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God Speaks Skolt Sámi as Well

Finnish Orthodox Church as a Domain of Language Use among the Skolt Sámi in Sevettijärvi

—
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Master's thesis in Indigenous Studies submitted in November 2016



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Acknowledgements

When I was a pupil, just as other Czech children, I learned a lot about the Czech National Revival that took place in the Czech lands in 18th and 19th century. Its purpose was to revive the Czech language, culture and identity. It was fascinating to learn about it, but at the same time it felt to be in the distant past. Nowadays however, the cultural and language revitalization of many indigenous and language minority groups takes place around the world. The people that are a part of these processes try to save their culture, identity and language, like in my own country centuries ago. I have met some of these people when doing my fieldwork in Sevettijärvi.

I want to thank all the people that helped me with my project. My special thanks go to all the informants - rather my fellow researchers, as I perceive them. I also want to thank other people that I met during my project that offered me insight, information, inspiration, motivation and even friendship. I am so grateful to you. It was a big honor and pleasure to get to know you and this project would not have happened without you.

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This project is dedicated to all the Skolt Sámi people, to the people of Sevettijärvi, and to all the people who have contributed no matter how much to revive and maintain the Skolt Sámi culture, language and identity.

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Abstract

This study describes how the Finnish Orthodox Church in Sevettijärvi functions as a domain of language use and furthermore analyses what role the Church has had in the process of the Skolt Sámi language revitalization. Many researchers have expressed the importance of the Orthodox Church in everyday life of Skolt Sámi, however none have focused on the Church in the Skolt Sámi context from a sociolinguistic point of view. This study builds on the theoretical concept of domains of language use developed by Joshua Fishman and examines the Finnish Orthodox Church in Sevettijärvi as a domain of language use.

This thesis shows what factors influence the language choice in this domain, how the domain has developed, and how it has influenced the Skolt Sámi language outside this domain. Empirically, my study is based on ten semi-structured interviews and participant observation. I present my data divided into four main parts: religious literature, religious services, religious education, and other communication in the domain of the Orthodox Church (communication between the church and the members through media, between the clergy and parishioners, among parishioners and individual communication with the divine). In this thesis, I argue that the Orthodox Church has supported the Skolt Sámi language and its revitalization. At the same time, I show what hinders the further development of the Skolt Sámi language in this domain and what measures might be taken in order to strengthen the position of the Skolt Sámi language in the future.

Keywords: Skolt Sámi people, Skolt Sámi language, Finnish Orthodox Church, domains of language use, indigenous people, language revitalization, sociology of language and religion

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the new situation in Finland, the language and culture of the Skolt Sámi came under the yoke of a new majority language and culture. The Sámi had relatively few possibilities for preserving their traditional ways of living, e.g. their traditional society could no longer function as it did before. But in the new country the Skolt Sámi could profess their Orthodox faith. It was only the Orthodox Church which kept them together, made it possible for them to meet regularly, made them feel they had a religious and ethnic affinity with each other. The Orthodox religion, which was part and parcel of their history and everyday life while living in their traditional habitation areas, thus appeared to be their own tradition, which they brought with them when emigrating to a new land (Sergejeva, 2000, p. 26).¹

It is estimated that there are about 7,000 languages in the world nowadays (Ethnologue, 2016). However, many linguists expect at least half of the languages to disappear during this century (Grenoble & Whaley, 2006, p. 1). Krauss (1992, p. 7) even believes that 90% of mankind's languages will die or will be doomed to extinction in the 21st century. Nevertheless, for different reasons, interest in language revitalization increases in minority language communities around the world. The Skolt Sámi community is one of these communities.

This Master's thesis deals with the topic of the Skolt Sámi language situation in Sevettijärvi (in Skolt Sámi *Če'vetjäu'rr*) in Finland focusing on its development in terms of the language domain² of the Finnish Orthodox Church. The data used in this Master's thesis was collected especially during my fieldwork in Sevettijärvi in August 2015. The goal of this Master's thesis is to contribute to a better understanding of the contemporary language situation among Skolt Sámi people in Sevettijärvi by focusing on the dynamics within the Finnish Orthodox Church. Many researchers, such as Linkola (1996), Jefremoff (2005), Lehtola (2004a), Sergejeva (2000), Leo (1995), and Rantakeisu (2015), *repeatedly* express the importance of the Orthodox Church in *everyday* life of Skolt Sámi, though none have focused on the Orthodox Church in the Skolt Sámi context from a sociolinguistic point of view.³ I hope that this work will contribute to fill this "gap" and I hope that it will also be beneficial

¹ When referring to Jelena Porsanger, née Sergejeva, I use both names depending which name is used in given publications.

² The term is explained and discussed in the next chapter. A short definition is to be found in section 2.6.

³ Hudson (1996, p. 4) defines *sociolinguistics* as "the study of language in relation to society". *Sociology of language*, on the other hand, is defined by the same author (Ibid., p.4) as "the study of society in relation to language". Nevertheless, both of the fields are concerned with the relationship between society and language and they overlap. The differences between these two depend on emphasis.

for the local community to which this Master's thesis is dedicated. Hopefully, it will find its purpose in the future language revitalization research and efforts in the Skolt Sámi context or other indigenous or minority language communities. Even though the topic of this thesis is narrowly focused, the scope of this thesis does not allow me to discuss all of its complexities. Therefore, this thesis aims to give a basic overview on the situation and serves as an opener to the discussion of the role Finnish Orthodox Church has in the Skolt Sámi language situation. This Master's thesis is multidisciplinary, but my theoretical focus and overall approach to the topic is largely influenced by the fields of sociolinguistics and sociology of language and religion.

This Master's thesis is structured as follows. In this chapter, I will present the research questions and the sociocultural and historical context of the place and the community where my research was completed. In the second chapter, I describe previous research and relevant theoretical concepts, especially the concept of *domains of language use* developed by Joshua Fishman (1972a). The third chapter is a presentation of methodology and methods and reflection. In the fourth chapter, I present my data in a fourfold structure: religious literature, religious services, religious education, and other communication in the domain of the Orthodox Church (communication between the church and the members through media, between the clergy and parishioners, among parishioners and individual communication with the divine). These data are subsequently analysed in chapter five.

1.1. Research questions

The main research questions of this project are: 1) What dynamics constitute the Finnish Orthodox Church as a domain of language use in Sevetijärvi? and 2) What historical and contemporary role has the Finnish Orthodox Church in the Skolt Sámi language revitalization and what is the Church's potential as an instrument of language revitalization?

The first question was deliberately developed broadly in order to cover the complexity of the domain and a wide range of the diverse nexuses of different participants making up the whole domain. More specifically, this involves examining both formal and informal tendencies concerning language use within the Finnish Orthodox Church and the Skolt Sámi community. This study focuses upon how Skolt Sámi language entered the domain of the Finnish Orthodox Church, what led to this decision, and how the Skolt Sámi language has developed in this domain both in oral and written form. This involves topics such as what

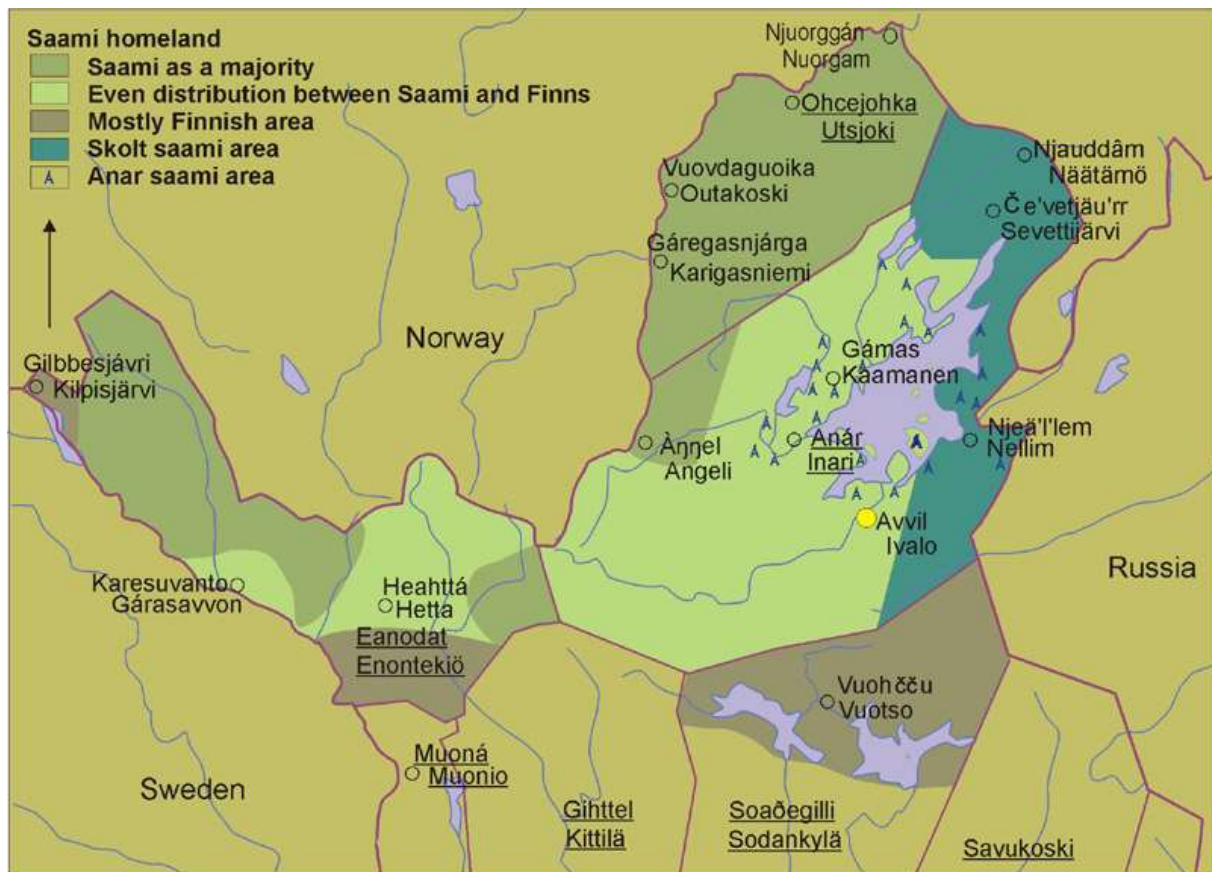
religious written sources are available in Skolt Sámi language, what languages are used during religious services, and what language people usually use during spiritual activities etc. At the same time, I was interested in the question of what factors influence language choice in the domain of the Finnish Orthodox Church.

When a language is used in fewer domains it signifies the lessening the vitality of the language. On the other hand, if a language is used in a higher number of domains, it is a sign of strengthening the language vitality (Grenoble & Whaley, 2006). Also, increased use of a minority language or a non-dominant language within a single domain is a contribution towards the efforts of revitalizing language. Based on this logic and based on the literature about Skolt Sámi and Finnish Orthodox Church and their activities, I presuppose that the Finnish Orthodox Church has been a potential instrument of language revitalization in the broadest sense of the word, thus also in the profane area. Whereas, with the first research question I try to simply examine dynamics working in the domain of the Orthodox Church, the second question is already based on the presumption that the Finnish Orthodox Church has had a certain influence on Skolt Sámi revitalization, and the validity of this presumption will be discussed in later chapters.

1.2. The Skolt Sámi people

The ethnonym *Sámi people* is a name for indigenous people of Fennoscandia. This name is an endonym (coming from the Sámi word *sápmelaš*), thus Sámi people call themselves Sámi, unlike the exonym *Lapp* used by southern neighbours which carries pejorative connotations. It is estimated that in Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia (on the Kola Peninsula), there is a population of between 60,000 and 100,000 Sámi people (Lehtola, 2004a). More than a half of the Sámi population speaks one of the nine still living Sámi languages.

Skolt Sámi is a Sámi language and an ethnic group. The group lives in the territory of three different states – Finland, Norway, and Russia – and constitute approximately 1,000 people. Therefore, many refer to Skolt Sámi as “a minority within minority”. It is estimated that in Finland there are about 600 Skolts and 400 of them live in the traditional Skolt Sámi area: the villages of Sevettijärvi, Nellim, and Keväjärvi (Kolta-alue, n.d.). Many Skolt Sámi people in Finland live outside the Skolt Sámi area.



Map 1: "Sámi Homeland" is a legal term in Finland and covers the municipalities of Enontekiö, Inari, Utsjoki and Sodankylä.⁴

The name *Skolt Sámi* (in Finnish *kolttasaamelainen*, in Norwegian *skoltesame*) is an exonym which originally also carries a derogatory meaning. However, Skolt Sámi have accepted this name and use it (Linkola, 1996). They call themselves *sa'mmlaž*, simply meaning *Sámi* in Skolt Sámi language. It is also worth noting that in Northern Sámi they use the word "nuortalaš", literally meaning "Eastern", as an ethnic name for Skolt Sámi.

The Skolt Sámi traditional living area (see the map below) was located between Neiden (in Skolt Sámi *Njauddám*, in Finnish *Näättämö*, in Norwegian *Neiden*) and Pechenga area (in Skolt Sámi *Peäccam* and in Finnish *Petsamo*) and in Tuloma area (Linkola, 1996). The impact of history on the development of the Skolt Sámi living area will be discussed later.

⁴ The map is retrieved from <http://www.helsinki.fi/~sugl_smi/kuvat/Kartat/Hallinto/sapmelassuomas.jpg>.



Map 2: Old Skolt Sámi siidas.⁵

The Skolt Sámi traditionally had two important sources of subsistence – reindeer husbandry and fishing. As Linkola (1996, p. 32) writes, fishing was their primary source of livelihood. However, due to the events in 20th century, these livelihoods dramatically declined. Traditionally, similarly to other Sámi groups, Skolt Sámi people were divided into social entities called *siidas* (in Skolt Sámi *sijdd*). They consisted of certain families and kin that practiced their livelihoods through specific councils in their areas (Rantakeisu, 2015). During the wintertime, they lived in common winter villages and in summertime they moved into hunting and fishing areas. The traditional way of living remained longest in Suonjel (in Skolt Sámi *Suõ'nn'jel*, in Finnish *Suonikylä*) (Linkola, 1996). Winter villages functioned as social centres, where village meetings (in Skolt Sámi *sijdsobbar* or *siidsååbbar*) were held, and state authorities did their duties., They were also locations for schooling and spiritual life. Skolts traditionally used a village administration model which is still in use. Skolt Sámi people also elect a village representative, or elder (in Finnish *luottamusmies* or *kylänvanhin*) for the period of three years. Some of the objectives of the village meetings are to discuss local issues, and prepare statements and proposals for the authorities. Nevertheless, the meetings do not have any judicial power anymore (Rantakeisu, 2015).

The Skolt Sámi culture is very distinctive in comparison to other Sámi cultures. The Skolt Sámi culture has been heavily influenced by the East. For example, Skolt Sámi share similarities with Karelians in folk dance tradition and garment style. Another significant feature of the Skolt Sámi culture is *leu'dd* – a singing tradition, similar to *yoik*. *Leu'dd* is a

⁵ The map is retrieved from <<http://www.samimuseum.fi/saamjiellem/english/historia.html>>.

long poetic ballad form (Lehtola, 2004a). Other very distinctive parts of Skolt Sámi culture are language and religion and will be discussed later.

1.3. Recent history of Skolt Sámi people

Since the Middle Ages, Skolt Sámi have been strongly influenced culturally and politically by the East. Historical events and political actions of the Nordic states and Russia have always had a direct and crucial impact on Skolt Sámi lives and their ways of living. For example, new state borders or their closure had huge effects on Skolt Sámi families and Skolt Sámi reindeer herding. Nonetheless, even though history offers many interesting issues, the scope of this Master's thesis does not allow me to elaborate more. Rather, I will present a short summary of Skolt Sámi history of the 20th century that is essential for the context of the thesis.

Until 1920, the Pechenga region, a part of Skolt Sámi homeland, belonged to Russia. As a part the Tartu Peace Treaty in 1920, the Soviet Union ceded this area to Finland meaning the connections between Skolt Sámi families on the Finnish border and those on the Soviet border were cut off. In addition, it also split the Suonjel area, one quarter remained on the Soviet side. This loss of land also meant a loss of a portion of reindeer pastures (Lehtola, 2004a). Such a change had significance in terms of citizenship, family connections, sociocultural change and linguistic change. Russian was no longer needed, but Finnish was required instead (Feist, 2010).

As Lehtola (2004a) mentions, Suonjel area, unlike other Skolt Sámi areas, was protected against agricultural expansion and was planned to be an area for the protection of Skolt Sámi culture and land rights. However, the historical events of the Second World War changed everything and completely devastated Skolt lives.

When the Winter War burst out between Finland and Soviet Union in November 1939, Skolt Sámi had to be evacuated. Even though they could return to their homes by the spring of 1940, in 1944 at the end of the Continuation War, they had to leave their homes again and this time, it was forever. After the war, Finland ceded the Pechenga region to the Soviet Union (Linkola, 1996). This time, the Skolt Sámi evacuated deep into Finnish territory, into central Ostrobothnia in Western Finland, in the middle of Finnish culture. This historical period was an important landmark for the development of Sámi identity. Lehtola (2004b; Rantakeisu, 2015) even writes that one cannot understand modern Sámi culture without an understanding of the impact of evacuee times. Skolt Sámi people had to stay in Western Finland under

difficult circumstances until 1945, some until 1946 (Petsamosta Inariin, n.d.). Even though traditional Skolt Sámi lifestyle had begun to break down before the war, historical events during the Second World War accelerated this cultural transformation. Younger Skolts have already adopted the Finnish lifestyle and many Skolt Sámi fought together with Finnish men against Soviets. While at first, many people, and especially the older generation, wanted to come back to their homes, the younger generation did not want to become Soviet citizens. In order to maintain the unity of the Skolt Sámi community, the older generation decided to stay in Finland (Linkola, 1996; Rantakeisu 2015). Remaining Skolt Sámi families in the Soviet Union were resettled and concentrated far from the border in the interior parts of Kola Peninsula (Lehtola, 2004a).

After a four-year process of planning (Lehtola, 2004), Skolt Sámi who had formerly lived in Pechenga found a new home in Nellim, and those originally from Paatsjoki moved to Keväjärvi, while Skolts from Suonjel moved to Sevettijärvi-Näätämö area (see the map below). The last families moved in 1949, when the borders were closed permanently (Kolttasaamelaiset, n.d.).



Map 3: Relocation of Skolt Sámi people to the new areas.⁶

⁶ The map is retrieved from <http://www.samimuseum.fi/saamjiellem/tietokuvat/kolttien_muutto_iso.jpg>.

Unfortunately, after the relocation to the new areas, the connections to traditional homeland were lost, as was the traditional way of living. In addition, the Finnish government implemented assimilation policies in order to incorporate Skolt Sámi into the Finnish society, resulting in many traumas (Rantakeisu, 2015). One of the main instruments of these policies was education. Children did not have the opportunity to learn Skolt Sámi language up until the 1970's and in addition, the language was forbidden at school. Skolt Sámi pupils were bullied and as a result, they often hid their own identity in order to cope with the situation (Lehtola, 2004a). About 80% of the children lived in boarding schools coming home just on weekends and during holidays. Therefore, most of the time these children were under the influence of the dominant Finnish culture (Linkola, 1996). The generation born in the 1950's and 1960's was left with the biggest trauma and scars to their identity (Rantakeisu, 2015). This was especially damaging for young people who were exposed to negative attitudes not only from Finns, but also from other Sámi (Lehtola, 2004a).

The Skolt Sámi culture and language has begun to revive little by little from the 1970's and 1980's onward. In the 1970's a Skolt Sámi orthography was created and in 1972, the first ABC book was written and the language started to be taught at school in Sevettijärvi (Kirjakielen kehityksestä, n.d.). In 1980's the first Skolt Sámi radio program was available and later on the language began to appear in TV-programs (Koltansaamen kielestä, n.d.). Skolt Sámi literature began to be published and *leu'dd*, the story tradition, and other Skolt Sámi cultural traditions began to revive. Together with growing self-awareness, and greater tolerances of the Finnish state towards minority cultures and languages have contributed to the Skolt Sámi cultural and language revitalization (Rantakeisu, 2015, p. 93).

