

Chapter 5

Education Provision for Indigenous and Minority Heritage Languages Revitalisation: A Study Focusing on Saami and Scottish Gaelic



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Abstract This chapter provides a comparative study of education provision for the Indigenous language of Saami and the minority heritage of Scottish Gaelic. Due to historical factors, both languages are considered endangered according to UNESCO listings. Whilst North Saami and Scottish Gaelic receive government support, which would appear to be providing a reasonably stable position at least within their geographically core areas, assimilation continues resulting in the overall numbers of speakers remaining small. As education is viewed as key to the promotion of both languages, following an introduction to the background historical and societal context of both language contexts, the chapter presents educational practices and challenges in education for comparison over the past forty years. The comparative study highlights that similarities between these two languages exist in language revitalisation efforts to reverse language shift but the forms vary. The chapter concludes with some emerging recommendations for the successful maintenance and revitalisation of minority heritage and Indigenous languages in the twenty-first century despite the continued dominance of surrounding majority languages.

Keywords Indigenous languages · Minority heritage languages · Maintenance · Revitalisation · Education

5.1 Introduction

Following many years of colonisation across geographical areas of the world, a purposive revitalisation of Indigenous, regional and minority languages is desirable both as a human right for those communities and as means of retaining important cultural understanding distinctive in its nature. Language revitalisation aims to reverse language shift with an attempt to halt or reverse the decline of a language or to revive an extinct one (Kandler et al., 2010). The pressing need for purposive measures has been noted to maintain and revitalise language of both the Saami language (Outakoski, 2018) and Scottish Gaelic (McEwan-Fujita, 2011). Given the historical factors that have endangered both languages (Moseley, 2010), educational provision has been viewed as a key element in this endeavour (Aikio-Puoskari, 2016; Bord na Gaidhlig, 2007, 2012).

Whilst the Saami and Scottish Gaelic communities are situated in geographically different locations, a comparative study provides insight into how maintenance and revitalisation of Indigenous, regional and minority languages might be enhanced in a range of settings against the dominance of majority languages. The study will focus on an introductory history of each language within the legal policy context of each nation and resultant education provision and practices. The Saami review focuses on the Finnish situation, but also considers other countries where the Saami traditionally live. Emphasis will be placed on efforts to maintain and revitalise each language since the 1980s with emphasis on the current challenges remaining.

5.2 Background to Saami and Scottish Gaelic

The Saami language belongs to a Finno-Ugric language group. There are nine different Saami languages of which five have a separate writing system and grammar (Aikio, 2012). There are approximately 100,000 Indigenous Saami people in Scandinavia, from mid Norway and Sweden spreading through the northern regions to Finland and on the Russian Kola Peninsula. About 30% of them speak some Saami languages. Increasingly, Saami people have migrated to towns outside the core Saami regions (Heikkilä et al., 2019; Keskitalo, 2019). The history of Saami education was one of assimilation until the 1970s. Fillmore (1996) defines assimilation as a process through which individuals acquire the habits, attitudes, and mode of life of a culture. As a result, increasingly, many Saami people are unable to speak their own language and language revitalisation is necessary.

The Constitution of Finland recognises the Saami as an Indigenous people (Niemivuo, 2010), meaning they have the right to develop their language and culture including Saami Indigenous knowledge and traditional livelihoods (Hyvärinen, 2010). The Saami Language Act safeguards the right of the Saami to use their own language in public authorities and imposes an obligation on public authorities to implement and promote the linguistic rights of the Saami.

Nevertheless, despite advances in recognition of the Saami language and resultant educational provision, the language remains at risk of further loss. This potential loss can be attributed to a range of factors contributing to linguistic vitality (Ehala, 2009) consisting of the ethnolinguistic group's relation to demographic, economic, political and cultural capital. For example, currently Saami education is connected to the Saami Homeland Area (SHA) but approximately 75% of Saami pupils reside outside that core region. Only 10% of those outside the SHA study the Saami language. The future of the Saami language is under threat as few language learners gain an education in their mother tongue (Keskitalo et al., 2021).

In 2020, 2282 people registered the Saami language as their mother tongue. Not all Saami speakers have registered the language as their first language (Tammenmaa, 2020) due to the low status of the language, lack of awareness of the possibility or because most people are bilingual, they may not identify themselves primarily as Saami speakers. In total, there are around 3000 Northern Saami speakers, around 500 Inari Saami speakers and around 350 Skolt Saami speakers.

