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Investing in indigenous multilingualism in the Arctic

Sari Pietikäinen

Department of Language and Communication Studies. Box 35 40014, University of Jyväskylä, Finland

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ABSTRACT

This article explores the dynamics between language and identity categories and the boundaries produced in a changing multilingual, indigenous context in the Arctic region of Finland. In this moment of transition, indigenous multilingualism has high stakes. It can be a resource for political and economic development but also for management and regimentation, open to winners and losers. Drawing on a longitudinal critical discourse ethnography of producing language and identity categories in the Finnish Arctic, I discuss three circulating discourses relevant for the ways in which indigenous identity boundaries are made to matter, namely strategic, aspirational and affective multilingualism. I argue that the processes at work are neither simple nor linear, but must be understood as organic, interwoven, and rhizomatic.

Indigeneity and multilingualism are both part of the lived reality and organizing rationalities in indigenous experience. They are typically embedded in the shifting value of linguistic resources, with their histories interrupted by nation states, reformulated by indigenous political movements and revalued by new global economic opportunities (cf. Lehtola, 2015; Tuhiwai Smith, 2012; Pietikäinen et al., 2016). Together, they provoke a whole web of intertwined discourses, practices, and emotions related to the production of identity and language categories, and the relationship between the two. They also draw attention to the need for and difficulties in governing multiple, ongoing and open-ended language change and its political, social and economic consequences. As Foucault (1997a,b) reminds us, governmentality produces certain rationalities, orders and subjectivities designed to fit the goals of those in power. This means that there are no innocent categories of identity or language; they are all designed to protect the driving rationality behind them, and in so doing they produce boundaries, centres and margins, advantages and disadvantages. Consequently, some identity and language categories work well for some but not for others. When language and identity boundaries are fixed or changed, there are always winners and losers, making the production of categories of language and identity a question of power and inequality.

In this article[1] I explore the dynamics between language and identity categories and the boundaries produced in a changing multilingual, indigenous context in the Arctic region of Finland. Amid the turbulent currents of global changes, the once-peripheral spaces of the Arctic now lie at the epicentre of an ambivalent conjunction of at least three major forces: climate change, expanding economic interest and cultural transformation. Under these changing circumstances, language and identity boundaries that have so far been used primarily for social structuration and political projects have become also resources for economic development in the context of the new economy of experience tourism and markets of authenticity. These boundaries are themselves the object of a new kind of discursive investment and resignification, offering the potential for new types of political and economic gain. These opportunities and challenges are particularly acute for the indigenous Sámi people living in the Arctic. The indigenous Sámi community comprises approximately 60,000–80,000 people, whose

E-mail address: sari.p.pietikainen@jyu.fi.

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traditional living area, called *Sámiland* or *Sápmi*, stretches across what is now known as the northernmost parts of Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia. This vast region is sparsely populated and often regarded as a periphery to the southern centres of the state, but it is a heartland for this indigenous community and a growing economic hub for tourism and the extraction of natural resources.

In this moment of transition, indigenous multilingualism has high stakes. It can be a resource for political and economic development but also for management and regimentation, open to winners and losers. Being multilingual by having several indigenous languages in one's language repertoire, in contrast to speaking several majority languages but no indigenous languages, offers people certain resources and positions or disqualifies them from having them. Drawing on a longitudinal critical discourse ethnography of producing language and identity categories in the Finnish Arctic, and especially on multilingualism in indigenous Sámi contexts, I discuss the ways people struggle, strategise and profit from this complex, ongoing and multidirectional language change. I will illustrate some of the ways in which indigenous identity boundaries are made to matter: how they are discursively imagined, struggled over and strategized in this moment of transitions I suggest that one way to examine this complex web of connections and intersections is with the rhizomatic discourse analytical approach (Pietikäinen, 2014, 2015; Heller et al., 2018). This makes use of the conceptualisation of *rhizome* by Deleuze and Guattari, as a construct that sees the processes and events to be observed in terms of *flow* and *dis/connections* (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987; Honan, 2007). Deleuze and Guattari (1987, 23) argue that "the rhizome is an acentered, nonhierarchical, nonsignifying system without a General and without an organizing memory or central automation, defined solely by a circulation of states". Relationships between multilingual practices and identity categories are seen as linked to historical, social, economic, and political practices and processes. As Honan (2007) explains, discourses about languages operate in rhizomatic ways: they are not linear or separate, but any text, sign, or speech act is an assembly or a nexus of several interlinked discourses, which are connected to and across each other. Rhizomatic approaches, such as multisided ethnography or nexus analysis, aim to map, trace and connect the various circulations and trajectories in order to provide an explanation for ongoing, multiple, complex processes (cf. Scollon and Scollon, 2004; Heller et al., 2018). Tracing the trajectory of particular categories of language and identity helps to explain the shifting meanings and values of particular categories and the various processes underpinning them. Adopting some of the core ideas of critical discourse studies and critical sociolinguistics, mainly related to the constructive potential of discourse, its historical embeddedness and impact in knowledge production and social organization (cf. e.g. Fairclough, 1992; Heller, 2011; Heller et al., 2018; Pietikäinen, 2016), I understand language and identity as multiple, dynamic sites of struggle and investment, as the object of multiple discourses, continually changing over time and space, with consequences to access to and the value of resources and ultimately, social inequalities. The Foucauldian understanding of discourse sees it as a way to produce knowledge and thus to govern, through the production of categories of knowledge and assemblages of texts, what it is possible and not possible to talk about, what is included and what is excluded (Foucault, 1997a,b; Weedon, 1987). This conceptualization assumes that discourses have material conditions and consequences, and that discourses systematically form, shape, and change the definitions of objects circulating within them (Määttä and Pietikäinen, 2014). I will start with a brief account of the trajectories of Sámi languages and then move on to discuss three discourses of indigenous multilingualism in this context: strategic, aspirational and affective. I will end with a discussion of the possible future of indigenous multilingualism.