Nowadays, Skolts have much better possibilities to get education even in their own language. Since 1993, a Skolt Sámi language nest experiment has been implemented which helps to teach the language to the youngest generation (Lehtola, 2004a). Sadly, the local society has struggled a long time with unemployment in the Skolt Sámi area. Therefore, a lot of people decided to move down south to the big cities such as Rovaniemi, Oulu or Helsinki. Usually, it is the young people that move down south for better job opportunities (Linkola, 1996).

1.4. Skolt Sámi language in Sevettijärvi

Sevettijärvi-Näätämo is located in the municipality of Inari and is inhabited by approximately 250 people (Tilastotietoa Inarin kunnasta, n.d.). Sevettijärvi was founded in 1949 by fifty-one Skolt Sámi families (Lehtola, 2004a) and is a cultural centre of Skolt Sámi in Finland. The vast majority of the local population speaks Skolt Sámi. Sevettijärvi is very much characterized by Skolt Sámi and Orthodox culture and traditions and it is the only place in the world where the unique Skolt Sámi culture, language and traditions have persisted.

Skolt Sámi (in Skolt Sámi *sää'mkiöll*) language belongs to the Finno-Ugric branch of the Uralic language family. Sámi languages are divided into Western Sámi languages and Eastern Sámi languages. Skolt Sámi belongs to the Eastern Sámi language group together with Inari Sámi, Kildin Sámi, and Ter Sámi (Feist, 2010).

It is recognized that Skolt Sámi has four dialects, two belonging to the northern group and two to the southern group. The northern group consists of the Neiden dialect which is extinct and the Paatsjoki (in Skolt Sámi *Paaččjokk*) dialect, the southern group consists of Suonjel and Notozero-Girvasozero (in Skolt Sámi *Njuõ'ttjäu'rr*) dialects (Sammallahti, 1998). This Skolt Sámi orthography created in the 1970's is based on the Suonjel dialect and is used as the standard dialect (Feist, 2010).

It is estimated that out of 600 Skolt Sámi living in Finland, 250-300 speak Skolt Sámi (Koltansaamen kielestä, n.d.) and according to one of my informants, around 100 people are able to read Skolt Sámi language (Tanja, 2015). According to Jefremoff's findings (2005), 90% of the local population in Sevettijärvi is able to speak Skolt Sámi language. Jefremoff (2005) also shows that Skolt Sámi is usually used in families and with other relatives and neighbors. Quite interesting generational differences in the knowledge of the languages discussed later in the thesis, are summarized by Feist (2010):

A large proportion of the older generation are unable to write in Skolt Saami because the orthography was only developed in the late 1970s. Younger speakers, on the other hand, who learnt the language at school, are likely to have a much better understanding of the writing system, while simultaneously having a much worse grasp of speaking the language (Feist, 2010, p. 24).

More about the context of language use and the language proficiency of the Skolt Sámi population is illustrated below in the figures referring to Jefremoff's findings (2005) and presented in Feist (2010, pp. 24-25).

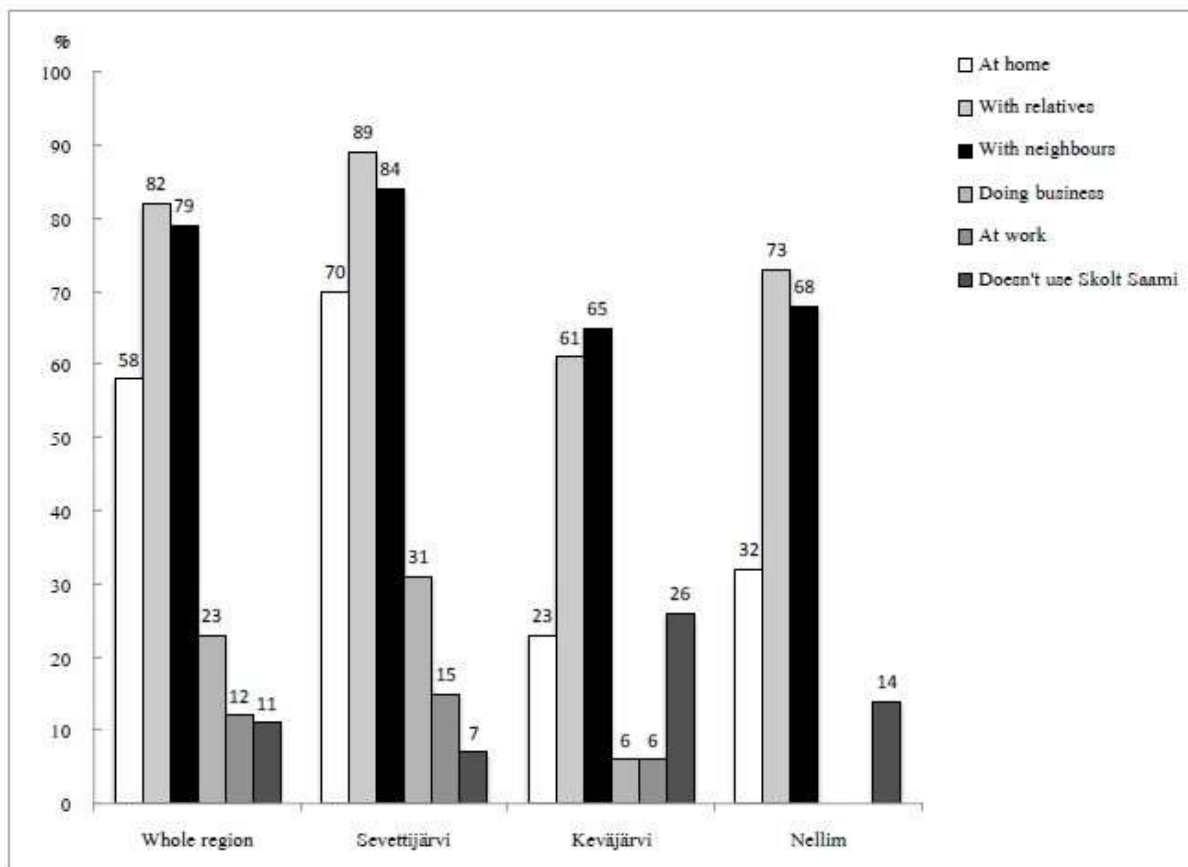


Figure 1: Language use among the Skolt Sámi (Jefremoff, 2005; Feist, 2010, p. 24).

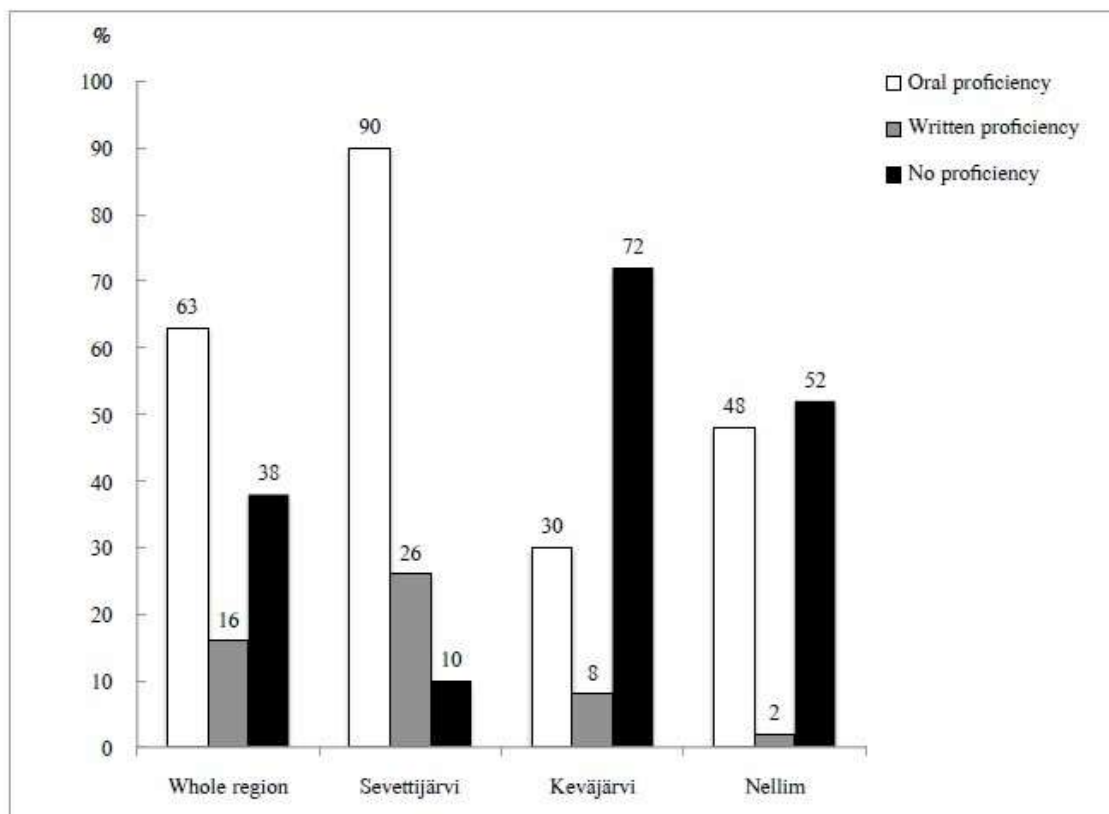


Figure 2: Levels of oral and written language proficiency among the Skolt Sámi (Jefremoff, 2005; Feist, 2010, p. 25).

This brief overview of the sociolinguistic situation and some statistics clearly show the language is spoken especially in informal settings, in families and among friends. The language is consequently used in a much lesser degree in formal settings, such as in business relations and also in the church (Moshnikoff & Moshnikoff, 2006). UNESCO classifies the language as *severely endangered* on the scale *vulnerable – definitely endangered – severely endangered – critically endangered – extinct* (UNESCO Interactive Atlas of the World’s Languages in Danger, n.d.). Even though education in the language and literature and other possibilities for strengthening of the language have increased considerably in the past decades, the social context is adverse to the viability of the language, since young speakers are most likely to move from Skolt Sámi area in search for employment (Feist, 2010). There are, though, also many positive factors such as awareness of issues related to the linguistic and cultural identity, available language resources etc. that give hope to Skolt Sámi language (Feist, 2010). The Orthodox Church as a linguistic arena and its possible contribution to better the prospects of the Skolt Sámi language will be discussed in this thesis.

1.5. Finnish Orthodox Church and the Orthodox Parish of Lapland

Most of the Skolt Sámi people are affiliated with Orthodox Christianity. Orthodox Christianity has around 270 million members around the world, making it the second biggest Christian Church in the world (Ortodoksinen kirkko, n.d.). The Orthodox Church of Finland is an autonomous archdiocese of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople (Ortodoksinen kirkko Suomessa, n.d.). The Orthodox Church of Finland has the status of a national church alongside the Evangelical Lutheran Church. The Finnish Orthodox Church was a part of the Russian Orthodox Church until 1923. Since then, the Orthodox Church of Finland has affiliated with Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople (Laitila, 2014).

The Orthodox Church of Finland has around 60,000 members and is divided into three dioceses – Diocese of Karelia, Diocese of Helsinki, and Diocese in Oulu – that consist of twenty-three parishes in the country (Ortodoksinen kirkko Suomessa, n.d.). One of them is also the Orthodox Parish of Lapland of which the Orthodox community of Sevettijärvi is a part.

The Orthodox Parish of Lapland has around 1,200 members. It was founded in 1950 as the northernmost Orthodox parish in Finland. Since 1980 the Orthodox Parish of Lapland belongs to the Diocese of Oulu (Leo, 1995). The main church of the Orthodox Parish of Lapland together with the church registry office (*kirkkoherranvirasto* in Finnish) is located in Rovaniemi. In the municipality of Inari, there are three other churches where services are held: in Ivalo, in Nellim, and in Sevettijärvi. Moreover, there is also a chapel in Keväjärvi. In the municipality of Inari, the majority of the members of the Orthodox Parish of Lapland are Skolt Sámi (Lapin ortodoksinen seurakunta, n.d.a).

The area of the Orthodox Parish of Lapland is extremely big as shown on the map below (Map 4). Needless to say, this is a challenge for the local Orthodox community. A travelling priest (*matkapappi* in Finnish), together with a cantor live in Ivalo, from where they travel to Sevettijärvi and Nellim to hold the religious services. Services in Sevettijärvi are thus held in average on a monthly basis. Services in Sevettijärvi are held in the local Orthodox church dedicated to St. Triphon that was built as a prayer house in 1950 and consecrated as a church in 1992 (Rantakeisu, 2015).



Map 4: Orthodox dioceses in Finland and parishes of the Diocese of Oulu.⁷

1.6. Skolt Sámi Orthodox religiosity and St. Triphon's tradition

Before Christianization, Skolt Sámi practiced their traditional religion. However, in the 16th century, in order to prevent spread of Lutheranism to the Kola Peninsula, the Russian Orthodox Church, with the support of the Russian state, sent missionaries to convert Sámi people. Among the first that brought Christianity to Sámi people on the Kola Peninsula were preachers such as Feodorit, Triphon and Feognost.

Triphon was especially instrumental, settling in Pechenga, founding a monastery there, and started preaching the gospel to the local Sámi population. Triphon is of substantial importance to the Skolt Sámi people. The legends that were written about him after his death are very much alive in the Skolt Sámi community and are a significant part of Skolt Sámi culture (Leo, 1995). Saint Triphon (1495-1583; in Skolt Sámi *Pââ'ss Treeffan*), born as Mitrophan, is also called “Enlightener of the Sámi” (Saint Tryphon of Pechenga, n.d.). He is a

⁷ The map is scanned from Leo, 1995, p. 59.

central figure in the Skolt Sámi Orthodox legacy. As mentioned above, the church in Sevettijärvi is dedicated to Saint Triphon and the Orthodox Parish of Lapland embraces and honors the legacy of Saint Triphon in other ways as well.

According to the Orthodox tradition, Saint Triphon died on December 15th 1583. This day is commemorated by the Orthodox community and especially by Skolt Sámi people. In Sevettijärvi, there is a special celebration in relation to Saint Triphon's day, both in the church and also in school. This occasion always attracts a high attendance (Rantakeisu, 2015).

The Saint Triphon tradition is also acknowledged by the annual Saint Triphon pilgrimage that takes place the last weekend in August (Leo, 1995). This celebration has very high attendance not only by Skolt Sámi people or Orthodox people living in the Skolt Sámi area, but also Orthodox believers coming from other parts of Finland and even from Russia or Norway. The pilgrimage usually takes place in Keväjärvi, Sevettijärvi, Nellim and in Neiden on the Norwegian side. In 2015, I attended the pilgrimage, which was special since it was the 450th year anniversary of St. George's Chapel in Neiden. According to the Orthodox tradition it was founded by Saint Triphon.

As shown in the next chapter, a wide array of authors mention the importance of the Orthodox Church for Skolt Sámi people. The Orthodox Church has had an important role in the construction of Skolt Sámi identity and it is also an ethnic marker in Finland in contrast to other Sámi groups (Rantakeisu, 2015). I have already mentioned that Skolts often are called a "minority within a minority". This term can be used at more than an ethnical level, but also on a religious level, since the majority of Finns and even other Sámi groups belong to the Lutheran Church. My informants mentioned the Church as an important element of support during the difficult times during and after the World War II. Sergejeva (2000) also writes about the crucial role of the Orthodox religion during and after World War II as quoted in the very beginning of this chapter.

Nonetheless, the role of the Orthodox Church in Skolt Sámi lives has changed. Many Skolt Sámi have converted to the Lutheran Church, the Skolt Sámi community is more heterogeneous in the religious sense, and Orthodoxy is not directly connected to Skolt Sámi ethnicity. Rantakeisu (2015) writes the following:

Orthodoxy is not necessarily anymore considered to be the only typical Skolt Sámi religion – all the respondents mentioned that not being an Orthodox does not diminish one's "Skoltness" (Rantakeisu, 2015, p. 99).

Even though nowadays the attendance at the services on a regular basis has decreased among the Skolt Sámi people and especially among young people, the role of the Orthodoxy is still considered an important part of the Skolt Sámi culture and heritage (Rantakeisu, 2015). One of my informants said the following:

(1)⁸ Orthodoxy is a part of our culture. However, Skolt Sámi are not considered to be religious, not by themselves, neither by outsiders. But the Orthodox Church is a part of our culture. The significance of the Church for the preservation of our culture until these days has been very remarkable. Without the Church, I cannot imagine how... Well, it is based on the fact that the Church gets people together and through this there has always been this sense of community (Tanja, 2015).

The Orthodox Church has been extremely important to the Skolt Sámi culture, history and identity and it still is, even though the Skolt Sámi religiosity has changed. Since the tie between Skolt Sámi people and the Orthodox Church has been so strong, I want to examine the Orthodox Church in Sevettijärvi as a language arena, and as a domain of language use.

⁸ I mark all the quotes from my informants by numbers presented in order of appearance, so that the Finnish original transcriptions are easy to find in the appendices. See the appendix “Original Finnish transcriptions of the interview quotes”. The process of transcription is discussed in 3.2.

2. THEORY

Religion is commonly overlooked in discussions on language revitalization, an ironic fact in that religious ceremonies and cultural activities imbued with spiritual value are often the last domains for a local language which is disappearing (Grenoble & Whaley, 2006, p. 43).

This chapter aims to present the theoretical framework of this Master's thesis as well as previous research. First, previous research on the relationship between the Skolt Sámi people and the Orthodox Church will be presented, also showing the relevance of this study. Subsequently, previous research on the relationship between language and religion will be presented in order to place this study within a larger scientific context. The last part of this chapter will be devoted to a short description of the key concepts of this Master's thesis, and thus the concept of *domains of language use* and other related theoretical terms.

2.1. Previous research on the relationship between Skolt Sámi people and the Orthodox Church and relevance of this study

Even though the Skolt Sámi community accounts for a small population, there have been many studies dealing with the issues of Skolt Sámi revitalization, regarding both cultural and linguistic issues. Yet these studies mention the relationship between Skolt Sámi language and religion only on a marginal level. I have found it very interesting when reading different studies and articles dealing with the Skolt Sámi cultural and language revitalization that authors such as Linkola (1996), Jefremoff (2005), Lehtola (2004a), Sergejeva (2000), Leo (1995), Rantakeisu (2015) and others *repeatedly* express the importance of the Finnish Orthodox Church in *everyday* life of Skolt Sámi.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the Church was an important element of support for the Skolt Sámi and their culture especially during the difficult times during and after World War II.

Orthodoxy has no doubt meant to the Skolt Sámi more than merely religion, since it also has meant an endeavour by them to preserve their own roots in the alien environment. [...] Attempting to preserve themselves as an ethnically internal group, the Skolt Sámi intuitively looked to their Orthodox faith, which distinguished them from the majority population, as did their language. The Church still means a great deal to the Skolt Sámi as a preserver of their culture (Sergejeva, 2000, p. 26).

As the quote above shows, the Church was a unifying element for the Skolt Sámi community. One informant in Jefremoff's (2005) study expresses his or her opinion on the Finnish Orthodox Church as follows:

Orthodoxy is the strongest element for supporting the culture. The Orthodox Church has supported the Skolt Sámi culture and it deserves a great gratitude for that (Jefremoff, 2005, p. 68, my translation from Finnish).⁹

As shown above, Jefremoff (2005) similarly emphasizes the Church as a supportive force for the Skolt Sámi culture. Linkola & Linkola (2000) then state that the Skolt Sámi language and the Orthodox Church are considered to be the symbols of the Skolt Sámi identity.

An informant in Rantakeisu's (2015) Master's thesis is of the same opinion about the Finnish Orthodox Church and mentions also its importance regarding the language: "But it [the church] does support [the culture] ... And it has also developed the language. And is involved in the language work. People hear Skolt language at church" (Rantakeisu, 2015, p. 45). These quotes show that to the Skolt Sámi Orthodoxy is more than merely a religion, for them it is also a marker of their identity and an important supportive element for the preservation of their culture.