Northern Saami, as lingua franca of Saami languages is spoken in three countries, Norway, Sweden and Finland with a total of 30,000 speakers, whilst Inari Saami is spoken only in Finland (Räsänen, 2017; Salminen, 2007). Emigration from traditional areas has been recognised as a threat to the number of language speakers (Romaine, 2007). Whilst most of the people living in Saami core areas are elderly, most Saami children live outside these core areas (Ruotsala-Kangasniemi & Lehtola, 2016). About 65% of Saami live outside their homeland. Based on statistics, the Saami population has more than doubled since 1970, but the number of people who have declared Saami as their mother tongue has decreased for all three Saami languages.

Scottish Gaelic is an ancient language traditionally spoken in the Highlands and Islands in Scotland. Since the tenth century, it has been in decline (Robertson, 2001). In 1700, it is estimated that about 25–30% of the population of 900,000 were Gaelic speakers, most of them monoglot (McEwan-Fujita, 2011). By 2001, the census figures identify 58,652 Gaelic speakers aged three and over representing only 1.2% of the country's population predominantly in the North and North-West of Scotland (Bord na Gaidhlig, 2007). This decline has been attributed to factors such as repressive government policies (Robertson, 2001) but also mass emigration from areas traditionally considered Gaelic speaking (Robertson, 2001). Gaelic is still spoken in communities in Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island in Canada. However, this chapter will focus only on the education provision within Scotland.

In recent years, as part of the general Celtic renaissance, Gaelic has received new cultural importance within Scotland. Following the re-establishment of the Scottish Parliament in 1999, the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005 (Scottish Parliament, 2005) was passed unopposed marking an important milestone in the status of Gaelic as it conferred parity of esteem for Gaelic with English, promotion of Gaelic in Scottish public life and a stated aim of increasing the use of Gaelic in homes, communities, places of learning and workplaces.

Legislative changes in both countries have led to an increased commitment to the revitalisation of both languages following decades of language activism. A key element of this revitalisation process is through improved and culturally responsive educational provision with Saami and Scottish Gaelic education provision now being available from preschool through to tertiary education.

5.3 Methodology

The study focuses on changes to education provision for Saami and Scottish Gaelic over the past forty years. The 1980s saw a sea change in perceptions of both Indigenous and minority heritage languages across Europe (Jansson, 2001). In both the Saami and Scottish Gaelic communities, the 1980s saw pressure mounting for recognition of and changes in educational provision within communities. Current provision and many educational practices aimed at maintenance and revitalisation of both languages can be traced back to the early 1980s. The study therefore accessed and engaged with a range of policy documentation outlining the development of education provision in both contexts with the authors engaging in extended dialogue about the commonalities and differences between the two policy contexts. Hence the study described in this chapter is based on the principles of case-orientated, cross-national comparative research (Stake, 2013).

Distinctive to the approach adopted by the authors, Gómez and Kuronen (2011) note the advantages in enabling the analysis of societies and their specific features from inside as this permits the researcher to recognise cultural and social contexts. This approach can result in researcher bias when those researchers are deeply embedded within the context of the study, but it is suggested that the dangers are

mitigated when the study is cross-national as comparison of the two distinctive contexts promotes deeply reflective dialogue. The study utilized a range of policy documents and academic texts to provide a desk-top study comparing the two identified cases (Saami and Scottish Gaelic) but these texts were exemplified by the authors' own knowledge and understanding of the current situation as through their own participation in the educational provision, they have experienced both successes and failures, providing a unique insight into the outstanding issues that require to be addressed.

5.4 Saami

Following long years of assimilation policy, today, the Saami are recognized as an indigenous people of Norway, Sweden and Finland in addition to Russia. In 1977, the Swedish Parliament recognized the Saami as an indigenous people (Riksdagen I Sverige prop 1976/77) with provision for general ethnic, linguistic and rights for minorities to preserve and develop their own cultural and social life. The status of the Saami indigenous people was secured in Norway in 1988 (Grunnlovens paragraf 110a) and in the Finnish Constitution (1995) and in the subsequently revised Constitution (1999). Within the Russian Federation, laws and regulations in accordance with international agreements ratified by Russia guarantee the rights of indigenous peoples including the Saami Kola. In 2000 the list of indigenous peoples within the Russian Federation was expanded from 32 officially recognized as indigenous to 45 (Seurujärvi-Kari, 2011).