1. Indigenous multilingualism in the Arctic: roots and rhizomes

The Arctic has a long history as a multilingual region, not only because of the languages of the people inhabiting the area, but also because of trade, cultural practices and family ties across language and state borders (Lehtola, 2000). For a start, the region is part of the transnational Sámiland *(Sápmi*), in which nine indigenous languages are used by speakers across four nation states. The region also features two minority languages – Kven in northern Norway and Meänkieli, spoken around the river Tornio/Torne älv on the northernmost stretch of the Swedish-Finnish border. Then the national layer adds to the multilingualism in the Arctic: the national languages of the four nation states, i.e. Norwegian, Swedish, Finnish and Russian, are very much present in the region, for example, in administration, education, media, business and everyday life. In many parts of the region, the national majority languages are the only languages used. Thirdly**,** as the Arctic is a popular destination for international tourism, other languages – English, Russian, French, German, Italian, Japanese – are regularly used at least seasonally in some parts of the area (Pietikäinen et al., 2010).

In this dynamic multilingual context, the status and value of indigenous Sámi languages have changed quite rapidly over the last century. Today, nine different Sámi languages are still spoken, but they are all classified as endangered, with an estimated number of speakers varying from around 250 people up to the approximately 30,000 speakers of Northern Sámi, the biggest Sámi language (Kulonen et al., 2005). In Finnish Sámiland, Northern Sámi is the dominant Sámi language, but Inari Sámi and Skolt Sámi are also used. According to the Finnish Sámi language act, Sámi people have the right to use their indigenous language with authorities and at school in the Sámi domicile area, ie. in Sápmi (see Aikio-Puoskari, 2002). In practice, this means that the role of a Sámi language varies from speaker to speaker, depending on e.g. age and home region, both impacting on the available Sámi services. Whereas for some the Sámi language is a daily resource for communication, for others it may be a school subject, something encountered later in life, or perhaps a register used only for ritual purposes. There are no monolingual Sámi speakers as everyone in the indigenous community speaks Finnish and often also other languages learnt at school (Swedish, English) or the neighbouring national languages (Norwegian, Swedish, Russian). Thus when speaking about multilingualism in Finnish Sámiland, we are inevitably talking about encounters between indigenous and majority languages and related categories and boundaries. As Epps (forthcoming in this issue) notes when discussing multilingualism in the context of Tukanoan in Amazonia, language competences and choices index potential abilities to move in, around and out of specific spaces and

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practices. As we shall see, in some indigenous spaces and practices the emphasis is on language boundaries and monolingual practices while in others more flexible and multiple practices become possible. I have also seen instances in daily interactions and in some educational contexts of what Singer (forthcoming, in this volume) calls receptive multilingual practices: speakers of different Sámi languages use their own indigenous language and all the participants accommodate and scaffold participation through e.g. repetition, speaking more slowly or borrowing from their shared linguistic resources, typically Finnish.

We can trace the roots of the current multilingual situation back to two significant shifts. Firstly, the Sámi languages, like many other indigenous and minority languages, share a history of language shift that has disrupted conventional links between language practices, belonging and identity (see e.g. Epps in this special issue). Before the Second World War, Sámi languages were used as the primary means of daily interaction in the community. However, the historical and political trajectories of Sámi people in the last 70 years, particularly in the context of Finnish nation-building and its monolingual school policy, have changed the indigenous languages from (strong) community languages to endangered languages known by only a few people. Often the speakers of the smallest Sámi languages also speak Northern Sámi, the lingua franca of Sámiland; people might have had more opportunities at school or in working life to take part in activities in Northern Sámi. On the other hand, Northern Sámi speakers may also have learnt other Sámi languages, depending for example on their interest and kinship networks, instances similar to Singer's (forthcoming this volume) notion of receptive multilingual practices.

Secondly, Sámiland is a site of seasonal multilingualism, related especially to economic changes and mobility. For example, expanding Arctic and indigenous tourism means new language requirements for accommodating the growing number of visitors from Europe and from China and Singapore. As in many other minority language communities (Heller, 2011; Heller et al., 2018; Pietikäinen et al., 2016), Sámi communities are changing economically from being mainly based on the primary sector to the present heavy emphasis on the tertiary sector – tourism now being a major source of revenue.

Contemporary socioeconomic changes, mobility and new economic structures open up new values not only for multilingual skills but also for skills and markets for indigenous Sámi languages as indexes of authenticity and difference. At the same time, the new uses of indigenous languages give rise to conflict and uncertainty about who can legitimately claim and exploit these languages for economic advantage and this leads to uncertainty about ideologically invested language practices in Sámiland. In the local political economy, Sámi languages are deeply rooted in the political movement for indigenous rights. This means that Sámi language spaces and practices are inevitably subject to various, often conflicting, language ideologies, norms and realities, typical of many language situations structured by language endangerment and revitalisation practices (Pietikäinen, 2013).