Nevertheless, so far no studies have elaborated on the issue of the Finnish Orthodox Church being a domain of language use and its relationship towards Skolt Sámi language. This lack of research and implications of the connection between the Finnish Orthodox Church and language revitalization sparked my interest in exploring this topic further. Before beginning fieldwork, studying the above mentioned literature and also other research gave me some useful background information about the Skolt Sámi history, culture, language and society, as well as the historical context for the relationship between the Orthodox Church and Skolt Sámi people. I very briefly present some of the texts dealing with Skolt Sámi issues that have also connection to my thesis. I present these texts chronologically.

In 1995, an article written by Metropolitan Leo was included in a book dealing with issues of ethnic minorities such as Skolt Sámi people, Karelians and Setos. Metropolitan Leo's article entitled *Kolttien uskontoelämän historia ja nykytila* (in English *The life and the contemporary situation of the Skolt Sámi religious life*) gives a short account on the history of

⁹ Original Finnish text: *Ortodoksisuus on vahvin kulttuuria kantava voima. Ortodoksinen kirkko on tukenut kolttakulttuuria ja ansaitsee siitä suuren kiitoksen.*

Orthodoxy among Skolt Sámi people. It is a good overview of the historical context, important Orthodox holidays celebrated by Skolt Sámi people, the importance of St. Triphon, and basic information about Orthodox Parish of Lapland, language issues, religious literature etc.

In 1996, Anni Linkola wrote her Master's thesis entitled *Koltansaamen nykytilanne vähemmistökielenä Suomessa* (in English *The contemporary situation of Skolt Sámi language as a minority language in Finland*). This thesis is a valuable source of information about Skolt Sámi bilingualism and the Skolt Sámi language situation, and some of the quotes from Linkola's informants are especially interesting. They mention the close connection between language and religion many times. Interestingly, she also mentions the term *domains*, although, when she writes about "Domains of oral Skolt Sámi" (Linkola, 1996, pp. 114-115) (in Finnish *Koltan puhumisen domainit*), she focuses upon home, relatives, friends and work, but she overlooks religion.

As Rantakeisu (2015) mentions, it is Jelena Porsanger who is perhaps a pioneer within the research on the Skolt Sámi religion. Porsanger has studied the Eastern Sámi traditions, religion and history, indigenous methodologies and other related issues. In 2000 she wrote an article entitled *The Eastern Sámi: A short account of their history and identity* (Sergejeva, 2000). In this article, she gives information about the historical milestones for the Eastern Sámi, thus also Skolt Sámi, from olden times up until the end of 20th century. She also discusses the relationship between the Sámi and the Orthodox Church.

In 2005, Irja Jefremoff published *Koltansaamelaiset: tutkimus kotoutetun kansan elämäntilanteesta uuden vuosituhaten alussa* (in English *Skolt Sámi people: research on an acculturated nation's life situation at the beginning of the new millennium*). This research is very special and valuable since it was initiated by the Skolt Sámi themselves - by local Skolt Sámi political structures. The aim of this work is to gain information about Skolt Sámi needs, hopes and opinions. It deals with various topics, such as the economic situation, education, Skolt Sámi language and culture etc.

In 2015, Mira Rantakeisu wrote her Master's thesis entitled *Cultivating a Sense of Belonging - The Orthodox Church as a Part of the Collective Memory of Skolt Sámi in Finland*. This Master's thesis examines the role of the Orthodox Church in the Skolt Sámi culture and presents also generational differences in religiosity.

Even though research dealing with the relationship between the Orthodox Church and Skolt Sámi people is sparse, it has recently increased as shown in the Master's thesis by Mira

Rantakeisu. At the same time, the Finnish Academy has launched a research project called *Embodied religion. Changing Meanings of Body and Gender in Contemporary Forms of Religious Identity in Finland* (Faculty of Theology, University of Helsinki). This project started in 2013 and should be finished in 2017 (Embodied Religion, n.d.). Elina Vuola, manager of the project, focused in her field work on Orthodox Skolt women and their relationship and perceptions of the Virgin Mary (Rantakeisu, 2015).

My Master's thesis aims to contribute to the growing interest in the relationship between the Orthodox Church and the Skolt Sámi people, and to enrich this field by discussing the interaction between the Orthodox Church and Skolt Sámi language.

2.2. Previous research on the relationship between language and religion

The question of the relationship between the Finnish Orthodox Church and the Skolt Sámi language brought me to inquire about the relationship between language and religion in general. Surprisingly, there is also very little literature to be found on this topic. Sawyer (2001a) writes the following in the opening chapter of *Concise Encyclopedia of Language and Religion*: “Language and religion share a very long and a very close history and it is perhaps surprising that this *Concise Encyclopedia of Language and Religion* is first of its kind”¹⁰ (Sawyer, 2001a, p. 1).

The interaction between language and religion occurs on many various levels and can be explored from many different perspectives. Language and religion have influenced each other immensely from time immemorial. Therefore, it is remarkable that the field that deals with the topic of language and religion in particular is relatively new and unexplored. However, the link between the spread of religion and the spread of language is inevitable (Ferguson, 1982). Omoniyi (2006, p. 363) writes that “multilingualism is both a cause and an effect of the spread of religion”. “The topic of ‘language and religion’ is relatively new to sociolinguistics and the systematic development of it as a field of sociolinguistic study only really started to come about in the past decade” (Darquennes & Vandebussche, 2011, p. 1). This quote shows how young and unanchored this field is. The development of the field is clearly presented in the articles *Religion as a Site of Language Contact* by Spolsky (2003) and

¹⁰ It is also worth noting that both religion and language are important markers of ethnonational identity (Safran, 2008). The topic of language, religion and identity is discussed by Safran (2008) and Edwards (2009).

Language and religion as a sociolinguistic field of study: some introductory notes by Darquennes & Vandebussche (2011). I will present just some major contributions to the field of sociology of language and religion so far.

One of the very few scholars that expressed the importance of the interactions between religion and language was Charles Ferguson, one of the founders of the modern sociology of language. His text from 1982 is, as Spolsky states, “probably the basic text on the relationship between religious and linguistic writing systems,” (Spolsky, 2003, p. 82). Ferguson shows that the distribution of major writing systems in the world is in close relationship with the distribution of the world's major religions, which is largely a result of the fact that a spread of a major religion also introduced the use of writing into non-literate communities (Ferguson, 1982). He also draws attention to the intersection of missionary activities and colonization. Furthermore, Ferguson argues that “indirect relation between spread of writing systems gives some indication of the indirect relation between religion and the spread of languages in general” (Ferguson, 1982, p. 96). Ferguson discusses different attitudes of religions towards translations of sacred texts. He assumes “that all religious belief systems include some beliefs about language” (Ferguson, 1982, p. 103). Ferguson also shows how religion plays an important role in language maintenance and language shift and describes how language preferences for corporate worship, religious teaching, or public interaction affects language maintenance and language shift.

Another great contribution to the study of the relationship between language and religion is the above mentioned *Concise Encyclopedia of Language and Religion* (2001). This work is divided into six main sections: 1) language in the context of particular religions, 2) sacred texts and translations, 3) religious languages and scripts, 4) special language uses (for example blessings, curses, prayers, meditation etc.), 5) beliefs about language (for example magical power of names, biblical story of the Tower of Babel etc.) and 6) religion and the study of language. The articles deal with various and quite specific topics, although, as Spolsky (2003, p. 81) underlines, “none deals with bilingualism or multilingualism or language contact or language policy and planning, nor do these terms appear in the extensive index”.

In 2006, Joshua Fishman and Tope Omoniyi edited a volume entitled *Explorations in the Sociology of Language and Religion* that consists of specific studies dealing with interactions between language and religion. Spolsky (2006) suggested the following thematic

structure for this work that is summarized and described in Darquennes & Vandebussche (2011):

1. *Effects of religion on language*: Possible research topics include the influence of religion on language choice, language maintenance as well as (lexical) borrowing.
2. *The mutuality of language and religion*: Research within this dimension deals, for example, with the interplay between religions and languages in the changing sociolinguistic repertoire of multilingual towns. At stake here is the interaction between multilingualism and religious pluralism.
3. *Effects of language on religion*: A possible focus of study is the contribution of language (such as used in prayer, e.g.) to building a religious community.
4. *Language, religion and literacy*: Research within this dimension looks, for example, at the influence of language and religion on literacy (Darquennes & Vandebussche, 2011, p. 4).

Spolsky provides another possible framework for the study of language and religion. This outline clearly reflects a different sociolinguistic perspective from the thematic division of *Concise Encyclopedia of Language and Religion*. However, Spolsky, (2006, p. 7) writing about his own classification admits that such “organization may be parsimonious [...], but it is not terribly revealing, for it is no more than a grouping”. Therefore, Fishman’s (2006) opening of his article *A Decalogue of basic theoretical perspectives for a sociology of language and religion* is: “With respect to basic theory, we stand now in the sociology of language and religion just about where we were relative to the sociology of language per se some 40 or more years ago” (Fishman, 2006, p. 13). Fishman (Ibid.) therefore encourages researchers to find “a theoretical parental home” for the new field of sociology of language and religion. It seems that this attempt to find “a theoretical parental home” has become so far the most promising and stays central in the sociology of language and religion research community.¹¹ Nevertheless, Fishman himself concludes his decalogue with the following words: “These propositions need to be fleshed out, modified, selectively abandoned or added to in order that a theoretically anchored and empirically supported sociology of language and religion can ultimately develop” (Fishman, 2006, p. 24).

Even though scholars now show more interest in the interactions between language and religion, and the field of sociology of language and religion is developing, well-established theoretical principles are still absent. This fact led me to the decision to use

¹¹ The international academic community of sociology of language and religion has a webpage: www.sociologyoflanguageandreligion.com.

theoretical elements from this developing field, but to build my analysis on a well-established theoretical concept of domains of language use.

2.3. The concept of domains of language use

The concept of domains of language use was launched by Joshua Fishman. The first person who proposed the idea of domains was Schmidt-Rohr in the 1930's (Fishman, 1972a). He recommended the following nine domains in order to describe dominance configurations in bilingual settings: the family, the playground and street, the school (subdivided into language of instruction, subject of instruction, and language of recess and entertainment), the church, literature, the press, the military, the courts, and the governmental administration (Fishman, 1965). Subsequently, other researchers either added or removed some domains in their analytical approaches to particular multilingual settings.

Joshua Fishman developed the concept in 1972 recommending five domains: family, friendship, religion, education and employment¹² (Fishman, 1972a). However, “domains are defined, regardless of their number, in terms of institutional contexts and their congruent behavioural co-occurrences. They attempt to summate the major clusters of interaction that occur in clusters of multilingual settings and involving clusters of interlocutors” (Fishman, 1972a, p. 441). Domains of language use are not universal and need to be defined according to the sociocultural context. Still, this concept helps us understand *who* speaks *what* language to *whom* and *when* in multilingual settings. It also helps us to understand why people speak that language in certain situations with certain people instead of others. It deals primarily with “within-group (or intragroup) multilingualism” rather than with “between-group or intergroup multilingualism”. Thus, it deals with multilingual settings in which one single population speaks two or more languages. In such settings “only *one* of theoretically co-available languages *will* be chosen by particular classes of *interlocutors* on particular *occasions*” (Fishman, 1972a, p. 437).

Fishman describes three main factors influencing language choice: group, situation and topic. The first factor is *group membership* (age, sex, race, religion etc.). Fishman gives a hypothetical example of a government functionary in Brussels generally speaking standard French in his office, standard Dutch at his club, and a distinctly local variant of Flemish at home (Fishman 1972a, p. 438). He uses different languages on different occasions according

¹² Work-sphere as a domain was overlooked by Schmidt-Rohr (Fishman, 1972a).

to which group he wants to identify with on particular occasions. Another factor is *situation*. As Fishman argues, “certain languages [...] are considered by particular interlocutors to be an indicator of greater intimacy, informality, equality, etc.” (Fishman, 1965, p. 70). As a result, one of the languages is more likely to be used for certain situations than the other. The third factor is *topic*. Certain topics are handled better in one language than in another, due to different causes (Fishman, 1965).

As Fishman suggests, individual language choices relate to widespread sociocultural norms and expectations. If many individuals tend to handle a certain topic in a certain language, it may be because the topic pertains to a *domain* in which that language is “dominant” for their society or for their sub-group (Fishman, 1965). Fishman (1972b) states the factors influencing domains are *topic*, *role-relation* and *locale*. *Topic*, as described above, regulates language use according to which topics interlocutors are used to handle in which language. In the religious domain, it might be sermons, prayers, confessions, and social topics (Spolsky, 1998). *Role-relation* also influences language choice. For example, Fishman writes that the religious domain may reveal such role relations as cleric-cleric, cleric-parishioner, parishioner-cleric and parishioner-parishioner (Fishman, 1972b). In different role-relations people might choose different languages. Also *locale*, or the place where the conversations take place, influences language choice. In a religious setting, the locale is often a church, for example.

Ultimately, as Fishman writes, “[l]anguage choices cumulate over many individuals and many choice instances, become transformed into the processes of *language maintenance* or *language shift*”¹³ (Fishman, 1965, p. 71). The domain concept has helped to organize and clarify the processes of language maintenance and language shift by revealing certain patterns of language use in different domains.

As describe above, domains of language use are directly dependent on the sociocultural context and thus need to be adjusted to it. The constitution of individual domains in given societies are not universal, even though the theoretical concept helps us to understand larger patterns in language choice and their related phenomena in multilingual settings.

As mentioned earlier in 2.1., Linkola (1996, pp. 114-115) references home, relatives, friends and work as “Domains of oral Skolt Sámi” (in Finnish *Koltan puhumisen domainit*), but she overlooks religion. I will not try to establish all the domains of Skolt Sámi language use in Sevettijärvi, but let us suppose that we can use the division that Fishman proposed in

¹³ These terms are explained in section 2.5. *Key concepts and terms*.

1972: family, friendship, religion, education and employment (Fishman, 1972a). In this thesis, I focus only on the domain of religion, even though the boundaries of this domain are very ambiguous, as will be shown later on. I now explain how I understand and use the concept *domain of language use* in the context of the Finnish Orthodox Church within the community of Sevettijärvi.

Many sociolinguists constitute religion as one single domain of language use. In the context of my thesis, it would be inaccurate to refer to the Finnish Orthodox Church as the entire religious domain of Skolt Sámi language use in Sevettijärvi. Even though the majority of the local population has an Orthodox religious affiliation, at least one other religious group makes up a big number of the population and its percentage increases, namely the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland. Therefore, the Finnish Orthodox Church could be defined as a subdomain within the religion domain of language use, but for the sake of simplicity, I will refer to the Finnish Orthodox Church as a single domain, and the Finnish Orthodox Church as a domain of language use. In many cases, the domain of the Finnish Orthodox Church overlaps or penetrates other domains, such as family, friends, education or media as shown in the next chapters.

2.4. Religion as a domain of language use and its role in language revitalization

Language revitalization, or what Fishman (1991) calls *reversing language shift*, aims to increase the number of speakers of a particular language and extend the domains where it is employed (Grenoble & Whaley, 2006). Thus, it is a large process of social, cultural and political changes that occur in a large number of domains across the society, as mentioned in the introduction. Use of a language in fewer domains is a sign of the lessening vitality of the language. On the other hand, if a language is used in a higher number of domains, it is a sign of strengthening the language vitality (Grenoble & Whaley, 2006).

There have been different studies assessing language vitality, among others a document by UNESCO entitled *Language vitality and endangerment* (Brenzinger et al., 2003) listing nine different factors of language vitality. However, I want to present here a taxonomy developed by Hyltenstam & Stroud (1991) describing factors influencing language shift and language maintenance. Subsequently, I will present a taxonomy of the structural variables affecting ethnolinguistic vitality by Giles (1977).

I. FACTORS AT THE SOCIETAL LEVEL

- a) Political-legal conditions
- b) Ideology of the majority society
- c) Implementation [of minority legislation]
- d) Economic conditions
 - Industrialisation/urbanisation
 - Majority enterprises
 - Communications
 - Labor market
- e) [Visibility of] sociocultural norms [in majority society]
- f) Education

II. FACTORS AT THE GROUP LEVEL

- g) Demography
 - Size
 - Geographical distribution
 - Migration
 - Age distribution
 - Sex distribution
 - Degree of endogamy
- h) Language characteristics
 - Official language
 - Official language in another country
 - Spoken language in more than one [country]
 - Dialect or language split
 - Standardisation/modernisation
 - Degree of bilingualism
 - Proficiencies in each language
 - View of language [prestige & purism]
- i) Heterogeneity/homogeneity
- j) Niches of subsistence/religion
- k) Type of ethnicity [e.g. ethnic nationalism]
- l) Internal organisation [e.g. charismatic leadership]
- m) Institutions
 - Education
 - Religion
 - Language planning
 - Research
 - Culture
- n) Media

o) Culture

III. FACTORS AT THE INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

p) Language choice

q) Socialisation

Figure 3: A taxonomy of factors influencing language maintenance for minority languages developed by Hyltenstam & Stroud (1991, p. 112).¹⁴

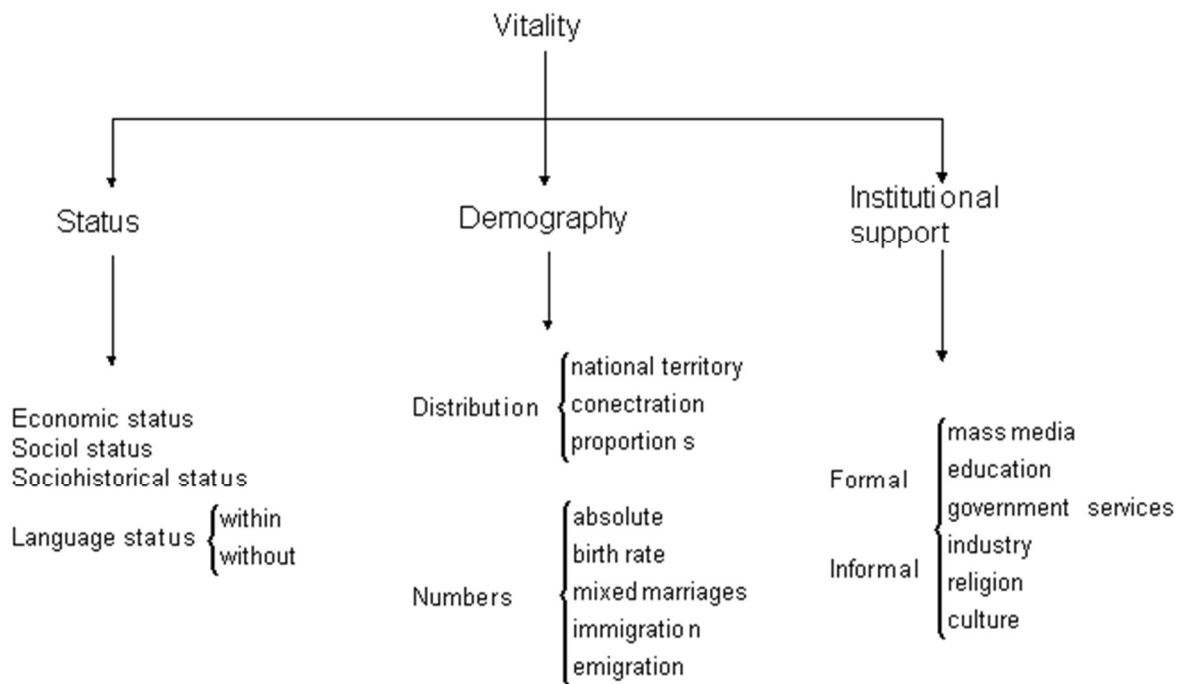


Figure 4: A taxonomy of the structural variables affecting ethnolinguistic vitality.¹⁵

These taxonomies show a bigger picture of various and complex factors affecting language shift, language maintenance, and language vitality. Institutional support is one of the important factors that a language can receive on national, regional or community levels (Giles 1977; Hyltenstam & Stroud, 1991). This thesis deals with the institution of the Finnish Orthodox Church on a local level of the community in Sevettjärvi.

