the

Saami of Finland, Norway and Sweden in 2010 the elective representative organ of the Russian Saamis living in Murmansk region (the Saami parliament of the Kola Peninsula) was created. The Saamis of the different countries have joint projects in different spheres. The youth of the Kola Saami have an opportunity to study in Finland and Norway using grants from these countries.

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