Emerging from and responding to the challenges posed by these simultaneous and overlapping political and economic processes, Sámi languages have reached a critical tipping point. They are no longer primarily used only for projects of identity politics, such as Sámi political mobilisation and lobbying for Sámi rights, but also as cool capital for economic development and marketing strategies in the global markets of differentiation and authenticity (Pietikäinen et al., 2016). Adopting the tropes used by Heller and Duchêne (2012) to describe this dynamism, they are resources both for "pride" and "profit". However, to use Sámi languages for either purpose, other languages are needed for crossing the linguistic, cultural and geographical borders, as we have seen, and consequently, multilingualism is an integral part of language practices in Sámiland.

However, multilingualism in indigenous contexts creates tensions and challenges with regard to how language is both discursively constituted by, and constitutive of, the epistemologies of how languages and their speakers are defined, and how these categories are appropriated, challenged and negotiated in actual language practices and in economic and political projects. This is particularly the case at the moment in Finnish Sámiland, where there is an on-going legal and political debate around who counts as a Sámi, on what grounds, and who gets to decide. Traditionally, Sámi political discourse has been organised around the rights of the Sámi as an indigenous people; the Sámi people are recognised as such under an International Labour Organization (ILO) declaration, and their culture and languages are protected with various legal instruments, albeit to varying degrees, depending on the host nation (for more details see Valkonen, 2009). The current debate is taking place in Sámi political spaces, mainly in the Sámi parliament but also in Sámi and Finnish media and, most recently, also in the Finnish courts (cf. Lehtola, 2015; Valkonen et al., 2016; Sarivaara et al., 2013; Seurujärvi-Kari, 2012). The current legal definition of a Sámi in Finland is mainly based on the Sámi languages: the Finnish Sámi parliament, the highest legal authority in Sámi issues, declares that "a Sámi is a person who considers him- or herself a Sámi, provided that this person has learnt Sámi as his or her first language or has at least one parent or grandparent whose first language is Sámi" (the Finnish Sámi parliament, accessed 15.12.2014). This language ideological view on language and multilingualism links to what Kroskrity (forthcoming, in this volume) describes in the context of the indigenous Teva community in NE Arizona as a "language ideological pattering with an emphasis on compartmentalisation and the cultivation of linguistic differences".

Unsurprisingly, the legal definition of Sámi is constantly being debated and developed. Praised and criticised by different stakeholders, the definition has become politicised as not everybody who wants to be legally recognised as a Sámi fits within the limits set by this definition. On the one hand, the definition has been challenged on the basis that it is too narrow and exclusive towards people who have some Sámi ancestry but whose linguistic repertoire fails to include a Sámi language due to language shift and mobility. Further, the meaning of "first language" has been contested as well as the ways this can be proved. The criterion of self-recognition has also been seen as unclear and there have been demands for the inclusion of group-recognition, too, although it is unclear what that would entail. On the other hand, the criticism of the official legal definition of a Sámi has been interpreted as interference in Sámi self-governance and as "colonialisation" from the inside: the motivations of people wanting to be officially acknowledged as Sámi have been questioned and there have been worries that the category of Sámi will lose its meaning if it includes people with very different histories and resources (see e.g. Joona, 2013; Lehtola, 2015; Sarivaara et al., 2013; Valkonen et al., 2016).

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Both normativity and diversity have particular and changing values and functions in multilingual indigenous language contexts. On the one hand, establishing clear linguistic boundaries and identity categories plays a critical role in the identification, differentiation, and political and cultural legitimation of speakers of indigenous and minority languages. On the other hand, idealised models of bounded and autonomous languages conflict with the hybrid, mixed and changing multilingual practices and identities that characterise the lived reality of indigenous and minority language speakers. Consequently, fixity and fluidity are both valued, while also being the target of constant renegotiation and debate. Investment in managing language and identity categories becomes central for legitimate access and the embodiment of cultural and political capital (cf. Bourdieu, 1991). One technique for this is through discourses, understood as regimes of truth with material and symbolic consequences. I will next illustrate three interlinked discourses circulating around indigenous Sámi languages and multilingualism in indigenous Sámi spaces, each relevant for producing indigenous language and identity categories.

2. Producing indigenous boundaries: discourses of strategic, aspirational and affective multilingualism

2.1. Discourse of strategic multilingualism

This banderol (Fig. 1) greets visitors when they enter the new Sámi cultural centre, *Sajos* (an Inari Sámi word for a meeting place), home to the Finnish Sámi parliament and several high-profile Sámi associations and activities. The banderol displays two key

Fig. 1. A multilingual banderol at *Sajos,* a Sámi cultural centre.

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symbols of Sámi identity: the traditional Sámi dress and the three Sámi languages spoken in Finnish Sámiland. The banderol recirculates the visual discourse on the Sámi dress typically found in folk museums, history books and postcards. In the banderol, the dress is at the centre of each photo, and all the details (patterns of colour, ornaments) are easily observable. Rather than wearing the dresses in real contexts, those wearing these dresses are posing for the camera like mannequins, against a white background, making the dresses the centre of the action (a visual representation often used in tourism and marketing discourses). The selection of dresses indexes sensibilities towards Sámi identity politics: there is a female and male dress from each language group with three from the largest language group, representing the main Sámi regions with their own Sámi dialects of Northern Sámi (cf. Magga, 2012).

