

## The Linguistic Special Features of the Sámi Education

PIGGA KESKITALO

*Sámi University College, Kautokeino, Norway*

KAARINA MÄÄTTÄ

*University of Lapland, Rovaniemi, Finland*

### ABSTRACT

*This article focuses on the features of Sámi language instruction at the first school grades in Norway. The most important part is to describe what kind of challenges Sámi language instruction at the first grades as an indigenous people's language and with the status of a minority language has. This situation introduces some differences and challenges that must be taken account at the planning level and in classroom working in practice. Sámi language instruction is effected in a situation which is challenging both from the sociological and human rights perspectives. Pupil groups are more heterogeneous than ever before because of the assimilation process and power relations as well as the status of Sámi language. Teachers must work in a situation which is quite different from the national-level language situation as a whole. Any examples cannot be found in research or in the national-level language situation as the situation of Sámi language differs from that remarkably.*

**Keywords:** Sámi language, Sámi instruction, Sámi curriculum, indigenous peoples, bilingualism

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The Sámi people live in four countries: in northern Finland, Sweden, Norway, and Kola Peninsula in Russia. Altogether, there are about 100000 Sámi people in these countries. About 40000 of them can speak the Sámi language. The word "Sámi" is derived from the word in the Sámi language "Sápmi" which means both the geographical area populated traditionally by the Sámi and the Sámi people. The Sámi people form a nationality that does not have a nation or nation borders but a common language, culture, and history (Smith 2006: 65). The Sámi people are known also as Lapp/Lappish people, but there is a negative and even insulting nuance in