¹⁴ I use the English translation from Swedish of this taxonomy as used in Musk (p. 69, n.d.).

¹⁵ In Giles, 1977, p. 309.

Grenoble & Whaley (2006) aptly remark that overlooking religion in the discussions on language revitalization is ironic. Jenny L. Davis supports this perspective by stating that “[r]eligious dynamics are one important context in which to explore revitalization efforts” (Davis, 2015, p. 1093) and “religious ideologies, practices, and texts often play critical roles in endangered language revitalization” (Davis, 2015, p. 1094). Religion is an important vehicle of language maintenance especially in the communities that see the church as an integral part of their cultural heritage (Woods, 2004) as it also the case of Skolt Sámi.

Religion can play an important role in language maintenance on different levels. It can create a language arena for the use of a minority language, not only at religious services, but also on other occasions or activities. And a minority language used at religious services is a language maintenance factor (Hyltenstam & Stroud, 1991). Use of minority languages at religious services has also a symbolic value and such a use strengthens the minority language and its chances for survival (Tandefelt, 1988). Fishman writes that religion seems to be “very strongly maintenance oriented during earlier stages of interaction and strongly shift oriented once a decision is reached that their organizational base can be better secured via shift” (Fishman, 1965, p. 83). At the same time, use of the minority language also affects the profane domains (Tandefelt, 1988).

Woods (2004) in her Melbourne study of ethnic churches entitled *Medium or Message? : Language and Faith in Ethnic Churches* presents patterns of language use in the religious areas as follows: liturgy, music, prayer, the Bible, sermons, worship style, language, clergy and congregation. In my analysis, I discuss the various aspects of the complex relationship between language and religion in the Finnish Orthodox Church in Sevettijärvi according to the following division: religious literature, religious services, religious education, other communication in the domain of the Orthodox Church (communication between the church and the members through media, between the clergy and parishioners, among parishioners and individual communication with the divine).

2.5. Key concepts and terms

In order to clarify the use of some basic terms in this Master’s thesis, I have decided to present key terms below.

Domain of language use. As mentioned above, Fishman defines domains of language of use as follows: “domains are defined, regardless of their number, in terms of institutional

contexts and their congruent behavioural co-occurrences. They attempt to summate the major clusters of interaction that occur in clusters of multilingual settings and involving clusters of interlocutors” (Fishman, 1972a, p. 441).

The study of *language maintenance* is concerned with stability and changes in language usage patterns and social, cultural and other processes in bilingual communities (Fishman, 1972b).

Language shift is a phenomenon that occurs when a particular individual or a speech community starts to use another primary language. This often means a change from a use of the minority language towards the majority language of a particular area (Šatava, 2009).

Language revitalization or what Fishman (1991) calls *reversing language shift* aims to increase the number of speakers of a particular language and extend domains where it is employed. Revitalization almost always requires changing attitudes of a community about a language (Grenoble & Whaley, 2006).

Language choice denotes a situation or situations in multilingual settings in which “only *one* of theoretically co-available languages *will* be chosen by particular classes of *interlocutors* on particular *occasions*” (Fishman 1972a, p. 437).

Code-switching is a complex phenomenon and definitions and usage of this term varies. I understand this term by the definition that follows. Even though code-switching is not one of the main concepts of my thesis, I use it in Chapter Five.

We define code-switching as the use of two or more linguistic varieties in the same conversation or interaction. The switch may be for only one word or for several minutes of speech. The varieties may be anything from genetically unrelated languages to two styles of the same language. The use of solitary, established loan words or phrases is not considered code-switching (Myers-Scotton & Ury, 1977, p. 5).

Speech community is an important term in sociolinguistics. Such a community comprises speakers in a particular social space (Patrick, 2008). Exactly how to define this term is still very much debated among scholars. The term has been used for both geographically large and small areas, also for class lines etc. (Patrick, 2008). Therefore, I need to clarify, the meaning of the term “speech community” in the context of this thesis. I use the term “speech community” for the Orthodox community in Sevetijärvi.

Identity is a very complex and difficult concept discussed in many different fields within the social sciences. However, the extent of this Master’s thesis does not allow me to discuss the topic from this perspective and it is not the aim of the thesis. Even though I do not

describe the relationship between language and religion from the perspective of the concept of identity, I realize that this notion subtly lies in the background, since both language and religion are one of the most important markers of ethnonational identity.

3. METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

Something that has become apparent to me is that for Indigenous people, research is a ceremony (Wilson, 2008, p. 69).

This chapter focuses on the methodology and methods that I applied when doing my research. Thus, in this chapter I will reflect upon the process of my research and the used methods. The purpose of this chapter is to show the development of the project and mental and methodological foundations of the research. I want to reveal what lies behind the choices I made and what led to the choices of the methods. I also want to show how I conducted the whole research project and reflect upon it.

The main arena for my data collection was fieldwork done in Sevettijärvi and places nearby from 11th August till 31st August 2015.

3.1. Indigenous methodologies

Skolt Sámi are indigenous people and even though I am not indigenous, I decided to develop my project within the framework of indigenous methodologies and I will try to explain the reasons behind it.

Skolt Sámi as indigenous people have experienced a history of colonization, not only in a political or economic sense, but in the broadest meaning of the word itself. W. E. Said wrote: “To be one of the colonised is potentially to be great many different, but inferior things, in many different places, at many different times” (Said, cited in Srinath, 2000, p. 45). Colonization can simply be defined as subjugation of one group by another (Young, cited in Chilisa, 2012, p. 9). The word *subjugation* bears an idea of asymmetrical power relations and an idea of one unit being superior to another subjugated and ‘inferior’ unit. Nonetheless, one might say that during the last century the former colonial powers have lost their influence in colonies that have been decolonized. Such an argument is correct only to some extent.

Linda T. Smith (2012) defines the European form of imperialism as “1) imperialism as economic expansion; 2) imperialism as the subjugation of ‘others’; 3) imperialism as an idea or spirit with many forms of realization; and 4) imperialism as a discursive field of knowledge” (Smith, 2012, p. 22). Thus, the argument stated above could only be applied to two out of four dimensions of imperialism defined by Linda T. Smith.

Colonialism and imperialism, two terms which are interconnected, have indeed caused a great damage to subjugated groups politically, economically, culturally and socially. However, imperialism means more than political and economic influence. It is “a complex ideology which had widespread cultural, intellectual and technical expressions” (MacKenzie, cited in Smith 2012, p. 23). The colonial power is also reflected in more abstract ways such as imposing Euro-Western set of values on indigenous peoples and using this set of values as a measuring scale of reality.

The Euro-Western set of values and assumptions about reality are different. It applies the nature of social reality (ontology), ways of knowing (epistemology), and ethic and value systems (axiology) that are dominant in academia. No doubt that our perception of reality and our assumptions represents a matrix for development of our methods and methodologies, an invisible corner stone of our research activities that we often are not even aware of. Dominant Euro-Western worldview and assumptions about the 'Other' have informed research conducted by outside researchers. As a result, these researches often misrepresented indigenous people and misinterpreted and misused indigenous knowledge. Therefore, indigenous scholars have called for decolonizing the methodologies in order to create methodologies that would serve indigenous peoples better – *indigenous methodologies*.

What does the term “indigenous methodologies” mean? Jelena Porsanger (2004) defines it as follows:

Indigenous methodologies should be designed to ensure that the intellectual property rights of indigenous peoples will be observed; to protect indigenous knowledge from misinterpretation and misuse; to demystify knowledge about indigenous peoples; to tell indigenous peoples' stories in their voices; to give credit to the true owners of indigenous knowledge; to communicate the results of research back to the owners of this knowledge, in order to support them in their desire to be subjects rather than objects of research, to decide about their present and future, and to determine their place in the world (Porsanger, 2004, p. 117).

Does it mean that we should completely abandon and condemn Western knowledge systems and Western research methods and methodologies? I am not of that opinion. Linda T. Smith describes that decolonization of the research rather means “centring [indigenous] concerns and worldviews and then coming to know and understand theory and research from [indigenous] perspectives and for [indigenous] purposes” (Smith 2012, p. 41). This understanding of the term “indigenous methodologies” became the key for my project and informed this work from the very beginning. To paraphrase Linda T. Smith, the main goal of

this project is to centre Skolt Sámi concerns and worldviews and to do research from Skolt Sámi perspectives and for Skolt Sámi purposes. Further in the chapter specific information on processes used to achieve this commitment are discussed and I elaborate on my methods, their use, ethics, reflexivity etc.

3.2. Methods

Methods as tools for data collection are an important part of the methodology (Chilisa, 2012). In order to answer the research questions in the best possible way, it is important to choose the best fitting methods, methods that would also help to show concerns of the local community. In this part of the chapter, I show what methods I chose, what led me to these decisions, why it is reasonable to use these methods in order to answer the research questions, and how the methods were used in the fieldwork.

Prior to the formulation of the research questions I tried to get as much relevant information about the subject and historical context as possible from the literature. The process of getting more information about the subject continued after the formulation of the research questions also. However, as the ideas about the whole project began forming more clearly, I turned my focus towards specific methods that would help me towards the goal. Therefore, I started doing research about methods that might be best fitting for my fieldwork.

At the same time, I wanted to do sensitive research that would reflect Skolt Sámi perspectives. Therefore, several months before my fieldwork, I tried to contact some local people that would be able to help me. I contacted some individuals, but also a Skolt Sámi cultural organization called *Saa'mi Nue'tt*. I did so by email, introducing myself and my project and asking them for advice and reflections concerning my project. I thought that this might potentially lead towards a collaborative work that representatives from the Finnish Orthodox Church might participate in. In any case, I wanted to involve members of the local community as much as possible from the very beginning. Unfortunately, I got an answer from my informant that *Saa'mi Nue'tt* was in a dormant stage. Nevertheless, she was very kind and willing to help me later on. I also contacted a friend of a friend who is from Sevettijärvi and this contact provided me some information that I was not able to find in the literature.

After a careful examination of the methods and discussion with my supervisor, I chose two main methods – qualitative semi-structured interviews and participatory observation. I

believe these methods were convenient tools in order to answer the research questions and to reflect local perspectives.

Semi-structured interviews “are focused interviews that have questions contained in an interview guide” (Chilisa, 2012). Prior to arriving in my fieldwork, I created such an interview guide. This interview guide was divided into four different main parts that were focused on how frequently Skolt Sámi is used in church, to what extent it is visible in different communication channels, how informants use Skolt Sámi and in which situations, and how they perceive the Finnish Orthodox Church and its role in the process of revitalization. The interview guide was written in Finnish and it is included in the appendices together with its English translation.¹⁶ I tried to formulate simple questions, free from academic terminology as Kvale & Brinkmann (2009) recommend. I also consulted with people that have a better knowledge of Finnish on the the questions as I developed them. I also made some adjustments after the first interviews, when I realized that some questions could be better formulated. Ultimately, I hope this thesis is written in an understandable and accessible way for the wider public.

Even though my interview guide was ready prior to my arrival, I changed it during the first week of my fieldwork before conducting interviews. The essence of the interview guide remained the same, but some questions regarding factual information, for example, questions regarding what religious literature has been translated into Skolt Sámi was redundant since I had obtained this knowledge from the literature or during informal interviews. The updated interview guide was more focused on personal experiences and individual understandings of the themes. During interviews, the guide was not followed very strictly. I did not use the same order of questions or and did not even ask the same questions in every interview. It depended very much on the situation and the natural flow of interviews. This also allowed me to be flexible in asking follow-up questions. Nevertheless, I always covered the four main parts of the interview guide. My main interest was to get the perspectives of the informants and I encouraged them to talk about what they think is important. I always asked them at the end of the interviews if there was something else they would like to add, emphasize, or to talk about that they considered important.

The interviews were recorded on a voice recorder with oral permission of my informants after I informed them about the project and about their rights to withdraw from it. Later on, I transcribed these interviews and translated them into English. In the transcriptions

¹⁶ See the appendices nr. 3 and 4.

of the original Finnish texts I maintained the dialectical differences from the standard Finnish and also filler words. The pauses in speech are marked by “...” (as for example in quote nr. 14). The symbol “[...]” denotes the parts of the speech that was left out for the sake of text economy. It was done so only if the left out parts did not change the meaning of the statement. Original Finnish transcriptions of the interview quotes used in this thesis are included in the appendices (nr. 5).

The flexibility of semi-structured interviews was the main reason I chose this format. I believe it allowed my informants to express what they personally felt was important in the contemporary situation and what should be done in the future. Later interviews showed more and more similarities in informants’ answers and revealed patterns existing in the domain of the Finnish Orthodox Church. Similar or even repetitive answers then pointed towards data saturation.

Another method that was essential for my research was *participatory observation*. As Kvale & Brinkmann (2009) state, if one wants to examine people’s behavior and their interaction, observation and informal interviews might give more relevant information than formal interviews. This was one of the reasons why I started with informal interviews and observation prior to doing semi-structured interviews. The second reason was to get to know the community and the environment of my fieldwork. Participatory observations allowed me, for example, to experience the setting of liturgies together with some of my informants and to be better acquainted with the context of the local services, helping me better understand some specific concepts that my informants spoke about in the interviews later on. Nonetheless, participatory observation had its limitations and could be used only in some areas of the diverse domain of the Finnish Orthodox Church.

The main arena for implying this method was the Pilgrimage of St. Triphon described in the introduction. This event took place from the 21st to the 23rd August. The first day, the events were located in Keväjärvi, the second day in Sevettijärvi and in Neiden in Norway and the last day in Sevettijärvi. I participated in all events that took place in Sevettijärvi and also decided to take part in the events in Neiden, because a lot of people from Sevettijärvi went there as well.

When observing the events, I was writing down information and impressions in my notebook and in my fieldwork journals. I also used a camera for taking pictures. These tools helped me not only in the data collection, but also in my reflexivity and later analysis and my impression and understanding of the subject was later also discussed with my informants.

As Chilisa (2012) writes:

The researcher is the main data collection instrument. The researcher also analyses, interprets, and reports the findings. It is important, therefore, that the researcher's thoughts, feelings, frustrations, fears, concerns, problems, and ideas are recorded throughout the study. Qualitative researchers keep a record of these observations in journals. A journal serves as a diary that records all events that affect the way the study is conducted, analysis is made, interpretation is reached, and conclusions are made (Chilisa, 2012, p. 168).

Since the collected data needs to be analyzed and I am fully responsible for the analysis, it is utterly important to see factors that influence my analysis. My journal and notebook were useful tools not just when it came to writing down actual information, but also what lay behind it – settings, body language of the people I talked to etc. In later work with the analysis, it helped me to see what might have influenced my own interpretation based on my first impressions, mood, and other factors affecting my very first analysis.

When I came back from the fieldwork, I transcribed the interviews and subsequently used thematic analysis in order to organize my data and identify the main themes. I went through the stages of familiarization with the data, coding, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes and writing up back and forth (Mann, 2016). Through this process I found patterns that defined the categories already mentioned in 2.4.: religious literature, religious services, religious education, other communication in the domain of the Orthodox Church (communication between the church and the members through media, between the clergy and parishioners, among parishioners and individual communication with the divine). I decided to have separate chapters for the data itself and its analysis, so that the reader himself or herself can make their own judgement solely on the basis of the data.

3.3. Fieldwork

As I wrote earlier in this chapter, I had established some contacts prior to coming to Sevetijärvi who gave me tips for people with knowledge about the subject. This approach to data collection is called “snowball sampling”. Chilisa (2012) describes this method as follows:

In this approach, the researcher selects a few participants who have the information that is important for the study. These selected participants help identify others who they believe have knowledge or information on the phenomenon under study (Chilisa, 2012, p. 169).

Before I came to Sevettijärvi, I had planned to interview Tanja, Erkki and Rauno. They and others helped me find people that might give me relevant information for my research and I am very grateful to all of them (see section 3.4.). The main criteria in search for my informants were their connections with Sevettijärvi and the Finnish Orthodox Church. All of my informants are Orthodox, the majority of them are Skolt Sámi also with different levels of the Skolt Sámi proficiency. All of my informants have lived or worked in Sevettijärvi.

The first two weeks that I spent in Sevettijärvi, I focused on informal interviews and participatory observations as described above, and visiting local museums. Three weeks in Sevettijärvi was not a long time, but I first wanted to be acquainted with the community and get to know a bit better the people I wanted to interview and also to explain to them the purpose of my study. I asked the people that I wanted to interview beforehand, if I could interview them at a time and place that would be most convenient for them. All the people that I asked agreed to have an interview after I informed them about the purpose of the project and what types of questions it involved. Only one person that I asked said no, since the person believed there were people with better knowledge of the subject. However, this person was very helpful in many other ways. I was also given helpful information and literature by a number of individuals.

The last week of my fieldwork, I focused on recording qualitative interviews that were always arranged beforehand (with the exception of the first one with the travelling priest that I met during the pilgrimage; he had a busy program the week after, so he agreed that I could interview him right away). I interviewed 10 persons of different ages and genders. Their short presentation is given later in this chapter. All the interviews took place in Finnish. Most people were interviewed in Sevettijärvi, but some were interviewed in Nitsijärvi, Ivalo and Inari. Some interviews were longer, some were shorter, but on average, one interview took between 30 and 40 minutes. The longest interview took almost an hour and a half, the shortest around 15 minutes. The informants were interviewed at the time and in venues they chose, which usually was either in their homes or work places. The format was one to one interviews, between interviewer and informant. There was one exception and that was the interview with Erkki and his wife Aulikki.

All the informants received an explanation on the purpose of the interviews and were informed about the process that would follow. They were also encouraged to ask me anything, anytime, and also about myself, so that it would not be only me asking sometimes very personal questions about them. I asked for a permission to record the interviews and was given permission by all informants. I told the informants that if there would be any question they did not want to answer, this was no problem. I did not want them to feel uncomfortable in any way. I also informed them that if they changed their minds after the interview, when it comes to publication of their interviews, they have all the right to retract their interviews and I would fully respect that. I also informed them that before publication, I would send them the parts of the interviews that I want to use in my thesis both in Finnish and with its English translations, together with the context in which they are used. I told them I would be glad to receive their eventual comments.

After my fieldwork in Sevettijärvi, I contacted some of my informants by email, if I needed some clarification or if I needed to ask some extra questions. These quotes are from 2016.

3.4. Informants

Western and indigenous ways of conducting research sometimes differ. This is also a case of the question of anonymity of informants. Whereas in Western research, it is against ethical guidelines to publish statements of informants under their real names, in indigenous research this issue is often understood differently. Wilson (2008) for example argues that “participants did not want anonymity because they understood that the information imparted, or story offered, would lose its power without knowledge of the teller” (Wilson, 2008, p. 130). This is the reason why informants often do not want to be anonymous (Chilisa, 2012).

The question of anonymity was, of course, a big issue of my ethical considerations. I was also aware of the fact that the Skolt Sámi community is very small and everybody knows everybody. My priority was to respect the individual’s decisions on anonymity. All my informants were advised about this issue during the interviews. Also, after some discussions with my friends and colleagues, I felt that it would be difficult for my informants to decide before or right after the interview if they would rather like to stay anonymous or not. This issue was therefore discussed later. When I wrote the draft of my thesis, I sent quotes used in the thesis to all my informants, both in Finnish and in English. They were also given the

context in which the quotes are used. Together with that, I sent them the Finnish abstract of the whole thesis found in the appendices. The informants were asked how I could refer to them and I sent them my suggestion. I also asked them if there is something I should change in the sent text. After this discussion, I made the adjustments proposed by my informants.

“Once decontextualized, stories may lose their meaning” (Petrone, cited in Kuokkanen, 2000, p. 425). Therefore, I use real names of my informants because it connects real stories to real people, and last but not least, it connects me to my informants. I also perceive it as a way to honor these people and their work. I do so with the informed consent of all of my informants. Another factor behind this decision was the fact that it would be impossible to completely anonymize some of my informants that are known through their roles in this little community. I would have handled this issue differently, if my data revealed some internal conflicts. In that case, the consequences of using real names might have been damaging. I also notified Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD) about the handling of personal data in this project, which is registered at NSD with the project number 50325.