5.4.1 Education

The development of Saami education provision is based on Saami cultural understanding of the connection between man and nature focusing on sustainable ways of living based on traditional knowledge. The Saami traditional way of living has been formed over thousands of years with its own trust system and gods. Negative views of the content and validity of Saami culture were sown during the period of Enlightenment. The first Saami writing system was created by Church clergymen with the intention of educating Saami through Saami language (Capdeville, 2014).

More recently, the Saami language finds mention for the first time in the legislation of the Finnish Education Act in 1983 and 1984. Before that, the Saami language did not have official status in primary school. In 1979, the first primary school pupils were able to attend the first six years of school through the medium of Saami. From the 1970s onwards, the Ministry of Education granted derogations to Saami area municipalities making it possible to hire additional Saami-language classroom teachers. Saami language teaching has since expanded to more schools. However, even in the twenty-first century, most Saami students go to school in

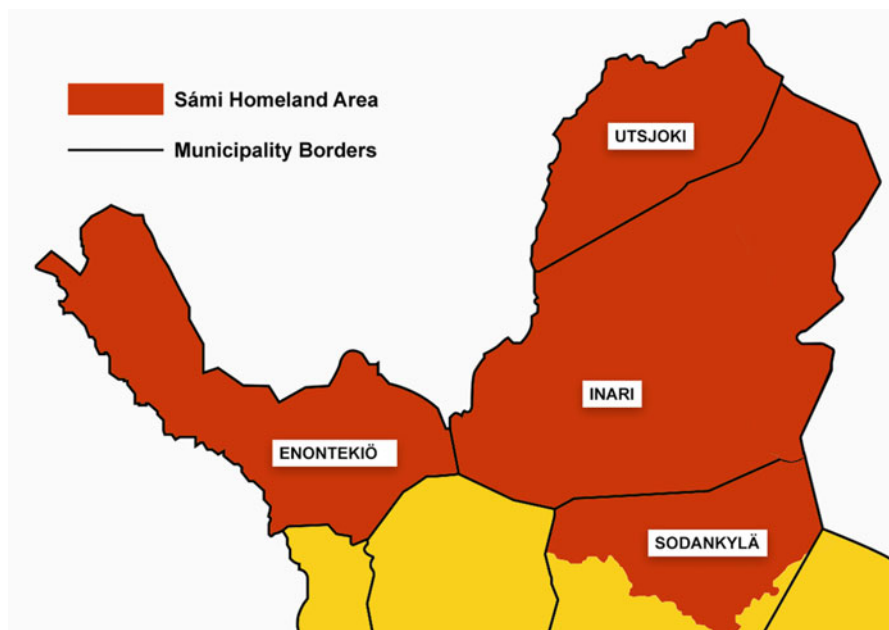


Fig. 5.1 Sámi home region in Finland

Finnish and receive Saami teaching as a subject. The homeland of the Saami was defined in 1973 as being composed of the municipalities of Utsjoki, Inari and Enontekiö and the northern part of the Sodankylä municipality (Fig. 5.1). Many rights related to the Saami language have since become mandatory in the home region (Aikio-Puoskari, 2007).

As a result of the education legislation reform in 1983–84, it was possible to use Saami as the language of instruction for Saami-speaking pupils in the Saami homeland. For a resident of the SHA, the pupils could be taught Saami and Finnish as their mother tongue. In addition, the reform enabled the teaching of the Saami language as a foreign language subject (L2). In the 1992–1995 education reforms, the Saami language gained the status of an independent mother tongue (L1) subject in upper secondary school, subsequently extended to primary schools with specific teaching resources added. In 1998, educational legislation reformed both operational and financial laws and harmonised provision for primary, secondary and vocational education. This reform also safeguarded the Saami language and associated funding for teaching in the home region and provided the first clear Saami obligation for education providers to comply with (Aikio-Puoskari, 2007).

In Norway, Saami language teaching started gradually in the 1970's in the primary school system. Unique to Norway was the launch in 1997 of its own Saami curriculum and Saami school system, which have a parallel status in Norway with the national school system and curriculum (Keskitalo, 2010.) The Saami University College was established in 1989 in Kautokeino, Norway, which included

Saami teacher education programmes. Saami is the academic language, teaching language and administration language. Kautokeino has over 90% Saami speaking inhabitants (about 3000 inhabitants). In 2010, Norway launched separate Saami teacher education reform with its own legislation, and in 2017, initiated master's level qualifications.

