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Revivalist Policy Impact in the Finno-Ugric Republics of Russia

The application of language policy theories opens a new perspective in the Finno-Ugric studies. Policy analysis is one of the approaches used in the field. A traditional conceptual framework for policy analysis in political science was the stages approach that divided the policy process into a series of stages. When applied to language policy, three stages in the policy cycle were typically distinguished: language beliefs (ideology), language management (planning), and language practices (ecology). Language planning, then, is often also represented as a series of stages: policy adoption, its implementation and evaluation.

In my previous research on language policy in Russia and its ethnic republics titled after the ethnic groups speaking Finno-Ugric languages, I also followed the series of stages and focused on investigating the revivalist ideologies and planning. The impact of revivalist efforts on language practices and ideologies remains without proper evaluation. In these regions, some sociological and sociolinguistic research was conducted into different aspects of the ethnic and linguistic situation that was often commissioned by regional agencies on nationalities affairs. However, usually the data were not interpreted in the context on language policy, probably, because its accumulating lasting effects often remain indistinguishable in the short run.

The aim of the paper is to explore the revivalist policy impact on the sociolinguistic situations in the Finno-Ugric regions of Russia in order to understand the policy scope and limits. The objective is to conduct a comparative study of the current sociolinguistic situations across the Finno-Ugric regions. The research problem is topical in the light of a larger theoretical debate about the scope and limits of language policy of the state. The empirical rationale is to finalize the study of the policy cycle in the Finno-Ugric republics of Russia.