The language choices in the banderol illustrate a particular political and economic organisation and governance of linguistic resources in this high-stake indigenous space, illustrative of the wider language ideological regimes in the region (see Pietikäinen, 2015; Pietikäinen et al., 2016). In the horizontal hierarchy of languages in the banderol, the national majority language, Finnish, is placed first in the reading order (at the top, first on left). Finnish is spoken by non-Sámi-speaking locals and people working at the Centre. After Finnish comes English, accommodating international visitors at the centre and reflexively marking this important political and cultural Sámi space as also an international space for global tourism. In temporal terms, multilingualism and the inclusion of English in the banderol orient to the future, to potential others who may visit Sajos, a potential tourist function (already being realised as an expanding industry in the region) and constructing Sajos as a potential object of the tourist gaze (Urry, 2007).

The second line provides translations of Finnish and English words in the three indigenous Sámi languages spoken in Finland: Northern Sámi, Inari Sámi and Skolt Sámi. This order of Sámi languages is typical in many public signs in the village: the biggest Sámi language in terms of speakers comes first, followed by the other two, far smaller ones, perhaps in alphabetical order or perhaps prioritising the locally spoken Inari Sámi over Skolt Sámi, spoken more in the villages east and south-east of Inari (cf. Pietikäinen, 2013). The order also indexes a social difference between the three languages; Northern Sámi is the biggest not only numerically but also in terms of visibility, while the other two languages and their speakers are sometimes referred to as minorities within a minority.

The two majority languages are printed in bold, bigger than the three indigenous languages. The name Sajos, printed in the upper right-hand corner of the banderol in big letters, is followed by an explanation (Sámi culture centre) using the same order. Together these choices in design foreground the two majority languages as languages for communication, complemented by Sámi translations. The choice of words that are presented – a mini-dictionary designed for tourists to have a mini-conversation, a genre familiar from many tourism contexts – suggests that the intended audience for this banderol is non-local visitors. Below the mini-dictionary appear the names and logos of various funding agencies supporting the construction of Sajos, an interesting mix of EU funding schemes, the regional authority, and regional agencies.

I suggest that the banderol can be seen as a nexus in a rhizome of historical and contemporary political and economic processes related both to the region and to the revaluing of indigenous resources into peripheral cool (cf. Pietikäinen, 2015; McLaughlin, 2013). Both political and economic investments in indigeneity are materialised discursively and visually in this example. Rather than being structured solely by tradition or, alternatively, by contemporary conditions, it is shaped by a dynamic relation between the two. Just as indigenous multilingualism implies competing ideologies, we can say that Sajos is a nexus of two intertwined and somewhat conflicting discourses - the political and the economic - each having its own distinctive logic. Sajos exists in a continual state of self-reassessment and revaluation, needing to adapt as best it can to a fast-changing and complex political and economic environment characterised by contestation over the distribution of resources, access, and legitimacy. It needs to do this creatively and successfully, in both economic and political terms, for global consumption, while locally the key political issues – such as who can legitimately benefit from these new developments and who gets to decide – are hotly contested.

One technique for this delicate balancing act is what I call a **discourse of strategic multilingualism**. Parallel to what is called *strategic essentialism*, a term coined by Spivak (1990) and widely used in gender and post-colonial studies, including indigenous contexts (e.g. Hoskins, 2012; Stewart, 2017), to refer to the temporal promotion of a specific identity as authentic, homogenous and stable for political projects in the prevailing political economy, also *strategic multilingualism* involves the temporal inclusion of some languages and exclusion of others as well as assertions of clear boundaries promising the redistribution of authority and resources. For example, the inclusion of English in the banderol serves the economic imperatives of the tourism-driven economy of Sámiland while the display of indigenous languages functions both as authentification of the place for tourists and as recognition of the Sámi for everyone.

An extreme example of strategic Sámi multilingualism is to be found inside *Sajos*, in the assembly room of the Sámi parliament. In many minority and indigenous language contexts the discourse of language endangerment shapes the political and social contexts in which indigenous multilingual practices are articulated and realised (Heller and Duchêne, 2007; Patrick, 2007). Following the ideology embedded in the Sámi language revitalisation movement – to promote and use indigenous languages across various domains – the language policy of parliamentary sessions is that all three Sámi languages can be used, as well as Finnish. All members of the parliament are fluent speakers of Finnish, so in a different political order Finnish could be used as a shared resource. It is indeed sometimes suggested that in order to save money and time, and to guarantee that everybody fully understands the discussions, Finnish should be used. However, in this pivotal indigenous political space, the members of parliament use, or try to use - depending on their competence - the indigenous language of the Sámi group they represent, members of the Northern Sámi group using Northern Sámi, Inari Sámis using Inari Sámi, and Skolt Sámis using Skolt Sámi. Simultaneous translation is provided in all four languages (the three indigenous languages plus Finnish) and members as well as the audience can choose which translation to follow using headphones. Also, all the materials for the meetings are provided in all four languages.