There is no separate Saami curriculum in Finland like in Norway, where it has been in use since 1997 (Keskitalo, 2010) or Sweden, which has had one since 2011 (Skolverket., 2011). However, Finland's national curriculum gives local schools and communities autonomy in constructing their curricula based on national curriculum guidelines.

One answer to the educational challenges faced by Saami education in Finland is the *Pilot project on distance education in the Saami languages* started in 2018 (Keskitalo et al., 2021) managed by the municipality of Utsjoki, and coordinated by the Saami Parliament. It offers two supplementary hours of Saami language teaching online to those outside of the Saami homeland with its own local curriculum (Utsjoki., 2019). The long-term goal is to establish a permanent distance education system for the Saami language outside the SHA.

Saami people live in 230 municipalities around Finland, and the resources for education in Saami are scattered all over the country. There is a clear need to develop new methods that are based on distance and online connections. In this way, high-quality education can be more effectively offered to the whole Saami population of Finland, who are increasingly moving to all corners of the country. During the school year 2020–2021, 90 pupils in 62 schools studied in the project. The effect of the pilot project has significant for the smaller Saami languages, Inari and Skolt Saami, as previously their teaching was only organised occasionally outside the native region but now seen in the doubling of the number of students studying Saami languages outside the native region. For most of these children, distance education is the only possibility to learn Saami since there are not enough pupils nearby to form a study group or available teachers.

5.4.2 Challenges

The Saami experienced colonialism, a central manifestation of which is assimilation (Kortekangas et al., 2019). Assimilation refers to the active merging of minorities into the mainstream population (Battiste, 2000). Saami languages are endangered due to centuries of assimilationist policies and policy measures. Furthermore, rapid social change has to an extent negatively impacted Saami health and mental well-being. For example, the suicide rate among young reindeer herders is high (Heikkilä et al., 2019). Nonetheless, contemporary Saami people are part of the globalised and, to an extent, urbanised world because of migration to suburban areas. This creates new demands for education.

Currently, diaspora and urbanisation are ongoing phenomena among Saami people. Diaspora has affected the demographic structure of Saami people living in

the SHA (Keskitalo, 2019). Sixty percent of contemporary Saami live outside the SHA, along with 75% of Saami-speaking children (Heikkilä et al., 2019). For example, around 1000 Saami live in Helsinki, the capital of Finland (Lindgren, 2000). Saami-speaking teachers and actors at different levels have been actively developing Saami education. However, there is a lack of both human and economic resources in the field of Saami education development (Keskitalo et al., 2021; Rahko-Ravantti, 2016).

The Finnish educational system is generally successful, for example in international comparison PISA results (Sahlberg, 2014), although the Finnish Education Evaluation Centre retains concerns about basic education equity. Throughout Finland, girls generally perform better than boys (Pöysä & Kupiainen, 2018). Saami boys statistically receive lower grades. In a recent report, the Ministry of Education and Culture highlighted the situation of Saami language teachers, Saami language textbooks and knowledge of Saami people in majority language textbooks as being deficit (Arola, 2020).

According to Ministry of Education and Culture (2021), several measures have been taken in recent years to revive the Saami language, but the measures taken have not yet guaranteed the preservation of the Saami languages. The status of all Saami languages spoken in Finland is still endangered. Of these, Skolt Saami and Inari Saami are seriously endangered languages (Salminen, 2007). The Finnish government considers the main challenges in reviving the Saami languages to be the provision of adequate Saami language and Saami-language teaching and day care, the emigration of the Saami from the Saami homeland, which has meant narrowing the natural language environments of the Saami languages users and lack of availability of qualified, proficient Saami speaking professionals in the various fields (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2012).

The Finnish government considers the recovery of the Saami language requires the following: (1) language nests, which as an immersion-based approach to language revitalisation in early-childhood education have proven to be an effective language revitalization measure, to be established and expanded and day care to be provided as required by law; (2) Saami language teaching to be developed throughout the country and a system supporting remote Saami language teaching utilising remote connections to be introduced; (3) the education system to produce more diverse Saami-speaking professionals in various fields, especially in teaching and customer service positions; (4) in order to revive the Skolt Saami language, special measures to be taken to increase the use and study of the language; (5) the Saami Language Act to be fully implemented in the Saami homeland and the authorities actively promote the use of the Saami language; (6) Saami-language radio, television and internet content to be significantly increased; (7) maintenance, storage and research of the Saami language research results and materials to be easily exploited; (8) support for Saami art and culture to be increased (9) Saami cross-border co-operation in support of language and culture to be well established and new strong Saami-language environments to be created. A working group presented selected concrete measures for the selected priorities (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2012).