My informants, whom I consider to be my fellow researchers or field partners are following: Rauno, the contemporary travelling priest; Maaria, singer; Erkki, the former travelling cantor; Aulikki, a former churchwarden in Ivalo; Merja, translator; Aaro, employee in the Skolt Sámi Heritage House; Seija, teacher; Tanja, village representative; Sergei, former village representative; Teijo, local businessman. I interviewed five men and five women, the youngest was 19, the oldest 76. I interviewed one person from the age group 18-30 years old, two persons from the age group 30-45 years old, three persons from the age group 45-60 years old and four persons from the age group 60+ years old. All of them have lived or worked in Sevettijärvi and are Orthodox. The majority of them are Skolt Sámi.

Nevertheless, the question that rises is, how do the opinions of my informants represent the whole community? I was very surprised that often the answers of my informants were quite similar. Even though my data has a high degree of consistency, we should keep in mind that there may also be other voices and opinions on the topic in the community that are not represented here.

3.5. Ethics and reflexivity

Research has huge power. It has the power to label, name, condemn, and describe (Chilisa 2012). Therefore, researchers have the responsibility to carefully think about research processes and outcomes, keeping in mind indigenous peoples' interests, experiences and knowledge (Porsanger, 2004). Such a degree of power and responsibility calls for a high standard of ethical competence. As Clegg and Slife state, "every research activity is an exercise in ethics" (Clegg & Slife 2009, cited in Chilisa 2012. p. 171). Such an understanding of research activity accumulates other virtues such as respect and humility. In my opinion, these qualities should inform the whole research process from the formulation of research questions to the final dissemination.

I tried to be even more careful about doing my research in a sensitive way since the topic of my thesis is very sensitive itself. It deals with language and religion, which are components of one's identity. Some questions related to very intimate issues, like the language of one's prayers. Therefore, I focused on prioritizing both concerns of individuals and of the community, and protecting them from any physical, mental or psychological harm (Chilisa, 2012). I never pressed anyone to answer any question and if I saw hesitation, I reminded my informants that they did not have to answer questions, unless they felt comfortable about it. Part of my ethical considerations was, of course, showing knowledge of and respect for religious traditions and rituals. Such a task required gaining knowledge about Orthodox Christianity, especially in the Finnish and Skolt Sámi context beforehand. When I was not sure about something, I simply asked someone if my actions were culturally sensitive or not. For example, in St. George's chapel in Neiden, I was not sure if it was appropriate to take pictures inside or not. A knowledgeable person told me that it would be inappropriate and that I could buy a postcard instead. Therefore, I did not take any pictures there.

To conduct culturally sensitive research was a great responsibility and a big challenge, especially due to the fact that my position in this research was one of an outsider. Such a position has its advantages and disadvantages. As an outsider, I did not have to deal with role duality, or did not have tendencies to pre-judge things. However, I believe that being an outsider in this case had more disadvantages than advantages. I am not a Skolt Sámi, I do not belong to the community of Sevettijärvi, I am not a Sámi, I am not even indigenous, nor an Orthodox Christian. In addition to that, I am a young researcher with lack of fieldwork experience. These disadvantages might have made it more difficult for me to acquire trust of

the members of the local community. Being aware of the issues of the Skolt Sámi community and partly the beliefs of the Orthodox Church and the will to use this awareness in order to help the Skolt Sámi community in Sevettijärvi, made me an ally at best. And this is the role and position with which I wanted to enter the local community and with which I wanted to start doing the research: as an ally and as a (fellow) researcher eager to learn from the local community, giving them voice and creating a project that should not stay only in academic libraries but could be useful for the local community.

Another issue related to being an outsider is the language. As already mentioned in the introduction, 90% of the people living in Sevettijärvi speak Skolt Sámi (Jefremoff, 2005). Unfortunately, I do not speak Skolt Sámi even though I would definitely like to learn the language in the future. Another problem was the different levels of Skolt Sámi language proficiency among my informants. Another option was to use English for the interviews, since the thesis is submitted in English. The problem though is that it is not the first, nor the second language of the Skolt Sámi people. Therefore, I was afraid that it would not be natural for them to express themselves in English, and there would be a lot of information they would not be able to express. That is why I decided to conduct the interviews in Finnish, which is the language that everyone speaks in Sevettijärvi; it is even the first language of many. I studied Finnish language and literature at the Charles University in Prague and also at the University of Oulu. However, even though I can speak the Finnish language, I am not a native speaker, and therefore the voice recorder was a very useful tool for the later analysis of nuances in the language. Some things were also discussed with informants or native Finnish speakers, especially the translations used in the thesis.

Local knowledge is an invaluable source of information. At the same time, it has to be handled very carefully. To give space and voice to local knowledge is one thing, but to correctly present this knowledge is another extremely important aspect. Especially in the context of indigenous people, their knowledge has a long history of misuse and misrepresentation. Presented knowledge from informants should accurately reflect their opinion and truly represent their voice, so that it benefits the indigenous community. Therefore, I tried to assess during the interviews that I correctly understood the purpose of their statements and continue this examination later by sending informants the parts of the interviews that I use in the thesis.

In my opinion, it is of utmost importance to protect indigenous knowledge, not only to take away but also to give something back and to firstly prioritize indigenous benefit. As

Wilson (2008, p. 77) writes, “[r]espect, reciprocity and responsibility are key features of any healthy relationship and must be included in an Indigenous methodology.”

As mentioned above, this thesis is dedicated to the Skolt Sámi community and its purpose is to serve the Skolt Sámi community. Nevertheless, the thesis is in English. Therefore, I decided at least to write an abstract in Finnish (see appendix nr. 2) that is also translated into Skolt Sámi (see appendix nr. 1), so that Skolt Sámi people whose first language is Skolt Sámi can get at least basic information about my thesis in their mother tongue. The submission of this thesis does not mean the end of this project for me. I hope to discuss the thesis and its implications with the members of both the Skolt Sámi and the Orthodox community.

3.6. Research is a ceremony

On August 30th the day before I left my fieldwork, I wrote in my fieldwork journal: “The research was a ceremony. It was transformative, it was like a ritual.” I was referring to Wilson’s work *Research is Ceremony* (2008) that I had read half a year before I left for my fieldwork. If it was transformative for someone else, I do not know, even though I hope my project has had or will have some impact, no matter the scale. But the project has definitely been transformative for me.

Wilson (2008) writes that for indigenous people, research is a ceremony; it is raising of one’s consciousness. And this is how I felt it, especially through interactions with other people in the community. From the very beginning of the planning of the project, I wanted it to be something that others could benefit from. I wanted to do something that would be meaningful for the local community. But I have had my doubts. When I came to Sevettijärvi, I was asking myself all the time: “Is this something that the people here care about? Am I just doing this for myself or academia?” I wanted to do something especially for the community and with the community. Even though it might sound bizarre I have developed quite a strong relationship towards the subject. And during the time in Sevettijärvi, I have developed a very special relationship towards the place and towards the people living there. Wilson (2008, p. 73) writes that “[...] an object or thing is not as important as one’s relationships to it”. This is also an understanding I have developed; knowledge is relational, and everything needs to be understood in its context and relationships. “We could not be without being in relationship

with everything that surrounds us and is within us. Our reality, our ontology is in the relationships” (Wilson, 2008, p. 76).

The most powerful moment during my fieldwork and also a moment when my relationship towards my subject changed, was when one of the members of the local community and my friend thanked me for what I was doing and told me that in her opinion the research is important. Others also appreciated what I did and I repeatedly expressed my appreciation for their work in their community. I felt that this mutual appreciation for each other’s work strengthened my relationship with the individuals, with the community, with the subject of my thesis. Every relationship consists of at least two parts. My research was a set of relationships consisting of many parts. I was one of them. My informants were also part of them and without them the project could not be done. The project also consisted of other living and non-living objects which were essential to the whole research process. I was just a portion of the research, neither insignificant, nor more important than other parts.

4. EMPIRICAL CHAPTER

(2) *Nowadays it feels already really natural, for example, that liturgies are conducted at least partly in Skolt Sámi. And I remember that earlier the church songs were in Skolt Sámi conducted by the cantor, they were used and learned and also the parish takes part in the liturgies and sings those songs. But then little by little we started to hear [Skolt Sámi] also in the priestly acts, there the language started to appear and that surely got attention because, they [priests] used officially our own language (Merja, 2015).*

The domain of language use within the Orthodox Church in Sevettijärvi consists of many diverse layers and very complex dynamics. I will focus on the contemporary situation, but I will also outline the development of the last decades since the pre-war times. In order to understand the contemporary situation, one needs to understand the historical and cultural context that I introduced in chapter one.

This chapter is based on my fieldwork, which consisted of qualitative interviews and participant observation. This text aims to present the data collected in my fieldwork.

4.1. Religious literature in Skolt Sámi language

As mentioned in chapter one, The Orthodox Parish of Lapland (*Lapin ortodoksinen seurakunta* in Finnish) consists of approximately 1,200 members (Ortodoksinen kirkko Suomessa, n.d.). The main language of the Finnish Orthodox Church is Finnish. However, the Finnish Orthodox Church has been very active in past decades in providing written materials for other language minorities in the country including the Skolt Sámi people.

First of all, we have to keep in mind the historical context of the written Skolt Sámi language. Up until the 1970's, the Skolt Sámi language existed among the Skolt Sámi people themselves only in oral form (Kirjakielen kehityksestä, n.d.) although the first attempts to create a written Skolt Sámi came much earlier. In 1884 a priest called Konstantin Ščekoldin translated the Gospel of Matthew into Skolt Sámi¹⁷ written in the Cyrillic alphabet (Sergejeva, 2000).¹⁸ Nevertheless, the first systematic attempts to create a Skolt Sámi orthography came in the 1970's. At that time Skolt Sámi orthography was created (the Skolt Sámi language,

¹⁷ In this thesis, I do not focus on this attempt for the following reasons. This attempt took place under the rule of the Russian Empire and also in the domain of the Russian Orthodox Church. Also the orthography that was used by the Skolt Sámi themselves came much later.

¹⁸ This Skolt Sámi language was based on Paatsjoki dialect (Kirjakielen kehityksestä, n.d.).

orthography and literature, n.d.) and since then it has developed. Skolt Sámi uses the Latin alphabet.

According to Tanja, who is the village representative, nowadays there are less than 100 readers of the language. For example, the older generation of Skolt Sámi people can often speak Skolt Sámi very well, but they do not read in Skolt Sámi. In contrast, the younger generation learns the Skolt Sámi orthography in school, but do not speak as often and not as well as the older generation. Thus, abilities of language comprehension and production in written and oral forms often varies according to the age group. One should also note that there are still some internal disagreements about the orthography within the Skolt Sámi community, since the Skolt Sámi language has had several different dialects and the Skolt Sámi orthography was based on the dialect of Suonjel (the Skolt Sámi language, orthography and literature, n.d.).

In 1981, the General Assembly of the Orthodox Church of Finland instructed Metropolitan Leo, who is now the Archbishop of the Finnish Orthodox Church, to take initiative in launching a prayer book in Skolt Sámi that is also used during liturgies by the choir (Rantakeisu, 2015). This work was done in 1983, thus exactly 400 years after St. Triphon's death, becoming the first religious book published in modern Skolt Sámi. It is a prayer book which name in Skolt Sámi is *Risttoummi mo'lidvaķe'rii* (in English *Small prayer book*). This prayer book was later revised, and it is also worth noting that the hymns found in the prayer book have been also recorded in Skolt Sámi and are available for purchase. One of the translators was Erkki Lumisalmi, who was also a cantor in the Orthodox Parish of Lapland from 1983 until 2014. Erkki told me that in the beginning of the 1980's, Metropolitan Leo instructed him to use Skolt Sámi as much as possible. Use of Skolt Sámi language during religious services will be discussed further later in the chapter.

Another religious book that was published in Skolt Sámi was the Gospel of John (in Skolt Sámi *Evvan evaņķe'lium*) in 1988. Gospel of John is the first ever translated part of the Bible into Skolt Sámi and it is a result of the cooperation between devoted Skolt Sámi translators, the Finnish Orthodox Church and the Finnish Bible Society (in Finnish *Suomen Pipliaseura*) (Vähemmistökielet, n.d.).

For decades, there has been a special committee working on translating church texts into Skolt Sámi (The Skolt Sámi language, orthography and literature, n.d.). When I talked to Erkki, he said that nowadays there is an ongoing work on the translation of the Gospel of Luke. The goal is to translate all the four gospels into Skolt Sámi and this project is

coordinated by the Finnish Bible Society. Translation of the gospels or one day even the whole Bible into Skolt Sámi will be an enormous task, but such work is important for the Skolt Sámi Orthodox community and also for the Skolt Sámi language. The importance of the Bible translation into Skolt Sámi was mentioned by some of my informants and its significance will be further discussed in the next chapter.

A very important part of the Orthodox church tradition is liturgy (Grande, 2009). The Orthodox Church is conservative when it comes to liturgies. Orthodox liturgies as they are known nowadays have been the same, with few minor changes for centuries. Usually, the Orthodox Church uses the liturgy of John Chrysostom. This was also translated into Skolt Sámi in 2002 for the use of clergy (in Skolt Sámi *Pââ's E'ččen Evvan Krysostomoozz liturgia*). More on the matter of its use will be discussed later in the chapter.

However, we should not forget the texts primarily targeting youth. For example, various stories are published for children in Skolt Sámi whose main character is St. Triphon. These books are also used in language nests. Additionally, in 1999 a handbook was published of the Orthodox faith in Skolt Sámi translated by Erkki Lumisalmi that was originally written by Kalevi Kasala. Its name in Finnish is *Ortodoksisuuden mitä, miten, miksi - kirkkotiedon käsikirja* (in Skolt Sámi *Ortodokslažvuõđ mâi'd, mōõzz, mä'htt - ceerkavteâđ kēârjjaž*) which translated into English means *What, why and how in Orthodoxy*. The Skolt Sámi handbook is richly illustrated and contains the basics about Orthodoxy and is also meant to be a supportive teaching material for the religious classes at school. There are also other teaching materials in Skolt Sámi that are in the process of preparation.

4.2. Orthodox services

I will devote this section to the question of the use of Skolt Sámi language at Orthodox services. The purpose is to look closely at which situations and how often the Skolt Sámi language is spoken by the Orthodox Church in Sevettijärvi. Naturally, the largest focus will be on liturgies, but I will also mention other services and rituals that are also an important part of the Orthodox life, such as marriage services, burial services, and house blessings. I will focus especially on the contemporary situation of the use of Skolt Sámi language in the church in Sevettijärvi.

4.2.1. The context of Orthodox services

As explained in Chapter One, the Orthodox community in Sevetijärvi is a part of the Orthodox Parish of Lapland. Since it is a big territory, the priest and the cantor travel around the parish. Therefore, liturgies are not served in Sevetijärvi on a weekly basis. The priest comes to Sevetijärvi on average once a month to serve the Divine Liturgy (which is what is called “Mass” in the West or also sometimes in the evening the service called the All-night vigil).

Liturgy plays a vitally important role in lives of Orthodox believers, even more important than in the Catholic or Protestant context. As Grande (2009) states, it is the most important element among Orthodox believers. Orthodox liturgy, in which people assemble together to worship and pray in a joined body, has a long tradition. There are several types of liturgies used nowadays within Eastern Christianity. Those countries were converted to Christianity from Constantinople use Byzantine rites. Liturgies within this rite were fixed by canon law in 6th century and have further developed since that time. They persisted into the present with only a few minor changes. The most celebrated liturgy within the Byzantine Rite is the one of Saint John Chrysostom originating from the 5th century AD (Fortescue, 1908).

The Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom is divided into three main parts - liturgy of preparation, liturgy of catechumens, and liturgy of faithful. Orthodox liturgies are almost entirely sung, including reading from the Scriptures; thus music is an integral part of liturgies. The exception is homily, which means the commentary on the preceding reading from the Scriptures. Important parts of the liturgies is also a cantor, thus the lead singer in the church and also a choir. Other people in the church can join the singing and the liturgy then represents a dialogue between the clergy and church member. The Orthodox chanting tradition is very old and rich, and the chants are sung *a cappella*, or without instrumental accompaniment (Kirkkolaulu, n.d.).

4.2.2. Factors enabling use of Skolt Sámi language at Orthodox services

Use of Skolt Sámi language in the church is closely connected with translations of religious books into Skolt Sámi. As stated in the discussion of religious literature in Skolt Sámi, it was in the beginning of the 1980's when Metropolitan Leo initiated launching of the prayer book in Skolt Sámi that was published in 1983. The very same year Erkki Lumisalmi started to

work as a travelling cantor in the Orthodox Parish of Lapland. These two factors meant the beginning of Skolt Sámi usage in the Orthodox Parish of Lapland. Since this time Skolt Sámi language has belonged to the Orthodox church in Sevettijärvi.

In 2002, the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom was published in Skolt Sámi language (the northern part of Lapland's Orthodox parish, n.d.). This enables that Skolt Sámi language can also be used by the priest performing liturgical acts that are fixed. Therefore, Skolt Sámi language can be heard not only from the cantor, the choir, and the members of the parish, but also from the priest. This is relatively new due to several reasons. One of them is that the liturgy in Skolt Sámi has been available since 2002, the second reason is that the priests have been Finnish with no training in Skolt Sámi. The courses in Skolt Sámi language started quite recently at the Sámi Education Institute in Inari (in Finnish *Saamelaisalueen koulutuskeskus*). In 2015, one of the graduates of the Skolt Sámi language and culture program was Anneli Pietarinen, a contemporary cantor in the Orthodox Parish of Lapland, a Finn and also the wife of the contemporary travelling priest Father Rauno¹⁹. The options of Skolt Sámi language courses as a part of secular education are essential for the existence and further development of Skolt Sámi language in the religious domain.

Fr. Rauno took a basic online course in Skolt Sámi. This enables him to perform the liturgical acts in Skolt Sámi according to the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom. The fact that the format of Orthodox liturgy is fixed enables the priest to use Skolt Sámi to quite a large extent, even though his knowledge of Skolt Sámi language is not extensive. Also the Skolt Sámi translation of the Gospel of John makes it possible for it to be used whenever a reading from this gospel is to be read during liturgy according to liturgical year and its cycle of reading. Knowledge of the Skolt Sámi language limits the priest only when he is about to give a homily.

4.2.3. Use of Skolt Sámi language at Orthodox services

When I attended the liturgy in Sevettijärvi during the Pilgrimage of St. Triphon, the service was extraordinary in many ways. First, attendance was high. The relatively small church of Sevettijärvi was full of people. Dozens of people attended the liturgy and some even had to stand in the doorway. Secondly, the number of languages used during the liturgy was higher than usual, which was also due to visitors from Africa, Russia, and Norway. Therefore, people

¹⁹ Hereinafter referred to as “Fr. Rauno”

in the church could hear Finnish, Norwegian, Swedish, Russian, Church Slavonic, English and also Skolt Sámi. The liturgy was conducted by Metropolitan Elia and Erkki Lumisalmi served as a deacon. He and the cantor used Skolt Sámi during the liturgy. I estimate that the use of Skolt Sámi during this particular liturgy was about ten percent of the total service.

However, since this liturgy was a part of the pilgrimage, it was a special occasion, one of the most celebrated festivals during the year. Therefore, what I observed differs a lot from what churchgoers in Sevetijärvi usually experience. According to my informants, attendance at liturgies is usually quite low - between seven and fifteen people. Also the number of languages used during liturgies is lower. Use of Skolt Sámi during the liturgies is usually higher, as I was informed.

(3) Lukas: Yesterday, I noticed that it was maybe 10 percent of Skolt Sámi during the service. How is it usually?

Maaria: I think that normally, Skolt Sámi is used more than on these feasts. Because on these occasions there are many Finns and Finnish choirs and in a way there are many languages, so that the Skolt Sámi language comes forth, but in a much lesser degree on these ... than usually. Usually, there is much more Skolt Sámi (Maaria, 2015).

My informants estimate that at liturgies use of Skolt Sámi is usually around 30 percent of the service, while 70 percent is in Finnish. Church Slavonic is not used very often. Even though Fr. Rauno told me that if he knows that there are some Russian speaking people at the service, he uses Church Slavonic.

