

Language planning of North Sámi health care terminology

North Sámi language policy and language planning has two main goals: to stay as a united language despite state borders and to expand from an endangered language to a language used in as many domains as possible. This requires terminology planning.

However, North Sámi language planning doesn't have enough resources to meet the growing demand of specialized terminology in barely any field. Insufficient and incoherent terminology in eg. the health care field has a negative impact on the Sámi language training of health care professionals and training conducted in North Sámi. It increases the risk of dividing the languages along the nation state borders (see eg. Mäkelä 2022) and raises internal language barriers between professionals in Sápmi.

This presentation examines preliminary results of an evaluation of corpus planning in North Sámi in the health care field: does the corpus planning reflect the goal of a united North Sámi language?

The study will focus on around 300 terms for communicable (infectious) diseases and their symptoms. Communicable diseases and especially their symptoms, such as fever and coughing, are so common and timeless that they will, together with both rarer and newer diseases, like Covid-19, give a good view of corpus planning throughout the years.

The data consists of mostly written material from the 19th century to this day and will thus give a long-time perspective into the matter. Examples of data sources are dictionaries and learning material. The data will be collected by the snowball method.

This study is a language policy evaluation, which is the fifth and final stage of the language policy cycle, a policy cycle that has been adapted to the purposes of language policy and planning research (Gazzola et. al 2024: 5-9). The evaluation is made with ethnographic methods adapted to the policy evaluation setting (McCarty & Halle-Erby 2024), but without the participation part to avoid burdening already busy corpus planners.

The theoretical frame is Ulrich Ammon's (2003) theory that language planning is a social and dynamic process and involves several different groups (actors) with different positions

of power. The mapping of actors, variation and linguistic components will be made like in similar earlier works (Olthuis 2007; Mäkelä 2022). Lars Vikør's (2011) corpus analysis model can also show whether the planning reflects the ideology behind.

The results will reveal any tendencies of the North Sámi terminology dividing the language along the nation state borders. This research does the groundwork and provides stakeholders with something to work from – it opens for practical collaboration with stakeholders to develop and streamline the North Sámi terminology planning to prevent further division.

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