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In practice, strategic multilingualism in this particular space means parallel monolingual language practices (Heller, 1999) and no language mixing, code-switching or fluid multilingualism – all practices that can be found in less formal contexts. Furthermore, like any other kind of essentialism, strategic multilingualism also creates distinctions, exclusions, and unexpected outcomes. In this indigenous political space, those with fluent Sámi language skills have an advantage over those with more limited skills in indigenous languages. Not having Sámi skills makes the speaker stand out as s/he then needs to use Finnish, a marked linguistic resource in this political economy. Also, the smallest Sámi languages, i.e. Inari and Skolt Sámi, may not have all the necessary technical terms, and borrowing Finnish words indexes the current situation of that particular language and its speakers. An unexpected consequence of strategic multilingualism is that it may impose hypercorrect standards (Bucholtz, 2001) and a form of linguistic purism, causing potential speakers to withhold their Sámi spoken voices or to turn away. It creates what could be called a **super-Sámi standard**, in a situation where the standard itself is constantly evolving. This super standard works well for those Sámi individuals who have full literacy competence in indigenous languages through indigenous-medium education, and less well for those who lack that competence due to having had different opportunities for learning Sámi languages. Language practices become fixed along this super-standard vision of multilingualism, and ideologically it becomes difficult to use the shared linguistic resource of Finnish or flexible multilingual practices, despite the fact that the indigenous language skills of members of parliament, like those of the wider community, vary from L1 to very limited (Aikio-Puoskari, 2002; Olthuis et al., 2013).

One example of an experience of this kind of super-Sámi standard in an economic context is voiced in the following story from an interview[2] with a forty-something Sámi man, called here Mika (pseudonym). In the following extract, he talks about taking part in a panel discussion on regional economic development as a representative of a specific Sámi means of livelihood. He is reflecting on how, in this context, his lack of competence in Sámi languages singled him out: all the other participants spoke Sámi languages so Mika was the only one who had to use the simultaneous translation, and his lack of Sámi language skills was repeatedly commented on.

01	nää kaikki muut jokka oli siinä *these others who took part in the*
02	paneelikeskustelussa ni ne puhu saamen kieltä sitte *panel discussion they spoke Sámi then*
04	[ja sitte mulle- mulla joutu olemaan tää *and then I- I had to wear these*
05	simultaanitulukkausluurit päässä että mää sitte *headphones for the simultaneous translation so that I*
06	ymmärsin mitä ne muu- muut siinä vieressä puhu *understood what the others sitting next to me were saying*
07	ja sitte mon- monta kertaa ne tuota (.) .h *and then ma- many times they well (.) .h*
08	jakso muistuttaa että ku tääl on *reminded everyone that there is*
09	yks semmonen saamelainen tässä joukossa *a Sámi person present here amongst us*
10	joka ei puhu saamen kieltä *who does not speak Sámi*
11	että he ei voi ↑ymmärtää että voi olla *that they cannot ↑understand that*
12	tuommosia saamelaisia olemassa *such Sámi people can exist*
14	[ja niinkö ihan suoraam monta kertaa sano sitä *and like they said that many times really directly*

Mika's narrative shows that the situation was not easy for him. His use of the translation service made his lack of language skills visible to all the other participants and the object of their explicit evaluation and comments. Lacking Sámi skills marginalised him

[2] The interviews were collected and transcribed in a context of a narrative research on language biographies, collected by a research team (Laihiala-Kankainen, Pietikäinen, Lane, Salo, also Lilja related to transcription and analysis) in 2008 and 2009 in the Sámiland.

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among Sámi speakers. Mika's story illustrates how competence in a Sámi language or lack of it is intertwined with legitimate access and recognition also within the community. It positions speakers within the hierarchy of Sáminess: the speakers of indigenous languages are more easily seen as belonging to the legitimate centre of the community while non-speakers are seen as marginal. Mika's story also illustrates how a performance of investment in indigenous language skills gets tangled up with questions of the production of social inequalities: it is not only a matter of being understood, but having the right resources in one's possession.

A discourse of strategic multilingualism may well work for particular political and economic goals and projects. It seems to work to create a united voice for a "modernity game" with nation states and the EU for the distribution of resources and recognition of clearly bounded and accountable languages and identities. The more dangerous side of it is that it can reinforce the norm of a singular super-standard and eradicate diversity, the development of language repertoires and flexible practices. Furthermore, super-standard Sámi contributes to a gap between the ideological use of standard Sámi and the multilingual and diverse language practices of members of the community. This can lead to ideological language tensions, as many Sámi speakers struggle with the ambivalence brought about by the contrast between their own dynamic language practices and the dominant (boundary-oriented) ideologies of language and identity. In strategic multilingualism, language choices and boundaries can easily become politicised and disciplined, and ultimately turn into a question of inequality.

2.2. Aspirational multilingualism: the politics of belonging and becoming an indigenous language speaker

This drawing (Fig. 2) was made by a 7-year-old Sámi girl, Merja (pseudonym). She drew this in a context of collaborative ethnography in which, with pupils and teachers, we designed and carried out various activities to examine multilingual

Fig. 2. The princess: visualisation of aspirational multilingualism by a Sámi language learner.

