Place name policy, official use of Sámi toponymy and standardization

Kaisa Rautio Helander
2018
Dark green: Sámi area

(Kulonen & Seurujärvi–Kari & Pulkkinen 2005)
“The display of languages transmits symbolic messages as to the legitimacy, relevance, priority and standards of languages and the people and groups they present. The public space is therefore a most relevant arena to serve as a mechanism for creating de facto language policy.” (Shohamy 2006: 110.)
Places on the nation state border

In Finland: (Fi + Sá)

In Norway: Norw.

On the maps:
Names in Norwegian or in Norwegianized loan forms

Sámi place names in oral tradition

Deanušaldi
Leavvajohka
Leavdnja
Karášjohka
Gásluokta
## Language legislation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Finland</th>
<th>Norway</th>
<th>Sweden</th>
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▶ Sámi language administrative areas
Language legislation and place name legislation

Finland

Norway
- The language provisions of the Sámi Act of 1992
- Place Name Act

Sweden
- Historic Environment Act
In Finnish & Skolt Sámi

In Finnish & Inari Sámi

In Finnish & North Sámi
Bilingual place names in Finnish and Swedish as a model
In Finnish & Skolt Sámi

In Finnish & Inari Sámi

In Finnish & North Sámi
Sámi names for villages and addresses

- Hillágurra
- Sáttojogaš
- Guhkesluokta
- Jávrebainjárga
- Viđis
- Goalseluodda
- Fievroaluodda
Bilingual and multilingual name use
Bilingual street names in Norway

In Narvik

Not a Russian street name, but in cyrillic alphabet!!
“Laws are especially powerful mechanisms for affecting language practices.” (Shohamy 2006, 59)

However, “as is often the case, the mere act of declaring certain languages as official does not carry with it much meaning in terms of actual practice in all domains and it does not guarantee that officiality will be practiced.” (Shohamy 2006, 61.)
Components of place name policy

- Name practices
- Place name policy
- Name ideologies
- Name management
Name practices

Name ideologies  Name management
Name ideological expressions against the Sámi place names
Toponymic silencing

A provision of the Land Purchasing Act in the year 1902:

“surveyed landed property is to be given a Norwegian name” (Ot.Prp:1901)

> Consequence: toponymic silence
Toponymic subjugation in mapping

The National Land Survey of Norway 1886:

Instead of alien place names, a Norwegian name should be used where it exists; if there is no Norwegian name or it has not been established, a Norwegian translation will be registered as an original name of the location and the alien name will be written in brackets.
Consequences of toponymic silencing and subjugation

Toponymic **subjugation** of the Sámi name for the lake

Toponymic **silence** of the Sámi settlement (village) name
The history of using only Norwegian place names

Silenced Sámi names:

- Stabbursnes (Rávttošnjárga)
- Snekkernes (Snihkkárnjárga)
- Karlebotn (Stuorravuonna)
Place Name Act (1990)

§ 9:
Sámi and Kven place names which are used among people who are permanently settled in a place, or who have occupational connections to a place, will normally be used by public authorities e.g. on maps, signs, and in registers, together with any existing Norwegian name.

Austertana – no to Sámi names

Sámi (names)? No thanks!
Will retain Luftjok and Seida
“Have the Sámi people not learnt to read Norwegian, and are they not Norwegian citizens? – In Norway, it is the Norwegian language that must be spoken and written. What languages a person might know, has nothing to do with the matter. Every country has its own language. Everything else is ridiculous.”

(Translated from Norwegian)
Sámi name Ájluokta

recognised as an official parallel name in 1995 by the municipality.

First after 22 years, in 2017 the Sámi name erected on the road sign by the Public Road Administration.
Since the Place Name Act (1991):

Bilingual village names recognized on the official maps
Signs of villages can be bilingual

Signs of distance and direction only in Norwegian

Karášjohka
Karasjok

Kautokeino

Kautokeino
Standardization

Obsolete spelling

Current North Sámi spelling
Uncorrect Sámi spelling

Current North Sámi spelling
In Norway

Álletnjárga

Skáidi

Stállogárgu

Skaidi

Stallogargo
Standardization

Is it usual to keep an obsolete orthography as an official name?

Is it usual to keep an obsolete orthography as a parallel name in official use?

Storfjellet

Storfjeldet - as «a Sámi name»?
In Friesland – is one of these names an obsolete orthography?
Invitation to the 49\textsuperscript{th} NORNA-symposium

Minority Names in Oral and Written Contexts in a Multi-Cultural World

• 24.–25.4.2019 in Guovdageaidnu (Kautokeino), Norway

> proposals for 20-minute paper presentations or for posters, by 31. October 2018 at the latest.
Giitu
Thank you