5.5 Scottish Gaelic

5.5.1 Policy Context

In recent years, Gaelic has received new cultural importance within Scotland. In 2001, the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005 was passed through the Scottish parliament unopposed marking an important milestone conferring parity of esteem for Gaelic with English, promotion of Gaelic in Scottish public life and the aim of increasing use of Gaelic in homes, communities, places of learning and workplaces. This included the development of a national Gaelic radio station and television channel and the Gaelic College, Sabhal Mor Ostaig, achieving University status.

Scottish Gaelic is now promoted as a vital part of Scotland's cultural heritage with allocated public funding. Bord na Gaidhlig stated that although the language is 'extremely fragile' (Bord na Gaidhlig, 2007: 9), there was cause for optimism. The 2001 and 2011 census indicated that although the overall number of Gaelic speakers was in decline, this rate had 'slowed considerably' (Bord na Gaidhlig, 2007: 11). In 2011, although there was still a 4.6% decline in Gaelic speakers over the age of 25, there was a growth of Gaelic speakers under the age of 25. Whilst this increase in younger speakers is encouraging, Dunmore (2017) highlights issues remain as younger speakers report little regular use of the language in home and community settings.

5.5.2 Education

The increase in younger people speaking the language is attributed to the education system. The 1872 Education Act made no provision for monoglot speakers of Gaelic despite education provision run by societies and churches having done so. However, educational needs of Gaelic speakers were legally acknowledged for the first time in the 1918 Education Act, placing an obligation on local authorities to make provision for the teaching of Gaelic in Gaelic-speaking areas. This resulted in provision of Gaelic as a curricular area at both primary and secondary level, and the opportunity of gaining qualifications in the senior phase of secondary school in Gaelic.

Gaelic education was first recognised as a medium of curricular instruction in its own rights in 1975 when a bilingual pilot project was set up in the Western Isles (Roberts, 1991). The government funded pilot project was well received but by the 1980s, doubts were being expressed as to the effectiveness of bilingual education to tackle the problem of erosion of young people speaking Gaelic within a dominant wrap-around English culture (Robertson, 2001).

A decision was made to implement Gaelic Medium Education (GME) as the primary means to tackle this erosion (Robertson, 2003 in Bryce and Humes (Eds.), 2003). The success of the first two Gaelic medium provisions in 1985 fueled demand in other geographical areas, and by 2010–11, fourteen education authorities were

providing GME for approximately 2312 children in 60 primary schools (HMIE, 2011) rising to 4300 students in both primary and secondary provision in 2018.

Nevertheless, issues remain. Most GME provision is based on sites with English Medium Education classes. Hosting both GME and the more dominant English medium education on the same site has the potential to undermine students' language development and socialisation in the minority language outside the formal classroom. This potential is exacerbated by the many non-native Gaelic families choosing to attend GME. Some stand-alone GME Schools have now been established and some schools have been designated Gaelic schools with English Medium classes attached. In 2019, the Western Isles Education Authority increased Gaelic language provision in all schools and made the language the default language for all children starting primary education.

Underpinning growth in primary provision is the provision of pre-school Gaelic education referred to as the 'seedbed for much of the regeneration and growth in Gaelic in, and beyond, education' (Robertson, 2003: 250 in Bryce and Humes (Eds.), 2003). The first Gaelic playgroups were formed in the 1970s, and in 1982, Comhairle nan Sgoiltean Araich (CNSA) was set up to promote the development of Gaelic-medium playgroups where children could associate the Gaelic language with enjoyable, socially based experiences. By 2011, approximately 2000 children were learning Gaelic in birth to five provision (HMIE, 2011) provided at different age levels by Parant is Paiste (birth to 2/3 years), Croileagan (2–3 years) and Sgoil Araich (3–5 years).

At the other end of the spectrum, HMIE have noted that GME in secondary schools is at an early stage of development (HMIE, 2011). Although 46 Secondary schools offer Gaelic in some form, only 14 of these provide curricular subjects through the medium of Gaelic other than Gaelic as a subject.