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repertoires among the youngest speakers of Sámi. At the time of the drawing Merja was a pre-schooler in an Inari Sámi-medium classroom, developing her literacy skills in both Sámi and Finnish. In visualising her language repertoire, Merja drew on multiple resources to produce a creative visualisation of herself and the language resources around her. She drew a colourful picture of a princess with a yellow crown on her long, red hair, wearing nice clothes (notice the pompoms on the ends of the sleeves) and green high-heeled shoes. She also drew a circle of red dots around the princess and a flower nearby. In the drawing, she used red for Sámi and placed it on the hair and the shirt. For Finnish, she used blue and placed it on the legs. In her drawing Merja also visualised her "secret", imaginary languages (marked in yellow and violet). For the language she calls *Jamakai* she chose green and used it for the high-heeled shoes. At the bottom of the page, she wrote Finnish (in blue), Sámi (in red) and Jamakai (in green). She also added the Sámi national flag at the bottom of the page, placing it, however, on the same level as Finnish (For more details see Pietikäinen and Pitkänen-Huhta, 2013.)

This creative representation of a developing language repertoire, including factual and imaginary languages, can be seen as a visualisation of what I would suggest is a *discourse of aspirational multilingualism*. In the midst of ongoing contestation and creativity around indigenous identity categories and language practices, underpinned by wider political and economic changes, *aspirational multilingualism* refers to a desire to become recognised as a Sámi through acquiring Sámi language skills but at the same time the recognition and inclusion of other language resources in the speaker's repertoire and environment. Investment in Sámi language skills is an investment in the future, in becoming an indigenous language speaker and triggering a change in one's language repertoire that is now marked by lack of (full) Sámi language skills, without losing one's already existing language resources. As Darvin and Norton (2015) argue, drawing on Bourdieu's (1977; 1991) seminal work on language and markets, investment in learning a language also means an investment in attempting to acquire access to economic and symbolic capital, which can be complicated.

However, the investment in learning indigenous languages can be ideologically controversial in the local political economy of indigeneity in Finnish Sámiland. While language learners with a recognised Sámi heritage are considered legitimate participants in indigenous language education and their investments are seen as participation in language revitalisation projects, the legitimacy and motivations of ethnically Finnish language learners or of anyone with complex trajectories to the indigenous heritage is open to question. Who has a right to, and a legitimate access to indigenous resources, including language learning, can be the subject of multiple, partly overlapping, partly contradictory debates. This debate resonates with discussions around "new speakers" of minority languages (see e.g. O'Rourke and Pujolar, in press). In the Finnish Sámi context, these debates are intensified by the intertwined articulation of language and legal definition of Sámi identity.

An example of a more contested aspiration for learning and revitalising Sámi language comes from a group called *Metsäsaamelaiset*. This is a group of people who have no legal Sámi status and whose applications to the official Sámi registers have mostly been rejected (see e.g. Sarivaara, 2012; Valkonen et al., 2016). The group has organised around the shared condition of being a "non-status" Sámi, which has parallels with the non-status Indian category, used in North America, where it refers to a group who have mixed ancestry but who will not or cannot be registered as Indians under current legislation (Palmater, 2000, 109). The category of a non-status indigenous identity may underline the importance of self-recognition (feeling) and a different kind of family and language history from the official, authoritative version. In the Finnish context, this group has evoked a historical Sámi category of *Metsäsaamelaiset*, a Finnish word which literally means "Forest Sámi", and is analogous to the still used historical categories for various other Sámi groups, e.g. Mountain Sámi (currently often referred to as Northern Sámi) and Lake Sámi (currently referred to as Inari Sámi). The political mobilisation of this group has manifested in the establishment of an association called *Vuovde-, guolásteaddji- ja duottarsámit rs / Metsä-, kalastaja- ja tunturisaamelaiset ry,* meaning in English, Association of Forest, Fisher and Mountain Sámi (http://www.mgdsamit.fi, accessed 15.1.2014), which mainly refers to *Metsäsaamelaiset*, the Forest Sámi. The association organises events and aims to increase awareness of identity and issues relevant for Forest Sámi. Its members have also taken an active part in media discussions about the definition of Sámi.

In their activities, the Forest Sámi group makes use of historical, political and discursive resources, as do the official Sámi authorities. The adoption of a historical Sámi category is a powerful discursive move as it locates the group within Sámi history, even though the factual accuracy of this can be disputed. The Forest Sámi also tap into current language and culture revitalisation activities, as does the authoritative Sámi centre. The Forest Sámi have tried to reconstruct a version of an eastern Sámi language called *Keminsaami*, extinct now for at least 200 years. Apparently, there is a corpus of 500 Kemin Sámi words, including some prayers and poems. The chair of the association explains in a media interview:

> *"Pappi Jacob Fellman kokosi noin 500 sanaa käsittävän sanaston. Keminlapiksi on isä meidän -rukous ja Olaus Sirman runo Sodankylän Orajärvestä. Olen lukenut jostain, että kieli olisi läheistä sukua inarinsaamelle ja senpä takia sitten olemme innokkaasti ryhtyneet opiskelemaan inarinsaamea netin välityksellä.* http://yle.fi/uutiset/opetustuokio_sompion_metsasaamelaisten_viimeisessa_talvikylassa/6881546*, accessed 15.12.2013)*
>
> *"The priest Jacob Fellman collected a corpus of 500 words. There's a Lord's Prayer and a poem by Olaus Sirma from Orajärvi village in Sodankylä region. I've read somewhere that Kemin Sámi is closely related to Inari Sámi so we've enthusiastically started to learn Inari Sámi through the Internet"*

The discursive link between the extinct Kemin Sámi and Inari Sámi creates a link between the Forest Sámi and another small but legally recognised Sámi group, the Inari Sámi. The Inari Sámi community, consisting of some 300–400 speakers, is currently undergoing a political, linguistic and cultural renaissance (cf. Olthuis et al., 2013), and the potential alliance between the two groups could lend the Forest Sámi legitimacy and status that they current lack, moving them closer to authoritative Sáminess.