The degree of how much Skolt Sámi he uses during the service depends on who attends the liturgy.

(4) Rauno: I always follow who attends, if there are some Skolt Sámi speakers. If there is at least one, then I use Skolt Sámi, but if there are is no one, then I don't just because of a show. I can also use some Church Slavonic or English. If there are some foreigners, we use a little bit of English.

[...]

Lukas: Church Slavonic?

Rauno: If there are some Russians (Rauno, 2015).

In the church in Sevetijärvi, Skolt Sámi is mostly heard by the cantor, the choir, and church members that join singing. Church songs were the first translated literature into Skolt Sámi and church songs have gained a certain tradition in the church in Sevetijärvi. The fact that it is not just one person singing in Skolt Sámi, but at least the choir consisting of two or three

persons and sometimes also members of the parish, makes Skolt Sámi actively used. Such activity takes place in a public place which makes Skolt Sámi more visible not only for Skolt Sámi people, but also for Finnish people, possibly also for visitors from other countries. The pilgrimage is a good example of this.

Skolt Sámi language is used mainly during chanting as stated above, which also Aaro talks about.

(5) I go quite rarely to the church. Usually when there is some wedding, baptism or funeral. Then I go to the church. Otherwise very rarely. Yeah, Skolt Sámi is heard in the church, for example in those church songs. The songs are quite often in Skolt Sámi. Then, the priest says something in Skolt Sámi sometimes. Like Finnish and Skolt Sámi. Yeah, Skolt Sámi is heard in the church quite often (Aaro, 2015).

As it is implied in the last quote, Orthodox services do not involve only Divine Liturgy or All-Night vigil etc. Baptisms, weddings, funerals and other rituals, ceremonies are a very important part of religious, civil and cultural Skolt Sámi lives. Therefore, I was naturally interested in how much Skolt Sámi is heard on these occasions.

For example when I asked Erkki, if Skolt Sámi language is or has been used also on other religious occasions such as baptisms, weddings, funerals etc., he answered:

(6) At burials we also sing a bit in Skolt Sámi. We have for example final commendation (Erkki & Aulikki, 2015).

When I interviewed Erkki and his wife Aulikki, Erkki performed a chant sung during a final commendation in Skolt Sámi and translated it together with his wife into Finnish. He and his wife also explained to me this tradition in the Orthodox setting. Final commendation, or farewell to the deceased person, belongs to Orthodox burial traditions. In Sevettijärvi, if there is a funeral, basically the whole village attends, as I was informed. The coffin is open and everybody gets the chance to give a final commendation to the deceased. During this moment, the cantor possibly together with choir chant a song included in the prayer book.²⁰

²⁰ This song is number 107.

In a similar way, Skolt Sámi is used also at weddings. Erkki gave an example of a wedding from last year, where a Skolt Sámi chant was used during a wedding ceremony, more specifically under the crowning which is an Orthodox wedding tradition.²¹

Also Maaria, when asked if she remembers that Skolt Sámi language is or has been used also on other religious occasions such as baptisms, weddings, and funerals answered:

(7) Hmm... Wait a second. Yeah, it was used at least at weddings. But it depends a bit on what the couple wants. Last year, I was at a wedding where Skolt Sámi was used (Maaria, 2015).

The Skolt Sámi language is heard not only at liturgies, but also at other religious services, even though that it is not to such a high degree. Probably the most important reason for this is the lack of Skolt Sámi translations when it comes to wedding, burial, and other services.

4.2.4. A short historical perspective on Skolt Sámi language situation within the Orthodox Church

As quoted earlier in the chapter, one of my informants said that nowadays it feels natural that liturgies are conducted at least partly in Skolt Sámi. Before 1983, thus before publication of the prayer book, Skolt Sámi language was absent at liturgies in Sevettijärvi as Erkki confirms. But since that time, Skolt Sámi language has penetrated into many spheres within the domain of the Finnish Orthodox Church in Sevettijärvi. Now, I want to give a little more insight into the situation of Skolt Sámi language within the Finnish Orthodox Church shortly before and after the relocation to Sevettijärvi.

I asked Sergei, the one of my informants, about his experiences of Skolt Sámi language in the religious setting when he was a child. He said that in that time liturgies were in Finnish, but some people prayed in Skolt Sámi or in Russian, for example at home altars (icon corners). As he says, Skolt Sámi was a language that was spoken by families at home. He also mentioned that in Pechenga, there was a priest, Yrjö Rame, that did not speak much Skolt Sámi, just a little bit, but that he understood pretty much everything.

Yrjö Rame (1900-1990) started working as a priest in Pechenga in 1929, a parish that consisted especially of Skolt Sámi people. Father Yrjö²² continued his work among Skolt

²¹ This song is to be found in the prayer book, it is number 100. Number 101 is also a wedding song and it is sung under triple procession around the centre table.

²² Hereinafter referred to as “Fr. Yrjö”

Sámi people even in the times of the war and evacuation and also after the relocation of Skolt Sámi to a new land. He served as a priest in a new established Orthodox Parish of Lapland from 1950 till his retirement in 1971. Fr. Yrjö was loved by people in places he served and his popularity is reflected in a book by Mirjam Kälkäjä named *Isä Yrjö, Petsamon ja Lapin Pappi (Father Yrjö, priest of Petsamo and Lapland)*. The author collected memories of Fr. Yrjö and made it into a book that was published in 2002 by the Orthodox Parish of Lapland. This book is very interesting, also because it shows how Fr. Yrjö perceived Skolt Sámi people and Skolt Sámi language.

The book portrays Fr. Yrjö as a very kind, caring and helpful person that always had time for people. He could speak Finnish and Russian and as mentioned in the book, he could understand Skolt Sámi as well. He was well acquainted with Skolt Sámi life, and related to the Skolt Sámi people, culture, and traditions respectfully (Kälkäjä, 2002).

Father Yrjö was very positive towards Skolt Sámi culture, traditions and language as well, even when Skolt Sámi language was a forbidden language in schools and was excluded from public life during the times of strong assimilation policy after the relocation to Sevettijärvi. Sergei remembers a moment from his childhood and his personal experience with Fr. Yrjö.

(8) We had Father Yrjö as a priest. He really criticized this development, this case and encouraged us. Once he came saying: “Don’t forget, my beloved children, your own language and prayers. Pray for those.” It was an encouragement. Encouraging words (Sergei, 2015).

This powerful statement shows how differently he related to Skolt Sámi people, culture and language in contrast with the majority Finnish society and Finnish policy at that time. Nonetheless, even though he related positively to the Skolt Sámi language maintenance in general, he was not in favour of Skolt Sámi language penetrating into the religious domain, becoming a liturgical language. I asked Erkki, how Fr. Yrjö related to Skolt Sámi people and Skolt Sámi language and he stated:

(9) Father Yrjö related very well to the Skolt Sámi people, but very negatively to Skolt Sámi liturgical texts (Erkki, 2016).

The reason for this is mentioned in outline in Kälkäjä’s book.

In all his love and his good will towards Skolt Sámi, Father Yrjö was realistic. He was not always excited about new ideas that were suggested in relation to Skolt Sámi and Skolt Sámi culture from various directions.

One of these questions was a question of liturgical language.

For years, there was a discussion in Pechenga about the translation of liturgical texts into Skolt Sámi language. Father Yrjö urged caution in these efforts. In his opinion, youth understood better Finnish under actual circumstances. Skolt Sámi liturgical texts were not necessarily the best solution for the old generation. Traditional prayer language always was Church Slavonic, by no means Skolt Sámi language.

If it was decided to translate the texts, Father Yrjö advised that only some prayer parts or songs should be translated into Skolt Sámi. He did not consider translation of the whole liturgy or other services into Skolt Sámi as a good idea. He understood better than some others that translation of church texts would require creating new terms, which would be strange in original Skolt Sámi language (Kälkäjä, 2002, p. 69, my translation from Finnish).²³

Even though the editor's voice is quite noticeable in this excerpt, this text brings valuable information related to Fr. Yrjö's attitude towards Skolt Sámi language becoming a liturgical language. First, there is need to clarify that the historical context of this text takes place before the relocation to Sevettijärvi, which I think is important especially in relation to Church Slavonic. It is clear that Fr. Yrjö was very conservative when it came to liturgical languages. I interpret Fr. Yrjö's negative attitude towards Skolt Sámi language becoming a liturgical language as having two main reasons. The first is tradition, Skolt Sámi language was not a liturgical language, and the other Church Slavonic, especially in that time had a strong position in the church. The second one is a practical one - comprehensibility. Fr. Yrjö

²³ Original Finnish text:

Kaikessa rakkaudessaan ja hyväntahtoisuudessaan kolttia kohtaan isä Yrjö oli realistinen. Hän ei suinkaan aina innostunut uusista suunnitelmista, joita eri tahoilta esitettiin kolttien ja kolttakulttuurin suhteen.

Yksi tällainen kysymys oli jumalanpalvelustenten kielikysymys.

Vuosia oli jo Petsamossa keskusteltu liturgisten tekstien kääntämisestä koltan kielelle. Isä Yrjö kehotti varovaisuuteen tällaisissä pyrimyksissä. Hänen mielipiteensä oli, että nuoret ymmärsivät noissa olosuhteissa paremmin suomea. Koltankielinen liturgia teksti ei vältämättä ollut aina paras ratkaisu vanhalle sukupolvelle. Perinteinen rukouskieli oli aina ollut kirkkoslaavi eikä suinkaan koltta.

Mikäli käännöstöyöhön mentäisiin, oli isä Yrjön mielestä suotavaa, että ainoastaan eräät rukousjaksot tai laulut käännettäisiin koltaksi. Liturgian tai jokin muun palveluksen kokonaisuuden kääntämistä koltaksi kokonaisuudessa hän ei nähnyt hyvänä. Hän ymmärsi monia muita paremmin, että kirkollistem tekstien kääntäminen edellytti uusien termien luomista, jotka olivat outoja alkuperäiseen koltankieleen yhdistettynä.

was afraid that people would not understand as much Skolt Sámi as they understood Finnish or Church Slavonic. At that time people spoke or understood Russian and were used to hearing Church Slavonic in the church domain, whereas Skolt Sámi lacked specific church terminology. At the beginning of the Finnish independence, Church Slavonic and Finnish were used side by side. Gradually, the liturgies were almost entirely in Finnish. As Metropolitan Leo writes (1995), older generations of Skolt Sámi at that time did not always understand Finnish perfectly, even though they spoke the language with the Finnish speaking people. Such an attitude towards the Skolt Sámi language held back its development in the Church at that time. However, it is important to keep in mind that the Church, on the other hand, helped the Skolt Sámi community in different ways.

(10) Lukas: What is the significance of the Church in the revitalization?

Tanja: Important. I consider it important, because the language was not analyzed in our culture before those days. Well, it was a part of it, it was a mother tongue, a spoken language. But then the church helped Skolt Sámi in the life situation, when they moved from Pechenga to Finland. So, we survived. In a way that is the biggest work of the Church that Skolt Sámi still are here. But then after a while, language revitalization came there in my opinion, because maybe they didn't realize how important this language work is. But then when the teachers came together with the help of their men and other language workers started making the grammar. And then also the church noticed. Truly it was noticed that the language situation got worse. So, we have to thank them and the church is one of them. But the biggest help of the church is that we are still here (Tanja, 2015).

The Church helped Skolt Sámi under difficult circumstances of the war, evacuation, relocation, and assimilation policy. Even though Skolt Sámi language was not supported yet as a liturgical language, it was not a “forbidden” language, such as it was in other public spheres like schools and offices. Fr. Yrjö did not discourage to use Skolt Sámi language; on the contrary as Sergei's story shows, he encouraged the use of the Skolt Sámi language. But the truth remains that he was not in favor of Skolt Sámi language being used at church services. Such a change came a decade after Yrjö Räme's retirement and with the arrival of Erkki Lumisalmi as a cantor in the Orthodox Parish of Lapland.

There have not been many priests who used Skolt Sámi language at church services. The main reason was the absence of Skolt Sámi translation of liturgical texts and also unavailability of Skolt Sámi language courses. Therefore, when I asked Merja how many priests could speak Skolt Sámi or used Skolt Sámi, the answer was following:

(11) I don't remember many priests. I remember, that like more used, yes, Father Slava²⁴ and then the contemporary priest Rauno have used. Not so many priests. And no priests that would speak Skolt Sámi as a mother tongue. Before Father Slava and Father Rauno the priests didn't use Skolt Sámi (Merja, 2015).

4.3. Religious education

What is crucial about knowledge and tradition is its transmission. Thus, one of the questions I needed to answer was how the knowledge about Orthodoxy has been passed onto the next generations in Sevettijärvi since the foundation of the village. At the same time, I also needed to answer the question as to who has had the biggest responsibility in this process and if this process has changed during past decades, or as the case may be, how.

Of course, the Church itself is one of the transmitters of the knowledge. The first encounters with religion are in family or through family. Orthodoxy is very rich on traditions and various rituals that are for some a part of everyday life. Nevertheless, my main interest is how people gained education about their own religion, who provided it and in what language. Nowadays, in Finland, children get religious education according to their religious background. As I was informed by the headmaster at Sevettijärvi school, in 2015, there were six children taking Orthodox religious education, six children taking Lutheran religious education and the rest taking Life Stance education.

Informants from the older generation almost always emphasized the importance of the family for their religious education. On the contrary, younger informants emphasized the formal school education through religious education. These findings are in harmony with the findings of Mira Rantakeisu (2015) who also observed the generational differences in receiving education about Orthodoxy. She writes, “[t]he socialization process to Orthodoxy from an early age was *especially* evident in the accounts of older respondents, but also younger ones mentioned this” (Rantakeisu, 2015, p. 82, my emphasis). Later, she writes the following on the matter: “In the case of the elderly respondents, the religious education was gained either at home or at the church. For the younger respondents, though, the educational institute in religion was the school and the link between home and church was loose or even nonexistent” (Rantakeisu, 2015, p. 84).

²⁴ Father Slava (Fr. Slava), was a former priest in the Orthodox Parish of Lapland.

I would like to illustrate this with two statements coming from my informants. The first respondent, Teijo, a local businessman, remembers times of strong assimilation pressures and represents the older generation. On the other hand, Aaro, working at that time in the *Skolt Sámi Heritage House* in Sevettijärvi, represents the younger generation of the Skolt Sámi people. Both of them answered a question about how they gained their religious education.

(12) Lukas: Do you remember if you gained your religious education from home or from school?

Teijo: From both. At school, there was not much of this religious education. Here [in Sevettijärvi] it wasn't at all and then when I was at the junior high school in Ivalo, there was just one hour a week of religious education. There wasn't much of that at school.

[...]

Lukas: So, did you talk about religious matters in the family?

Teijo: Yes, we did speak about religion as well (Teijo, 2015).

Teijo then adds that they could not speak Sámi at school and that he got his religious education from home and in Skolt Sámi. Aaro, who represents the young generation, has a different experience about his religious education.

(13) Lukas: So, you got your religious education especially from school?

Aaro: Yes. At school we had religious classes and then when there was some service in the church and that kind of stuff, so we joined it. We spoke about religion especially at school (Aaro, 2015).

These two examples illustrate the shift in which domain plays the key role in passing knowledge about religion, religious traditions, and practice onto the next generation. Whereas the older generation gained this knowledge especially from their homes, the younger generation receives it especially through the school system.

But what does such a change mean for the Skolt Sámi language? In order to answer this question, we first need to know what languages have been used at home when talking about religion and what languages have been used during religious classes at school. Older respondents said that they also spoke Skolt Sámi at home when talking about religion. Nonetheless, due to the political situation, they spoke only Finnish at school. On the other hand, the young generation, speak about religious matters at home in Finnish or in both languages. At school, they receive religious education also both in Finnish and Skolt Sámi. But as mentioned earlier, nowadays there are also teaching materials about Orthodoxy in Skolt Sámi.

In addition, also a short school about Christian teachings, which is in Finnish *kristinoppikoulu* or shortened *kripari* belongs to the religious education. People often call it also *rippikoulu* which is a Lutheran term denoting confirmation school. Orthodox theology, however, understands confirmation differently than the Lutheran Church. In the Orthodox Church, chrismation (sometimes also called confirmation) is given together with the baptism. Nevertheless, similarly as in the Lutheran Church in Finland, Orthodox young people at the age of fifteen participate at a camp where they learn about basic Orthodox Christian teachings, traditions, and Orthodox ethics (Ratilainen, 2008). This education, I was informed, is available only in Finnish.

4.4. Other communication in the domain of the Orthodox Church

Another area within the Orthodox Church in Sevettijärvi is communication and the language choices involved. This includes the way the Church communicates with its members, also through media, how clergy communicates with parishioners, how parishioners communicate among themselves, how they communicate in families and how individuals communicate with the divine. This involves the most intimate questions I asked my informants, such as in what language they prefer to pray or which language they prefer when talking about religion within their families, and with their friends and fellow parishioners.

4.4.1. Communication between the Church and the members through media

Of course, the written sources that belong to the religious domain do not consist only of religious books. The Orthodox Church and more specifically the Orthodox Parish of Lapland also communicates with its members by means of written or spoken language and to do so, uses various forms of media which will be discussed later in this section.

One of the most basic means of communication with the local members of the Church is a notice board located in front of the church. Looking at the notice board, my main interest was to see how much Skolt Sámi language was visible there, at least in a symbolic way. However, at the time I was doing my fieldwork in Sevettijärvi, all the information and announcements were just in Finnish. My informants confirmed that Skolt Sámi is absent on the notice board.

Another way to convey information to Church's member is through media - press, webpages, social media and radio. The Church has a bulletin named *Paimen-Sanomat*. It has been published since 1981 and its aim is to inform members of the Orthodox Church in Diocese of Oulu. They do not publish anything in Skolt Sámi on a regular basis, but occasionally they do, as confirmed by people I interviewed. For example, in May 2013, a foreword, or small sermon *Kiitoksen aika* (in English *Time of Gratitude*) written in Finnish by Metropolitan Panteleimon that was also translated into Skolt Sámi (Panteleimon, 2013).

However, the Orthodox Church has possibilities to convey information to its members through channels that are not their own. For example, the priest of the Orthodox Parish of Lapland publishes a small sermon in a local secular newspaper *Inarilainen* once every two months. The contemporary priest Rauno, when talking about future measures that would make Skolt Sámi more visible told me the following:

(14) The next step for us is maybe that... I write a small sermon in *Inarilainen* newspaper, always once every two months, it's a kind of spiritual article, and this could be published both in Finnish and in Skolt Sámi (Rauno, 2015).

That means that if this is going to happen in the near future, it would probably have the same form as the small sermon published in *Paimen-Sanomat* in May 2013, thus a Finnish text with simultaneous Skolt Sámi translation. It is also important to add, that *Inarilainen* reaches all people in Inari municipality and by this Skolt Sámi language would gain visibility.

Such small sermons or spiritual programs are also broadcasted in radio. Radio YLE Sápmi has also contributed a great deal in preserving and revitalizing Skolt Sámi language. One of the programs on YLE Sápmi is also of religious character. It has been hosted by Erkki Lumisalmi for many years. Erkki says about this:

(15) I also broadcast a spiritual program in Skolt Sámi on Yle Sámi radio ten times a year. But it is too long when you have to hold it for half an hour. There are church songs, we do it in Finnish, Church Slavonic and little bit in Skolt Sámi. [...] I don't know how many [programs] there will be next year, but earlier it was an average of five, six times a year (Erkki & Aulikki, 2015).

Nevertheless, one of the most important channels for the Orthodox Church in Finland and more specifically for the Orthodox Parish of Lapland is webpages and social media. The webpage ort.fi is the official webpage of the Finnish Orthodox Church where one can find information about the Orthodox Parish of Lapland, clergy, employees, and liturgies. Nothing

written in Skolt Sámi is found on this page. All the information is provided in Finnish, and some general information is also provided in English and Russian and on the main page there is a name of the Orthodox Church of Finland also in Swedish.

