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STANDARDIZATION IN MULTILINGUAL AREAS

The Saami languages in Norden

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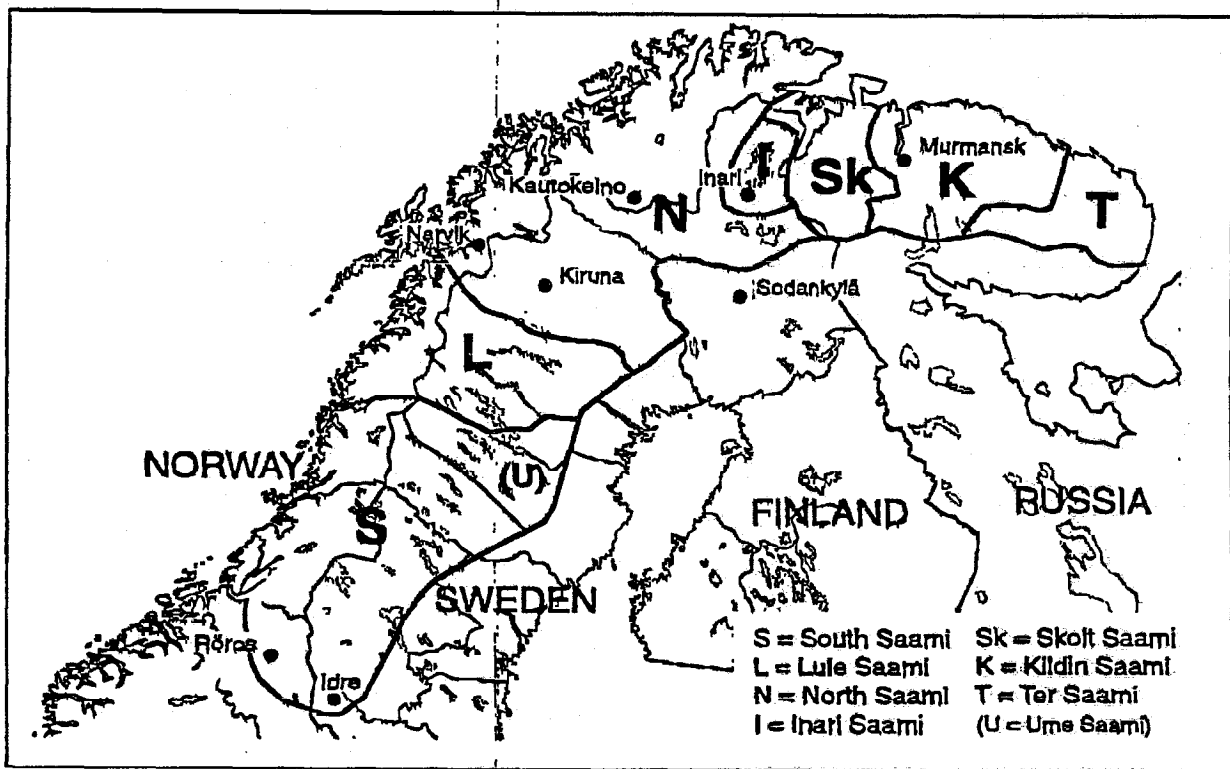
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The Saami people and the Saami language

The Saami have lived for at least two thousand years in the northern part of Scandinavia and the Kola peninsula. Because of the formation of the nations the Saami area has been divided between the four countries Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia.

The Saami language is a Finno-Ugric language, distantly related to Finnish and Estonian. However, the Saami language is not a homogeneous language. In philological literature the language is divided into seven (or eight, Ahkkil Saami is in the map below included in Kildin Saami) main dialects. These dialects differ essentially from each other and it is for instance impossible for a North Saami person to understand a South Saami person. The difference between the North Saami language and the South Saami language could be compared with that of Swedish and German.

The majority of Saami speaking people live in Norway, altogether approximately 30 000 people. In Finland the Saami language is spoken as mother tongue by 1 700 persons. Most of them use North Saami but about 300 persons speak Inari Saami and approximately the same number speak Skolt Saami. In Sweden there are approximately 8 000 native Saami speaking persons.



The Saami area and the areas of the seven main Saami dialects.

The Saami settlement area extends from Røros in Hedmark in Norway and from Idre in Dalarna in Sweden to northern Norway, Sweden and Finland and eastwards to the Kola peninsula in Russia. Of course this has influenced the place-names in the areas concerned. Old Saami place-names are also provable in the south of Finland.