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Another resource that the Forest Sámi have utilised in their discursive construction of their identity as Sámi is the reconstruction of a Sámi dress that has apparently been used in the historical region of Kemin Sámi. The Sámi dress is one of the most visible indexes of Sámi identity, and the colours and ornaments of the dress locate the wearer on the geographical map of Sáminess and within a particular Sámi language community. Usually, apart from the tourist industry, only recognised Sámi people wear the Sámi dress (Magga, 2012; Länsman, 2004). The chair of the Forest Sámi association explains the story of their dress as follows:

> *Sallan metsäsaamelaisessa Mukkalan suvussa oli säilynyt yksi naisten puku, jonka Kirsi Mukkala löysi. Hän ompeli puvun mallin mukaisen puvun.* http://janka.fi/numero-1-2013/121-kukaonsaamelainen*, accessed 14.12.2013*
>
> *In the Forest Sámi Mukkula family from Salla, one women's dress has survived and it was found by Kirsi Mukkula. She then made a new dress following this traditional model.*

This short narrative constructs a story of uniqueness and authenticity for this one particular dress that survived for a long time and is now used as evidence of the historical and legitimate roots of Forest Sámi indigeneity. The dress becomes located in the rhizome of historical processes, especially the material and ideological erasure of Northern Cultures resulting from the so-called Lapland war (1944–1945) and the nation-state regime of homogeneity after the Second World War, as well as current political projects of resignifying what it means to be a Sámi, on what grounds the claim can be made, and who gets to decide. This revitalised index of embodied Sámi identity has in fact been challenged by many Sámi dress authorities, who have pointed out the difference in form and materials of this dress from other authorised Sámi dresses.

These political and discursive strategies of the Forest Sámi can be seen as an attempt to gain authority, on the one hand by pushing the boundaries of the official definition of Sámi and, on the other, by localising or indigenising authoritative practices and indexes for their own purposes. These activities can therefore be seen as both fragmenting the authority bases of Sáminess and challenging "official" Sáminess, while at the same time confirming the authority of certain resources as indexes of this Sáminess: family ties, language, and dress.

2.3. Discourse of affective multilingualism

This picture (Fig. 3) shows a version of indigenous Sámi identity produced by *Suohpanterror,* a Sámi art collective. The poster modifies and recycles the political poster of Rosie the Riveter, the cultural icon associated with the American women's war effort during the Second World War and four decades later, with the feminist movement. In the Sámi version, Rosie is

Fig. 3. A propaganda poster by Suohpanterror, a Sámi art collective, presented in an open-air museum of Sámi culture and nature, Siida, August-September 2015.

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wearing a Sámi dress, an iconic index of Sámi indigenous identity and a central tool for political and legal struggles for indigenous rights and recognition. It speaks a discourse of ambivalent identity boundaries through a global language of well-known, recontextualised products of popular culture, articulated together with material indexes of Sámi identity, the traditional dress and jewellery, and packed in the familiar genre of transgressive pop-art posters. The poster teases and disturbs the idea of homogenous, fixed indigenous identity rooted in a particular time, place and resources. It speaks for indigenous Sámi rights and recognition but in a multimodal, rhizomatic way. It illustrates recent powerful performances of indigenous politics, embedded in the dynamics of political economy, with a history of the long-standing and still ongoing indigenous rights movement but intertwined with the global cultural economy, including revaluing resources traditionally perceived as peripheral into cool capital for difference, authenticity and originality.

I suggest that the poster is also an example of the discourse of **affective multilingualism**, which combines resistance and compassion in an attempt to develop creative, alternative and critical considerations to existing, powerful and often ideologically fixed views on identity and its categories. Suohpanterror's propaganda art posters use, modify, re-circulate and play with visualities and genres familiar from the domains of popular culture, advertisements and politics. Visual borrowings are taken from e.g. the presidential campaign in the USA or from a Russian feminist punk rock protest group. In Suohpanterror's adaptation of a graffiti art piece by Banksy, the iconic demonstrator throws a lasso instead of flowers. These posters are a form of art and political activism called *culture jamming*, since the 1990s employed by many new social movements sharing an anti-corporate and anti-neoliberal stance, as exemplified by *Adbusters*, a globally known anti-consumerist, pro-environment organisation. New social movements of this kind use postmodern discourse strategies, such as guerrilla semiotics, billboard banditry, hoaxing, and brand hijacking. Similarly, Suohpanterror refigures global logos, fashion statements and political and corporate campaigns in their posters to produce images that easily and quickly convert identifiable images and messages into larger questions about social justice, equality and environmental protection in a local Sámi context. Stylised repetition of the genre as well as blazoning the message across the posters is a powerful discursive strategy. The posters are a form of carnivalesque subversion, parodying advertisements and hijacking their message, and transforming it into its own anti-message humorously but critically.

For this kind of affective multilingualism to work - that is, to transform some of the existing ways of perceiving, thinking and talking about Sámi issues and creating affective solidarity, alliances and politics– requires interconnected and intertextual ways of working and the recycling and reworking of traces and signs already used before: they need to be rooted in expressive rhizomes and engage with multilingual and multisemiotic resources. To do this, the posters move from a multilingualism toward multi-semiotic discourse practices, where different language resources are only one way of meaning making. While the posters typically use Northern Sámi and English in their slogan, we can argue that they are at least part of what Kelly-Holmes (2014) calls visual multilingualism, that is, the use of languages primarily as signs.