As mentioned earlier, the Orthodox Parish of Lapland has also its own Facebook page and by July of 2016 this page has 450 followers (Lapin ortodoksinen seurakunta, n.d.b). The page informs followers about previous and upcoming events and the texts are often accompanied by pictures. Although there is not much Skolt Sámi language visible, some of the examples of use of Skolt Sámi on this Facebook page are to be found. In April 2015, the webpage informed about the events during Easter which was introduced by a traditional Paschal greeting that was written both in Finnish and Skolt Sámi. Written in Skolt Sámi it is “Kristas kaggöödi jamm’jest!” which means “Christ has risen!”. Another example is from September 2015 in connection with a video that was published on YouTube (Seurakunnat yhdessä, 2015) and which various churches in Finland took part in. The main message is to support the refugees from Middle-East and Africa. The vicar (in Finnish *kirkkoherra*) of the Orthodox Parish of Lapland appears in this video holding a sign which says “Welcome” in both Finnish and Skolt Sámi. Both of the words appear also in the description of the video shared on the Facebook page of the Orthodox Parish of Lapland. Based on my own and my informants’ observation, apart from these examples, Skolt Sámi does not appear on the Facebook page. However, unlike the official webpage of the Finnish Orthodox Church, on the Facebook page we can at least find examples of the representation of Skolt Sámi language on a symbolic level. Such posts can also encourage users to start using Skolt Sámi language on this page or maybe even elsewhere.

Fr. Rauno comments on the matter of the Facebook page as follows:

(16) We want to be proactive. But also proactivity has certain boundaries, so that it is not just for a 'show.' [...] Thus, the answer if it [Skolt Sámi] comes there [the Facebook page] is maybe. But not for the sake of 'show'. [...] Because we have really small resources (Rauno, 2015).

4.4.2. Communication between the clergy and parishioners and among parishioners

The question of language choice when discussing religion in family has been already opened up a little bit in the section about religious education. My informants did not speak much about the language preferences within the family. Still, even their short answers on this matter

were very consistent. The usual answer was that if the religion is discussed at home, it could be in both Finnish and Skolt Sámi.

Another area for language choice is in interaction with other parishioners and clerics and church employees. A typical occasion for these interactions appeared to be coffee drinking after religious services. Again, my informants said that on these occasions, they use both Finnish and Skolt Sámi, depending who they talk to. This was based on language proficiency, not social status. No matter, if it is a parishioner, cleric or other church employee, what appears to be a decisive factor for language choice is language proficiency, as illustrated by the following statement of Seija that will be also discussed in the analysis in the following chapter:

(17) Seija: Well, naturally if I talk to the priest or to some other visitors, to Finns, then it has to be in Finnish, but if it is among Skolt Sámi, then we speak Skolt Sámi. I don't know what the percentage is, maybe fifty-fifty. It depends on who is there.

Lukas: So, if you know that a certain person speaks Skolt Sámi, then you speak Skolt Sámi?

Seija: Yes, but Skolt Sámi are polite and they don't want to exclude anyone. So, the language shifts immediately, so the person can understand as well. So that all are included. On the other hand, it is also a bad thing. In my opinion, we could carry on speaking Skolt Sámi and then the one who doesn't understand could ask what did you say, could you say or translate it to the person who asked. But it wouldn't be necessary to completely abandon the language (Seija, 2015).

This statement coincides very well with what Feist (2010) writes: “If a non-speaker is present it is likely that the entire conversation will be in Finnish, even if all other speakers are fluent in Skolt Saami” (Feist, 2010, p. 23). Impacts of this code-switching will be further discussed in the next chapter.

It also needs to be said that coffee drinking after Orthodox services, in addition to being a multilingual area, is also a big social occasion which enables the participants not only to use Skolt Sámi among themselves, but also to *strengthen* their ethnic identity and their relations. As some informants mentioned, it is an occasion when which people share the memories and stories from the past.

4.4.3. Individual communication with the divine

First, I want to discuss the question of prayers. It is important not to forget the context of praying in the Orthodoxy. Orthodox prayers are divided into two main types - corporate and

personal prayers. Corporate prayers take place when believers gather in the church in order to pray on the occasion of religious services. Personal prayers are part of private lives of believers and Orthodox people use different ways to pray such as - crossing oneself, prayers from prayer books, or prayers in one's own words (Ortodoksinen rukouselämä, n.d.). Since corporate prayers are a part of Orthodox liturgies when the parish is formally assembled, corporate prayers are not discussed in this part.

When I asked people about their praying habits, I was interested in personal prayers. However, there are different ways Orthodox people pray privately. This was obvious in the answers of the informants I talked to. When talking about personal prayers, some people referred to silent prayers using their own words, or also a sort of meditation, others referred to the prayers that are written in prayer books they use. The answers of people referring to the prayers in their own words were especially similar.

(18) It depends on the situation. It depends somehow on... I really try, I would say, it is maybe like a kind of a mixed language. It is like, if something comes out naturally in Skolt Sámi, then I use Skolt Sámi, but then here and there I say things in Finnish. [...] Yeah, a mixed language, Skolt Sámi, Finnish, Skolt Sámi, Skolt Sámi (Maaria, 2015).

Other informants talking about personal prayers stated that they pray both in Finnish and Skolt Sámi depending on the context. No one with knowledge of both languages stated that he or she would pray exclusively in one of the languages.

Similarly, the people whose answers referred to the use of prayer books also stated that they use both languages, one of them also used prayer books in other languages in addition to Finnish and Skolt Sámi.

Another question regarded which language is preferred when it comes to reading religious literature. As I mentioned it earlier, Skolt Sámi orthography is very young and therefore the older generation, even though they can speak Skolt Sámi, usually do not read in Skolt Sámi. Therefore, some of the older people I spoke with do not use the religious literature in Skolt Sámi, simply because they do not read the language. Some of the younger respondents have used it at school, but do not use it because of their different relationship to Orthodox religiosity. There are, however, people that use the religious literature in Skolt Sámi for various reasons, especially for their religious purposes and also for enrichment of their Skolt Sámi language skills.

5. ANALYSIS

(19) *In my opinion, Skolt Sámi language has always belonged to the church. At least in my understanding. It has been a part of that life. That hasn't changed. Even though priests change and cantors change, nevertheless Skolt Sámi language still remains in the services* (Maaria, 2015).

This chapter aims to analyse the data in the previous chapter. At the end of this analysis, I will ponder over the contemporary situation in the language domain of the Orthodox Church in Sevetijärvi and I will try to discuss the future development in this domain. I will also try to outline possible measures that might be taken in order to develop Skolt Sámi language in the domain of the Orthodox Church even more.

5.1. Religious literature

As shown in the previous chapter, the first religious book that was published in Skolt Sámi was the prayer book in 1983, followed by Gospel of John in 1988 and Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom in 2002. In addition, other literature dealing with Orthodoxy has been published. Why were these translations rendered in Skolt Sámi language, what were the processes behind it and how have the translations influenced Skolt Sámi language?

Muraoka (2001) in the work *Concise Encyclopedia of Language and Religion* in the section on Bible translations writes: “In modern times, Bible translation is either part of missionary efforts or a response to the liturgical and educational needs of a particular religious community” (Muraoka, 2001, p. 104). I believe that this statement does not apply only to Bible translations, but also other religious texts, such as liturgical texts. There are different factors and reasons that lead towards a decision whether or not to translate a particular text into another language.

One of the factors influencing the choice is ideological and it is a belief about a sacred language. There are two main attitudes towards translation of religious texts: “those for which there exists one unique, sacred language and those for which the message of sacred texts can be expressed with equal validity in all tongues” (Delisle & Woodworth, 2012, p. 153). If, for example, there is a belief that a language in which a given religious text was written is sacred, such a notion influences decisions about translation negatively. In history, such views are known from examples of the relationships between Latin and the Roman Catholic Church,

Arabic in Islam, or Hebrew and Judaism (Sawyer, 2001b). In the Middle Ages, West Christianity adopted an increasingly sacral view of language, whereas Eastern Christianity kept more of a comprehensibility approach (Liddicoat, 2012). This approach values translation of religious texts giving primacy to comprehension and sees languages in which religious texts are written as vehicles for communication of religious ideas rather than as sacred artefacts in their own (Liddicoat, 2012).

From early on Eastern Christianity did not insist on linguistic uniformity. It was with blessing from Constantinople that Ulfilas (ca. 311-383 CE) invented the Gothic alphabet and translated the Bible into Gothic for the purpose of his mission to Eastern Europe. Similarly, Saint Cyril in 9th century invented Glagolitic script, the oldest known Slavic alphabet, and wrote his Slavonic translation of the Bible (MacRobert, 2001). Language in which this translation is written is known as Old Church Slavonic developed later in 11th century into Church Slavonic and its local varieties (MacRobert, 2001). Church Slavonic is still present at the liturgies in many parts of the world and also in Sevetijärvi.

Nevertheless, even though the Orthodox Church has had a long tradition of translations of religious text in different languages, the journey towards the first religious text translated into Skolt Sámi was not easy for several reasons. The first reason and obstacle was absence of Skolt Sámi orthography which was not created until the 1970's. The second related to attitudes towards Skolt Sámi language, including the attitudes of the Skolt Sámi people towards the Skolt Sámi language and attitudes of the Orthodox clergy towards the language.

After the relocation of Skolt Sámi people following World War II, the Finnish government implemented strong assimilation policies resulting in many traumas among many Skolt Sámi people. Skolt Sámi was a forbidden language. This negatively influenced the attitudes towards the language even among Skolt Sámi themselves. Secondly, the attitudes of the Orthodox clergy towards Skolt Sámi language were quite complicated as illustrated by the example of Fr. Yrjö in the previous chapter. My informants and literature describe Fr. Yrjö as a kind, caring, and helpful person who was well acquainted with Skolt Sámi life and related to the Skolt Sámi people and Skolt Sámi culture very positively. He related to the Skolt Sámi language positively even at the times of strong Finnish assimilation policies as shown on the experience from Sergei's childhood (see quote nr. 8 in the section 4.2.4.). However, his view on Skolt Sámi becoming a liturgical language was negative. This view had two reasons, I believe. The first one was the issue of tradition, and the other one is the issue of comprehensibility as described in the previous chapter.

Orthodox Christianity highly values the role of tradition and continuity and as Kälkäjä (2002) writes, “[t]raditional prayer language always was Church Slavonic, by no means Skolt Sámi language” (Kälkäjä, 2002, p. 69)²⁵. Yet, I believe, the more important for Fr. Yrjö, was the matter of comprehensibility. Fr. Yrjö was afraid that people would not understand. In addition to that, Skolt Sámi lacked the specific religious terminology needed to be created. New lexical items needed to be developed in order to express religious ideas in Skolt Sámi language.

Nonetheless, these obstacles were gradually overcome and the launching of the prayer book in Skolt Sámi was initiated. I interpret this decision as being a result of socio-cultural changes and the Church’s response to needs of the Skolt Sámi community. The Skolt Sámi culture and language began to revive little by little, Sámi orthography and grammar were created and the Church reacted on this change in the local community. Merja says the following:

(20) Lukas: What role does the Orthodox Church have in the revitalization or maintenance?

Merja: I say that it is very significant. My personal opinion is that it is the most significant. Well, of course, the teaching materials are made and if you think what things the school and its teachers have made, plus what the church has made possible, that all these are translated into Skolt Sámi, that is really remarkable achievement in my opinion. I consider it as one of the most significant among these language revitalization issues. Well, when these were made, nobody talked about language revitalization at that time, not by this term. That term came later on. But in my opinion the attempts started earlier, thus when Skolt Sámi was being made a written language, when Skolt Sámi was becoming a written language, the Church joined the process really quickly (Merja, 2015).

The Church and the translators thus made a huge contribution to the development of Skolt Sámi language and helped the Skolt Sámi revitalization movement.

Muraoka (2001) writes:

In many speech communities a Bible in their own speech marks the first written expression of their language or dialect. A translation or a retranslation of the Bible may set a new benchmark in the written form of the language concerned, as happened in the case of Luther’s German translation of the Bible or the King James Version of the English Bible (Muraoka, 2001, p. 104).

²⁵ See section 4.2.4.

The statement above points out to the central position that translations of religious texts often have in standardization of languages. The first attempts to create a written Skolt Sámi come also from the religious domain in connection with the translation of Gospel of Matthew into Skolt Sámi by Konstantin Ščekoldin in 1884. It is a known fact that translations of religious texts have triggered and influenced processes of standardization in many languages. Darquennes & Vandenbussche (2011) write:

While the bigger languages used in Europe have long passed the initial stages of standardization, some regional and minority languages used all over Europe still face challenges related to the processes of norm selection, codification, implementation and elaboration that are commonly related to standardization (Darquennes & Vandenbussche, 2011, p. 7).

That is also the case of the Skolt Sámi language. The Skolt Sámi prayer book published in 1983 was one of the first books published in Skolt Sámi and the first Skolt Sámi book intended for adult readers. Thus, the Orthodox Church helped in the process of establishing Skolt Sámi as a written language not long after the modern Skolt Sámi orthography was made. This has strengthened the position of Skolt Sámi language in the Church but also in general. Such a contribution exceeds boundaries of the religious domain and has a strong influence on the language itself. Merja, who works in the Sámi parliament, says that the translators working on the translation of the prayer book had deep knowledge of Skolt Sámi language, which was their first language. Merja talks about its importance for development of Skolt Sámi language as follows:

(21) Even if one is not interested in the church stuff, I would recommend studying these texts, because everything is in place here. These church texts are the kind of texts from which you can learn a lot of the Skolt Sámi language, a lot of the Skolt Sámi grammar and... Also morphological derivations and everything possible you can find here. These works are really valuable, even though this one [the prayer book] is small (Merja, 2015).

Indeed, the prayer book and other religious texts rendered in Skolt Sámi are valuable texts of which significance exceeds the boundaries of the religious domain and has also its purely linguistic and educational value that contributes to the standardization of written Skolt Sámi language. This work is also one of the cornerstones of the literature written in Skolt Sámi.

Of course, publication of the prayer book, Gospel of John and liturgical texts is a crucial factor enabling Skolt Sámi being used at liturgies in the religious environment where

liturgies are fixed. The existence of these texts is a basic prerequisite for Skolt Sámi being used at liturgies. Therefore, these texts have a high functional value through which Skolt Sámi can be heard in churches, as discussed later in the chapter.

However, these translations do not have only a functional value, but also a symbolic one. These religious texts used also at liturgies in public were available for Skolt Sámi people only in majority Finnish language or in traditional Church Slavonic. Publication of these texts has upgraded status of minority Skolt Sámi language that through these texts entered the domain of the Orthodox Church. It raises visibility and awareness of Skolt Sámi language and also strengthens the status of Skolt Sámi language and Skolt Sámi identity. Many Skolt Sámi people are aware of this fact and expressed their wish that more religious texts should be translated into Skolt Sámi.

5.2. Orthodox services as a multilingual space

As stated in the previous chapter, “[t]he liturgy remains the heart of Orthodox life and theology” (Noll In Woods, 2004, p. 145). Orthodoxy highly values the role of tradition and its continuity is considered essential. Liturgies in the Orthodox setting are fixed and have a long tradition. Nowadays, the liturgy that is used most often by Orthodox churches is the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom that is hundreds of years old (Woods, 2004). This liturgy does not maintain any principle of uniformity in language and in various countries the same prayers and forms are translated into different languages (Fortescue, 1908). Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom is usually used also in the Orthodox Parish of Lapland and its text was also translated into Skolt Sámi in 2002. Music, prayers, readings from Scriptures and homily are integral part of liturgies.

What language is to be used at liturgies has to do with the ideological reasons, or beliefs about a language. For some religions and religious communities, the matter of tradition, or continuity of authenticity is the most important one. Thus, for them it is important to use the language that upholds the religious tradition whether or not it is understood by churchgoers. A classic example of this attitude is the use of Latin in the Roman Catholic Church. The other attitude values comprehensibility, thus these churches choose the language used for religious services on the basis of what language is most easily understood by churchgoers.

In case of the Orthodox Parish of Lapland, and more specifically in the case of the church in Sevetijärvi, even though the role of tradition in general is highly valued and even though Church Slavonic still has its place in Sevetijärvi, the matter of comprehensibility seems to be the most important factor of the choice regarding which language is to be used at liturgies. As I discussed earlier, even though the issue of tradition and continuity mattered to Fr. Yrjö in the question of language choice, the matter of comprehensibility was even more important. Today, the factor of comprehensibility seems to play an important role when deciding what language will be used for the liturgy. Yet, the Church recognizes that the Skolt Sámi culture and language needs support. Therefore, the clergy use Skolt Sámi in the church, even though everybody in Sevetijärvi speaks Finnish and not necessarily everybody understands Skolt Sámi better than Finnish. This factor of comprehensibility is thus not to be understood as merely strictly pragmatic. Comprehensibility in this sense does not involve only comprehension of given information, but also a sort of “emotional comprehensibility”. Hearing Skolt Sámi in the church can cause positive emotions in some people. This way, people can find the message and the institution providing it more attractive to them.

However, the degree in which Skolt Sámi is used varies and it does not seem to be random and is not only symbolic. As the contemporary Fr. Rauno said, he follows who attends the liturgy and according to that he uses Skolt Sámi. As he said, he does not want to use Skolt Sámi for “a show”, thus the use of Skolt Sámi has to have a functional value. When foreigners attend he uses also English, or Church Slavonic, if Russian people attend. This shows to what extent the domain of the Orthodox Church in Sevetijärvi is a multilingual space. The best example of this was the pilgrimage which people from different ethnic, cultural and language backgrounds attended. The diversity of languages used at liturgies in Sevetijärvi thus depends on the linguistic diversity of attendants. Quoting Liddicoat, it can be concluded that in the church in Sevetijärvi, “[c]omprehensibility of liturgical actions is therefore understood as a pre-requisite for liturgical performance” (Liddicoat, 2012, p. 124).

Since comprehensibility of liturgical actions are important to the Orthodox Church in Sevetijärvi, and since there is linguistic diversity (sometimes bigger sometimes smaller) among those who attend liturgies in Sevetijärvi, a strategy for communication with linguistically diverse churchgoers is needed. Woods (2004) in her Melbourne study of ethnic churches entitled *Medium or Message? : Language and Faith in Ethnic Churches* identifies six different strategies for communication: use of simultaneous translation by interpreter via headphones, use of simultaneous translation by interpreter (up front or person-to-person),

written translation of sermon, written translation of liturgy (in whole or part) in the form of a handout, overhead, or printed booklet (e.g. prayer book) or code-switching by clergy. Of course, each of these strategies has its advantages and disadvantages.

In Sevetijärvi, in order to communicate the liturgy in more than one language, the following strategy is adopted. Single parts of the liturgy are not translated into the other languages/language, but one part is communicated in language A, another in language B, or in language C etc. Since liturgies are fixed, people know what to expect and switching between languages does not affect the length of liturgies and does not require any special devices. I choose to call this strategy code-switching, even though I am aware of the fact that code-switching is a very complex term. My understanding of code-switching is in line with Carol Myers-Scotton and William Ury (1977, p. 5). This definition is already presented in the section 2.5. A similar situation is to be found also in other Orthodox communities.

The Coptic liturgy as performed in North America is unique in its use of three languages—Coptic, Arabic, and English—with minor borrowings from a fourth language, Greek. The liturgy is a stylized, dynamic discourse between three persons or groups: the priest, the deacons, and the people. The priest officiating at the liturgy sets the pattern of code switching. The deacons and the people must respond in whatever language the priest uses (Abraham & Shryock, 2000, p. 229).

However, in the case of Sevetijärvi, even though the priest conducts the liturgy, people do not have to respond in the language used by the priest. Fr. Rauno says:

(22) We have also a priest, a deacon and people represented by the choir. But in our setting, people can answer in a different language than a priest or a deacon use. Based on logic, it would be good to use the same language as used by the priest, but there is no theological reason for that (Rauno, 2016).

Thus, even though the language chosen by the priest might clearly influence the language choice of the people, in Sevetijärvi it is not compulsory to follow the pattern set by the priest.