The word Saami

The Norwegian Saami Language Council as well as the Finnish Saami Language Council have decided to use *Saami* as the English term for the former *Lappish*, and thus leaving out *Sámi* and *Sami*. It is expected that the Swedish Saami Council will follow these decisions. This means that Saami is the form which ought to be used officially.

Official status

In *Finland* the Saami language has semi-official status. The most important government documents and all official documents concerning the Saami themselves are translated into Saami. The Saami also have the right to use their own language in a court or in contacts with other state authorities. According to the resolution nr 36, *Problems of minority languages*, of the second UN conference on geographical names 1972, the new North Saami orthography will be used on the maps published by the National Land Survey of Finland as soon as the topographic database of the survey is completed.

In *Norway* the Saami language has official status and is used as an official language in addition to Norwegian in several municipalities in northern Norway. In § 4 of the place-names act it is stated that the Saami place-names should be spelt according to the official orthography of Saami. This means that place-names written in the old orthography of Saami will be changed to the new orthography of respectively North, Lule and South Saami. In the directions of the place-names act it is stated in which areas the orthographies of the three different Saami languages are to be applied. Consequently the new orthographies gradually are replacing the old ones in the official maps and in the place-names data base at the Mapping Authority. The law also applies to names on road signs, in post addresses and other official documents.

In *Sweden* a special orthography for the Saami place-names has been used on the official maps. However, since the adoption in 1979 of a new North Saami orthography, this orthography has been used in the official maps in Sweden. Last year also the new Lule Saami orthography has been introduced in the maps. For the South Saami area the old orthography is still in use in the maps but the Saami Council has recommended the South Saami and the Urne Saami orthographies for this area. In introducing the new Saami orthographies in Sweden the resolution mentioned above has been of great importance.

The Saami language has no official status in Sweden today. However, a current parliamentary resolution will propose that the Saami varieties ~~among others will get a~~ status as minority languages. If so it will be possible to speak Saami ~~in courts and in contact~~ with officials. Of course this will also encourage the use of Saami ~~place-names in post addresses, road signs~~ etc.

Saami alphabets

The alphabets of the six Saami dialects, which are used officially in Norden, are as follows. The Ume Saami is not one of the main dialects but despite that The Swedish Saami Council has proposed that this alphabet should be used for the Ume Saami geographical names in the Swedish official maps.

The South Saami Alphabet

A a	G g	K k	P p	V v
B b	H h	L l	R r	Y y
D d	I i	M m	S s	Á á
E e	Ī ī	N n	T t	Ä ä
F f	J j	O o	U u	Ö ö

Ī (ī) could be omitted when geographical names are shown in the map

The Ume Saami Alphabet

A a	F f	K k	P p	Ú ú
Á á	G g	L l	R r	V v
B b	H h	M m	S s	Y y
D d	I i	N n	T t	Ä ä
Ɖ ɖ	Ī ī	Ŋ ŋ	Ʀ ʀ	Ä ä
E e	J j	O o	U u	Ö ö

Ī (ī) and Ú (ú) could be omitted when geographical names are shown in the map.

The Lule Saami Alphabet

A a	G g	M m	S s
Á á	H h	N n	T t
B b	I i	Ŋ ŋ	U u
D d	J j	O o	V v
E e	K k	P p	Ä ä
F f	L l	R r	Ä ä

The North Saami Alphabet

Aa	Ǿǿ	Jj	Oo	ƦƧ
Áá	Ee	Kk	Pp	Uu
Bb	Ff	Ll	Rr	Vv
Cc	Gg	Mm	Ss	Zz
Čč	Hh	Nn	Šš	Žž
Dd	Ii	Ŋŋ	Tt	

The Inari Saami Alphabet

Aa	Ee	Mm	Tt
Áá	Ff	Nn	Uu
Āā	Gg	Ŋŋ	Vv
Bb	Hh	Oo	Zz
Cc	Ii	Pp	Žž
Čč	Jj	Rr	Yy
Dd	Kk	Ss	Āā
Ǿǿ	Ll	Šš	

The Skolt Saami Alphabet

Aa	Ǟǟ	Gg	Mm	Ss	Ää
Áá	Dd	Hh	Nn	Šš	Āā
Āā	Ǿǿ	Ii	Ŋŋ	Tt	
Bb	Ee	Jj	Oo	Uu	
Cc	Ff	Kk	Ǿǿ	Vv	
Čč	Gg	Ķķ	Pp	Zz	
ƶƷ	Ǟǟ	Ll	Rr	Žž	

(The special characters in these alphabets, which don't occur in the English alphabet, are all to be found in the font Everson Mono Latin 9).