In rhizomatic terms, we can talk about the politics of becoming: not belonging to a specific, fixed category forever, but slipping through and overlapping between orders and categories of age, gender, ethnicity, acts. The emphasis on becoming highlights the perpetual process of infinite possibility. In this context, material culture, like the art posters, does not just reflect contemporary values, identities, and relationships but is an active participant in the creation and recreation of the socio-cultural milieu.

In this kind of affective multilingualism, ambivalence, fleeting temporality and humour become the methods of critique and transformation. Suohpanterror, for example, seems to offer a way to address contemporary critical issues by creating practices and performances that are important for current debates around Sámi rights, identity, and resources. These performances and practices make sense locally and are meaningful in relation to the social, spatial, and symbolic environments in which they are enacted and interpreted. Besides, Suohpanterror uses global imagery and familiar media and advertisement genres that also seem to address audiences beyond Sámi contexts and be part of a more global new social activism movement using social media and corporate images as part of their critique of established political orders and consumption patterns. Consequently, this Sámi version of affective multilingualism has managed to involve new participants in the discussion about boundaries and categories related to indigenous Sámi - people who typically are absent from the more established critique: young people, non-Sámi language speakers and others from the margins of dominant ways of doing critique in the Sámi context.

Suohpanterror's art propaganda posters can be seen as an example of a form of activism through affective multilingualism. Despite its apparent lightness and limitations, affective activism is serious about discourse, power, and social change. In the current era of multiple transitions, cross-sections and mobilities, this kind of affective activism has become a promising concept in critical language research for examining the dynamics of power in rhizomatic and intersecting social and political changes (Pietikäinen, 2016; Pietikäinen et al., 2016). It engages with critical discussions and activism by problematising essentialising notions of identity and boundaries and by recognising that identities and boundaries shift and change over time and space, as do the institutions and structures that delineate their shift and change. This multiplicity with a critical edge has made affective activism popular in many current identity politics projects related to gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, and others, which aim to start with multiplicity and intersectionality rather than dichotomous categorisation. It provides a nexus point, a conjuncture from which to explore overlapping practices of politics, popular culture, and social change in a moment of transition and multiplicity. At the same time, it raises a critical question about the reproduction of a relatively fixed view of power relations. We could argue that in many of their posters, Suohpanterror makes a classic critique of the unequal distribution of resources between the Sámi and the state of Finland, between the minority and majority, with a relatively classic

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solution to the problem. There lies the danger of the reproduction of fixed ontologies of this problem – an old system of power, which disregards the complex realities of Sámi experience, including different hierarchies and resources between different Sámi communities, and the debates among the Sámi communities on how the legal boundaries around the category of Sámi and indigeneity should be drawn up.

3. Discussion: speculative futures of investments in indigenous multilingualism

Investment in indigenous multilingualism in Arctic Sámiland can be seen as happening at an emerging conjuncture of two forces, namely economic development and identity politics. For a long time, Arctic Sámi spaces have been understood as peripheries under the regime of a modernist nation state, available exploitation by the state as a source, for example, of cheap labour and rew materials. Now, under developing global economic conditions, these spaces are transforming into developing economic hubs with alternative imaginations and future speculation. Reminiscent of the 'Gold Rush' in the 19th and 20th centuries, the current *Cold Rush* creates novel and partly speculative opportunities for profit, and political struggles over resource extraction, transport, and tourism. These processes increase the region's strategic importance while opening it up to new ideological confrontations over language and identity as sources of pride and profit. As these key categories of social structuration change, so too do power relations, understood in terms of social inequalities, and struggles over legitimate access to resources. Emerging new conditions call for new strategies, acting within and against economic power, dominant forms of identity politics, and hegemonic discourses about multilingualism and identity. They reflect a complex sense of the fixity and fluidity of ethno-linguistic categories, where language becomes not only an identity marker but also capital for economic development. These transformations impact not only on the ways in which people make a living but also on how their identities and languages are valued or disregarded, and their ability to cope with and reshape these changes. One outcome is a rhizome of alternative, overlapping and intertwined discourses of multilingualism, each structuring language resources into a particular order in the hope of a profitable investment in the changing political economy of indigeneity in Finnish Sámiland.

In Sámiland, the concepts of language and identity have mostly been conceived in terms of rights, ethnicity, and citizenship structured around the logic of the nation state, whether related to the idea of a Sámi nation or to the state of Finland. While these understandings of language and identity continue to be important and are still used to inform many political projects in the changing conditions brought about by globalisation, language and identity are increasingly constructed also through discourses of multilingualism, economic profit and a type of politics that extends beyond traditional power centres. The changing conditions also lead to changes in the value of indigenous resources and novel investments in and motivations for managing multilingualism in indigenous contexts. What is at stake for different stakeholders seems to depend on the degree of unchallenged access they have to Sámi symbolic capital and their capacity to transform it into action and performance in different spaces and practices. Being and becoming indigenous, the multilingual subject is embedded in a complex, evolving rhizome rooted in dynamics of language revitalisation and the economic transformation of indigenous capital, identity profiling and linguistic surveillance, rootedness and mobilities.

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