Bord na Gaidhlig (2007, 2012) has set out ambitious plans in its response to the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005. Targets include for example 4000 children enrolled in GME at Primary 1 by 2021 compared to just over 300 in 2006. This is to be raised to 10,000 children enrolled at this stage by 2031 and 15,000 by 2041. These are considered lofty targets. Nevertheless, Robertson indicates GME as a means of revitalising the Gaelic language still has challenges to face (Robertson, 2003:259 in Bryce and Humes (Eds.), 2003).

5.5.3 Educational Challenges

Challenges in the provision of education through the Scottish Gaelic language remain if Bord na Gaidhlig's targets are to be realised (2007, 2012). There remain significant recruitment issues both to provide teachers in certain geographical areas as well as in the secondary sector to provide the full range of curricular areas (HMIE, 2011). Stephen et al. (2010) highlight the specific challenge of provision of qualified staff for pre-school provision which is often run by parents in the 0–3 years and at the Sgoiltean Araich stage (4–5 years).

Another challenge is the continued provision of resources to meet the needs of all curricular areas in Gaelic (Bord na Ghaidhlig, 2007, 2012). This includes curricular materials for subjects such as science but also readily accessible, online resources (<https://www.storlann.co.uk/>).

A major concern is that GME remains located within a predominantly wrap-around culture of English. English as the dominant language tends to dominate the culture surrounding the learner in media and cultural exchanges. As stated previously, this is particularly true of GME which takes place on the same site as that of English Medium Education, where the common language between both staff and pupils is English resulting in it dominating out of class discourse. Concerns have been raised as to the lack of out-of-school care in Gaelic (Stephen et al., 2010) in certain areas, but also lack of opportunities for pupils to engage in social activities in the medium of Gaelic. Organisations to provide opportunities for young people to engage in sports and the arts through the medium of Gaelic outside formal education have been set up, although provision outside the Highlands and Islands and the major population centres remains patchy. Other measures to provide Gaelic language cultural provision for young people include the provision of Gaelic programmes on the Gaelic television.

5.5.4 Pedagogical Challenges

GME is based on the principle of language immersion which involves teaching only through the medium of the target language. Bilingual education, although welcomed by both parents and young people, was viewed as insufficient to contribute to the revitalisation of Gaelic considering the rate of decline in the late twentieth century. Complete immersion in the language in nursery provision and at the early stages of primary education was perceived as essential. This was particularly as the numbers of children learning the language in the home continued to decline (Stephen et al., 2010).

The early stages of learning in GME are referred to as ‘total immersion’. The length of total immersion varies between local authorities but certainly Gaelic is the only medium used in teaching and learning in the first two years with the emphasis on development of listening and speaking skills designed to allow children from non-speaking Gaelic backgrounds to develop basic oral competence in Gaelic and to reinforce existing skills of Gaelic speaking children whose language competence might otherwise diminish. The emphasis on oral skills extends well beyond the initial two years. The second phase known as ‘immersion’ is often introduced after the two years of total immersion.

Most children in GME are not native speakers, nor do they come from Gaelic speaking backgrounds, where one or more parent is a fluent speaker and can model the language for the learner. For many parents, the choice is based on a historical or family connection to the language or heritage sometimes several generations back. Approximately only 2% of children in GME enter education as a native Gaelic

learner (O’Hanlon et al., 2013). The inclusion of both native speakers and learners in the pre-school and early years’ GME provision must therefore present a unique situation for practitioners – somewhat dissimilar to that of English Medium settings. The challenge of enabling both groups of children to participate meaningfully in learning within the same setting cannot be underestimated.

5.6 Discussion

Educational provision for both Saami and Scottish Gaelic has changed significantly since the 1980s with dedicated provision from early years to tertiary education. Provision is now protected at policy level recognising both Saami and Scottish Gaelic as national languages with the same rights as majority languages. The national legislation and resultant educational provision are to be celebrated, but despite these advances, both languages remain at risk. This can be attributed to a range of factors. For example, currently Saami education is connected to the SHA but approximately 75% of Saami pupils reside outside that core region. Only 5% study the Saami language. This poses an obvious threat to the Saami language future (Keskitalo, 2020). In Scotland, recent census figures indicate that the decline in Gaelic speakers has slowed but not to the extent expected when considered considering the expansion of GME provision (<https://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/census-results> - accessed 24.4.20).

5.6.1 Educational Challenges

An area of concern for both language contexts are pedagogical challenges within provision for Indigenous and minority languages when they sit within a dominant majority linguistic context resulting in the pupils living in a wraparound language and culture different from their first language. For those delivering Saami language provision, many learners reside outside the traditional Saami area, and therefore, do not have access to schools with Saami language provision. For GME, recruitment of qualified teachers remains an issue.

One potential solution to this challenge lies in the affordances of digital language provision. Both Saami and Scottish Gaelic language providers have expanded their digital provision during the 2020 global pandemic when many school buildings were closed (Keskitalo et al., 2021). This has expanded opportunities to learn the language for those not residing in geographical areas where face to face provision is normally provided.

Enthusiasm for digital opportunities to learn minority heritage languages is demonstrated by the phenomenal success of the Duolingo Scottish Gaelic website with around 300,000 learners engaging with the website in the first six months of its launch. Equally successful has been the pilot project on distance education in the

Saami languages currently with around 90 students (Keskitalo et al., 2021). Both examples demonstrate the affordances of digital provision to meet challenges faced where provision is not available in a geographical area.

Additionally, enhanced digital provision of language learning may support teachers where many learners are non-native speakers. Currently, in GME, many teachers must provide effective learning opportunities for both native and non-native learners in the same classrooms. In contrast, digital education can support teachers through provision of innovative pedagogy which allows for enhanced differentiation of provision. The comparative study therefore highlights the ongoing requirement for an additive bilingualism that reflects a model in which both languages of a pupil develop equally in educational provision where both languages are equally valued and can develop (Baker, 2001). Digital provision may provide one mechanism to achieve this aspiration.

5.6.2 Opportunities for Home and Community Use of Languages

The study highlighted the need for increased opportunities for Indigenous language native and learner speakers to use their language skills in social settings. In Scotland, Ó Giollagan et al. (2020) note the ongoing mismatch between existing Gaelic policies and the level of crisis among the speaker group and assert that if the Gaelic language is to be revitalised, a successful vernacular community regeneration is required. The Scottish Government highlighted this as a priority in their most recent Language Plan (Scottish Government, 2017). Simply put, the language must be used in everyday communication in the community for it to survive. The reasons for this not occurring are complex and relate to ongoing issues between native and non-native speakers of minority languages (Dunmore, 2017) and complex issues related to identity formation of speakers, which there is not opportunity within this chapter to address meaningfully.

The study has identified a need to focus, not only on formal education but also on language socialisation opportunities in the home and community. Central to this aim is the supportive provision of media such as television, social media and informal conversation opportunities within youth and community groups. Excellent examples are available such as the partnership between the Saami community and Disney with the launch of the film *Frozen* in Northern Saami and arts organisations such as Feis Rois (<https://www.feisrois.org/>). However, investment in similar ventures is necessary if Indigenous and minority language users are to develop robust cultural identities that contribute to the maintenance and revitalisation of their languages.

Perhaps most importantly, educational provision must recognise that Indigenous and minority languages are inextricably linked to the culture of the community, and this culture must be acknowledged within educational provision for those pupils. Within educational provision, there is an urgent need to recognise that the language

is situated within a distinctive culture. Indigenous language is inextricably linked to culture and way of living; this must be recognised and acknowledged more purposefully within the education system; including the assessment policy of the wider nation.

5.7 Conclusion

Of necessity, the chapter focuses on only two Indigenous languages but is situated in line with the proposal that comparative case studies from different contexts can be illuminating (Stake, 2013). For the authors of this chapter the opportunity to engage in deeply reflective dialogue focusing on their native languages and educational initiatives to promote their revitalisation was enlightening. It is hoped that consideration of Saami and Scottish Gaelic will provide those in similar situations the opportunity to reflect on the challenges faced by other at-risk Indigenous languages but also provide insight into successful education interventions that might contribute to their maintenance and revitalisation.

In particular, the chapter offers insight into how educational provision can support the revitalisation of Indigenous, regional and minority languages where the wrap around majority language is dominant. The chapter offers a comparative study of an Indigenous and minority heritage language, both at risk of disappearing but which have in recent years aimed at revitalization through a range of education initiatives. Whilst some education provision has proved successful for Saami and Scottish Gaelic, the chapter has also identified both structural and pedagogical considerations requiring further attention for this revitalisation to be maintained and indeed advanced.

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