As mentioned earlier, music, prayers, readings from Scriptures and homily are integral parts of the liturgy. Orthodox liturgies are almost entirely sung including reading from the Scriptures with the exception of homily. The role of the cantor is very important since he functions as a lead singer of the choir representing the church members. Through the prayer book and Erkki Lumisalmi, Skolt Sámi entered into liturgies in the Orthodox Parish of Lapland. Even when he retired, Skolt Sámi has not disappeared from this sphere. The new cantor, Anneli Pietarinen, the priest's wife learned Skolt Sámi language and continues to use

Skolt Sámi as a cantor. The fact that she as a Finn, an outsider, and still put the effort in learning Skolt Sámi and continues to use it in the church, but also outside the church, is very much appreciated in the community.

Liturgies are also a place of corporate prayers. As Woods writes, [t]he language of corporate prayers in church services is largely influenced by the language of the liturgy” (Woods 2004, p. 149). In a multilingual space as Sevetijärvi, it is up to the priest which language is used in a particular part of the liturgy.

The language choice, when it comes to Scriptural readings that are a part of liturgy, naturally presupposes the existence of such texts in a certain language. In Orthodox liturgies, there are readings from the epistles and reading from the gospels. Since only Gospel of John is translated into Skolt Sámi, reading from other gospels and epistles cannot be done in Skolt Sámi yet. As I was informed, the translation work on the Gospel of Luke is in progress. When it is done, it will be another step in widening the space for Skolt Sámi in the liturgical sphere.

The above discussed parts of the liturgy presuppose the existence of the texts in a certain language and at least a basic knowledge of the language of those reading, reciting or chanting the text. This knowledge can nowadays be acquired in the secular sphere of educational programs, such as those at the Sámi Education Institute in Inari. Availability of these courses and clergy attending the courses is another factor enabling development of Skolt Sámi language in the religious domain. Further education of the clergy in Skolt Sámi language might lead to advanced knowledge of the language that is needed in order to give a homily, for example.

Homily, or the commentary on the preceding reading from the Scriptures, presupposes advanced knowledge of the language in which it is given which the contemporary priest does not have yet. Nevertheless, even if the priest would be able to give the homily in Skolt Sámi, the question of comprehensibility arises again. Woods writes:

The sermon helps the listener to apply to daily life the aspects of worship which make up the rest of the service. The language used is, therefore, more likely to be that which is most easily understood by the congregation (Woods, 2004, p. 19).

This is a speculation, but I believe, based on other examples from this religious domain where the question of comprehensibility arises, that even if the priest would be able to give the homily in Skolt Sámi, he would rather do it in Finnish, since that is the language “most easily understood by the congregation” at the moment.

As described in the previous chapter, Orthodox services do not include only liturgies, but also religious services and services that are of civil and cultural importance for Skolt Sámi lives, such as weddings or funerals. At these services some degree of Skolt Sámi is used, which depends on the couples or families and again on the existence of translation of these texts. The more translations of these texts, the more often Skolt Sámi can be used on these occasions.

From the historical perspective, the contemporary situation of Skolt Sámi usage at the religious services is very good. It is thanks to several factors, for example the Skolt Sámi translations of religious text crucial to the religious services, zealous endeavour of individuals using Skolt Sámi at the services and recently widened options of the Skolt Sámi language courses.

Presence of the Skolt Sámi language at religious services has a large functional and also symbolic value. The use of Skolt Sámi in the religious setting creates a better awareness of the language contributing to language visibility, the Skolt Sámi people and their culture within, but also outside of the community. For the last decades the Church has been a stable domain where the language is regularly used by many, which is very important. Further development of Skolt Sámi at various Orthodox services presuppose more translations of religious texts and also further Skolt Sámi language skills of the Orthodox clergy.

5.3. Religious education

The Church is not only a place of worship, but also a place for teaching and learning the Orthodox faith and ways of living. Preservation of this legacy presupposes its transmission onto the following generations. The Church itself does so through the religious services, through a short school about Christian teachings and also on other occasions. The Church is not, however, the only transmitter of the knowledge. Other transmitters can be identified as home and school. Whereas the church can decide in what language they transmit the knowledge in the church setting, they cannot decide what language is the language of instructions at homes and at schools. In such cases, the church is not the determining factor in the language choice.

In the question of who or what has had the biggest responsibility in this process of transmission of the religious education, a dramatic shift has occurred especially in the question of socialization process to Orthodoxy from an early age. Based on my interviews and

in harmony with the findings of Mira Rantakeisu (2015), one can observe that whereas the older generation gained the religious education especially from home and the church, the younger generation gained this education mainly at school.

Whereas decades ago, the main responsibility for the religious education laid on the families, nowadays it is school that is the main transmitter of the knowledge about the religion and it can also transmit this knowledge in Skolt Sámi. It is interesting that it is the school in general, alternatively language nests, thus formal institutions that are the key element in preserving the language nowadays, whereas decades ago schools as institutions were the main threat for the Skolt Sámi language. It is interesting to note that the primary religious education moved from homes that were a vehicle for the Skolt Sámi language maintenance in times when Skolt Sámi was a forbidden language at schools. Gradually, the primary religious education moved to schools when these institutions became a major vehicle for the Skolt Sámi language revitalization. However, such a process needs to be understood in a broader context of sociocultural changes.

5.4. Other communication in the domain of the Orthodox Church

Communication in the domain of the Orthodox Church in Sevetijärvi takes various forms. In this section, I will analyze the data concerning the topic of the communication divided into three subgroups: communication between the church and the members; between the clergy and parishioners and among parishioners and in families; on a personal level and the communication with the divine.

5.4.1. Communication between the church and the members through media

In this section, I discuss the situations in which the church tries to communicate some news, some small sermons or practical information regarding events through notice boards, press, webpages, social media and radio.

As shown in the empirical chapter, the Orthodox Church uses both their own channels in order to communicate the above described information, but also channels that are not their own. I was very surprised to see how many different channels the Orthodox Church uses to communicate with their members and how actively they respond to new social media for example. The activity on the Facebook webpage of the Orthodox Parish of Lapland is

especially remarkable. Even though information is primarily given in Finnish, Skolt Sámi has been also used on several occasions. Such use is usually small or symbolic, but even such a small use has powerful value. Quite remarkable is the example of an article entitled *Kiitoksen aika* (in English *Time of Gratitude*) published in May 2013 in the church bulletin *Paimen-Sanommat* (Panteleimon, 2013). This small sermon that was written in Finnish was also translated into Skolt Sámi. A small sermon is also published monthly in the secular local newspaper *Inarilainen*. As Fr. Rauno said, the next step might be to translate these small sermons also into Skolt Sámi. These examples show the Church's interest in the Skolt Sámi minority and the interest in the development of the Skolt Sámi language.

Yet, it is a pity, in my opinion, that on the notice board placed outside of the church in Sevettijärvi, Skolt Sámi is absent. Similarly, on the official webpage of the Finnish Orthodox Church *ort.fi*, Skolt Sámi is absent. As described in the previous chapter, all the information is provided in Finnish, some general information is also provided in English and Russian and on the main page, there is a name of the Orthodox Church of Finland in Swedish. Given the fact that Swedish has obviously only a symbolic value on the webpage, it is a pity that Skolt Sámi is not even represented on the webpage on the same, let us say, symbolic level.

I have found very interesting what Fr. Rauno mentioned both when talking about the use of Skolt Sámi at liturgies and on Facebook. When talking about the latter, he said as already quoted in the previous chapter that they want to be proactive, but they do not want to do anything for the sake of “show”. The practical argument of not doing something for “a show” is a valid argument regarding the small financial resources and a small number of both receptive and productive speakers of Skolt Sámi. However, what some may perceive as a “show”, others may perceive as having a powerful symbolic value which would strengthen the position of the Skolt Sámi language and might gradually help to produce both receptive and productive speakers of the language. But of course, the limitations of financial and human resources have to be considered in order to do the best decisions for the church and the local community.

5.4.2. Communication between the clergy and parishioners and among parishioners

As described in the previous chapter, a typical situation for the interaction between parishioners and clerics or among parishioners themselves is coffee drinking after church services. Based on the interviews, I conclude that the language choice on these occasions do

not seem to be influenced by topic, setting or social status of interlocutors, but simply rather by knowing who speaks what language. If all the participants of a certain conversation speak Skolt Sámi, the conversation occurs in the Skolt Sámi language. However, if someone who does not speak Skolt Sámi comes and joins the conversation, people switch into Finnish, even though the majority speaks Skolt Sámi. This situation was described by one of my informants (see quote nr. 17, in the section 4.4.2.). Feist (2010) observes these situations as well. Seija, my informant, said this switch occurs due to the politeness of the Skolt Sámi people, but she also says that this virtue has its downside, because it diminishes the use of Skolt Sámi on such occasions.

The very same situations were to be found in Kautokeino among the Sámi youth as Hovland (1999) describes in his book. If someone who did not speak Sámi joined the Sámi conversation, the conversation would switch into Norwegian. Yet, this trend has been overturned. Hovland (1999) writes that nowadays, if Sámi young people talk together and someone who does not speak Sámi joins the conversation, the conversation would not switch into Norwegian and would still continue in the Sámi language. The position of Sámi language has become stronger.

Use of Skolt Sámi among parishioners and between clerics and parishioners depends especially on the language proficiency. Even if only one of the participants of a conversation is not fluent in Skolt Sámi, the conversation will most likely switch to Finnish. This applies also to the conversation in the religious setting. As my informant suggests, a solution might be instead of complete abandoning the conversation in Skolt Sámi, to rather continue the conversation in Skolt Sámi and interpret into Finnish to those not fluent in Skolt Sámi.

As written in the empirical chapter, unfortunately I did not get much data on how religious topic influences the language choice in families and therefore I cannot draw any conclusions on this matter. However, it seems that such conversations might take place both in Finnish or Skolt Sámi. A factor that might influence the language choice when talking about religion might be a specific religious terminology.

5.4.3. Individual communication with the divine

A special case of language choice within the religious domain is the one that does not interact with another human being. This concerns the language of prayer or meditation. As described in the previous chapter, prayers in Orthodoxy can be divided into two main groups: corporate

and personal. Corporate prayers take place on the occasions of corporate worship and their language choice is thus largely influenced by languages of liturgy. Therefore, these prayers are a part of liturgies that were discussed earlier.

When asking my informants about the language of their prayers, I found out that some people talked about silent prayers using their own words and referred to the prayers that are written in prayer books they use. Therefore, the personal prayers can be divided into these two categories.

Of course, primarily what might influence the language choice on these occasions is language attitude. If one believes that language A is more sacred or appropriate (Woods 2004) than language B when interacting with deity, language A will be used. Nonetheless, I did not notice such attitudes among my informants and nor does Orthodox theology support such views.

The prayers in which the prayer book is used are largely dependent on reading skills. Since especially older generation does not usually have good reading skills in Skolt Sámi, in these cases Finnish will be more likely the language of prayer.

Silent prayers and meditation guided by ones' own words are a part of a special set that functions internally – such as counting, doing arithmetic, dreaming or cursing (Spolsky, 1998). These silent prayers as Woods (2004) mentions will usually occur in the language the person is most proficient and I would also add, most comfortable with in a certain situation. As my informants usually answered, the language choice on these occasions depends on the situation, in which language it feels more natural to pray at the very moment. It can be both in Finnish and in Skolt Sámi. Thus, these languages situations involve forms of code-switching.

5.5. Orthodox Church and its role in the Skolt Sámi language revitalization

As discussed earlier in chapter two, religion is often overlooked in the discussion on the topic of language revitalization and it is only quite recently the relationship between language and religion have begun to gain the attention of scholars. Similarly, in the discussions on the Skolt Sámi language revitalization, the Orthodox Church, even though it is often mentioned as an important identity marker, has not been discussed in relation to the broader language revitalization efforts in the Skolt Sámi community. In this thesis, I have discussed the dynamics within the domain of the Finnish Orthodox Church in Sevetijärvi, such as what influences the language choice within the domain, how Skolt Sámi entered into the church

etc. Now, I want to discuss the role of the Finnish Orthodox Church in the bigger picture of the Skolt Sámi revitalization efforts in Sevettijärvi. What place the Finnish Orthodox Church as a language domain has in the Skolt Sámi revitalization?

In this thesis, I have shown four main areas of language use in the domain of the Finnish Orthodox Church in Sevettijärvi: religious literature, religious services, religious education, other communication in the domain of the Orthodox Church (communication between the church and the members through media, between the clergy and parishioners, among parishioners and individual communication with the divine). Based on the data and its analysis, I conclude that the Finnish Orthodox Church has had quite important role in the Skolt Sámi revitalization and contributed to the Skolt Sámi language development. What is even more important is that this is also the view of my informants. In the following lines, I will give an explanation for this conclusion, also with regard to the theory.

As described in chapter two, religion is often the last domain of language use for a local language, as it was, for example the case of Hebrew. As Fishman writes, the religious domain is “very strongly maintenance oriented during earlier stages of interaction and strongly shift oriented once a decision is reached that their organizational base can be better secured via shift” (Fishman, 1965, p. 83). However, the situation of Skolt Sámi in the religious domain differs very much from, for example, communities in diaspora that use immigrant language in the religious domain (Spolsky, 2009). The Skolt Sámi language did not have any place at liturgies or anywhere formally in the church until the 1980’s. Thus, even though the term *language revitalization* runs through the whole thesis like a golden thread, this term is to be used in connection with the Orthodox Church only in the whole context of the Skolt Sámi revitalization. When talking exclusively about the Skolt Sámi language in the religious domain, the term *vitalization* is more correct in my opinion. This term is used by Todal (2002) for domains in which a language had not been used before, therefore a language does not come back to the domain, but arises as a new in such a domain. Since Skolt Sámi had not been used in the church before the 1980’s, the term *vitalization* is more correct.

The reasons behind the decisions enabling Skolt Sámi to enter the church domain have been described above. Of importance, is the special relationship between the Orthodox Church and Skolt Sámi community and Skolt Sámi identity. The Orthodox Church has actively supported the Skolt Sámi cultural and language revitalization and the Skolt Sámi people I talked to also feel this way. What I find remarkable is the very quick response of the

Finnish Orthodox Church to the sociocultural change and revitalization movement early in the 1980's as also shown on the quotes nr. 10 in the section 4.2.4. and nr. 20 in the section 5.1.

Since the 1980's, Skolt Sámi has become more visible in the Church, and the Finnish Orthodox Church contributed to the visibility and awareness of the language. By the translation of the religious texts the Church has contributed to the upgrade of the status of the Skolt Sámi language and these texts has also contributed to the development of written Skolt Sámi. The Finnish Orthodox Church in Sevettijärvi and also in other parts of Finland is a multilingual space and Skolt Sámi has its place in this domain in Sevettijärvi. As mentioned above, religion is maintenance oriented. Since Skolt Sámi has already become the liturgical language and since Orthodoxy is also viewed as a part of the Skolt Sámi cultural heritage, I think we can expect that the Orthodox Church will continue to use Skolt Sámi and develop it in its domain. Nevertheless, this will be under the assumption that Skolt Sámi will be used in other domains as well and that there still will be a call for the Skolt Sámi in the church domain. As shown above, Skolt Sámi entered the church domain as a reaction to the sociocultural changes and also comprehensibility has been one of the driving forces. Skolt Sámi is not viewed as a sacred language and therefore, I believe, if language stops being used in other domains, it will also disappear from the church.

Language revitalization or what Fishman (1991) calls *reversing language shift* aims to increase the number of speakers of a particular language and extend domains where it is employed (Grenoble & Whaley, 2006). The Finnish Orthodox Church is one of these domains in Sevettijärvi. This domain had not been a public space for Skolt Sámi language before the 1980's, but has become one now, and Skolt Sámi has developed quite remarkably since then. What I think is very interesting is the Orthodox Church penetrating into other domains as implied earlier. Fishman (1972b) names *topic*, *role-relation* and *locale* as factors influencing domains. In case of religious domains, typical examples of a *topic* might be sermons, prayers, social topics, of *role-relation* it is cleric-cleric, cleric-parishioner, parishioner-cleric and parishioner-parishioner and a typical *locale* is the church (Spolsky, 1998). However, the Orthodox Church as a domain of language use also penetrates into the domains of media, education, family, friends etc. To draw some strict boundaries between single domains is impossible. The fact that the domain of the Orthodox Church does not belong only to the church, but also to other areas of social life and language use, makes the role of the Orthodox Church in the revitalization process even more important. The interconnection of these

domains and cooperation of different institutions offer better prospects for the revitalization efforts.

According to my informants, Skolt Sámi is always heard in the church, which they perceive very positively. They are proud to hear their own language in the church, which is a public place. Optimistically they also look to the future in respect to the use of Skolt Sámi at liturgies as shown for example in the quotes nr. 19 and nr. 20 earlier in the chapter. There is no doubt that the Finnish Orthodox Church has had quite an important role in developing Skolt Sámi oral and written language. It has raised its visibility in the public space and upgraded the status of Skolt Sámi language.

5.6. Challenges for the development of Skolt Sámi in the Orthodox Church

Even though my informants are positive in general about the use of Skolt Sámi in the church and look optimistically into the future, there are factors that hold the use of Skolt Sámi at Orthodox services back. What hinders Skolt Sámi language from being used even more during the liturgies is lack of resources on several levels. First, is the economic one. As mentioned earlier in the chapter, the Church has limited resources as illustrated by the quote nr. 16, in the section 4.4.1.

The second problem is illustrated as follows:

(23) Well, the condition of the Skolt Sámi language is weak. There are approximately 700 Skolt Sámi in Finland, from which maybe 200, or 300 speak. And in my opinion less than 100 can read and write in Skolt Sámi. [...] Those who do translation work into Skolt Sámi are overloaded with work. [...] So, that is the reason. There are no speakers, no proof-readers, so I don't believe that the church would be able to. There is a lack of resources. In the church and, especially among us just as in the language work (Tanja, 2015).

Tanja mentions similarly as Fr. Rauno the lack of economic resources. However, even more importantly she mentions the lack of human resources both productive and recipient. There are not many people qualified to do the translating jobs and these are overloaded with work. Secondly, there are not many people that actually can understand spoken Skolt Sámi and even less that can read it. What Tanja did not mention here is that out of these numbers, the number of people that speak and read Skolt Sámi and are active in the Orthodox Church is probably even smaller.

The third and probably the biggest challenge is related to the number of churchgoers and the relationship of the Skolt Sámi people towards Orthodoxy in general nowadays as illustrated in the quotes that follow.

(24) Lukas: Is it important in your opinion that Skolt Sámi is used in the church?

Sergei: Absolutely, but it is sad that churchgoers are too few (Sergei, 2015).

(25) The religion has problems as well. There are people that want to leave the church. [...] Now, I think of the youth, for them the church is not what it used to be in the old times, but it is a bit like a burden. Nowadays, youth don't go to church (Tanja, 2015).

(26) The language renaissance is now in process and maybe it will succeed. But now we wait to see, if also religious renaissance will come. Because historically, Skolts lived in areas where there wasn't a priest all the time. [...] Skolts were Orthodox, wanted to be Orthodox, but it's not a part of their tradition to go often to the church. [...] Now, we try to change that (Rauno, 2015).

As I was informed by several people, usually the number of churchgoers in Sevetijärvi ranges around ten people. As it is obvious from the quotes above, demographically speaking, churchgoers are rather older and the youth are not very interested in going to church. Such an issue has been already discussed in chapter one based on the Master's thesis of Mira Rantakeisu (2015). However, I would say that the problem of the low attendance at liturgies in Sevetijärvi is more complex. First, the area is huge and there are very big distances. It is difficult for some people to come to church. Secondly, Sevetijärvi has struggled with unemployment, and due to which some people have moved down south. Another factor is the fact that there is just a primary school in Sevetijärvi and thus the youth have to study elsewhere when they grow older. After that, due to limited options of employment in Sevetijärvi or nearby, people are constrained to move away. Thus, the low number at liturgies in Sevetijärvi can be explained by changing religious identity, but also by entirely practical reasons and the complex socioeconomic context.

5.7. A look into the future: how to develop Skolt Sámi language in the Orthodox Church

Nevertheless, as mentioned couple of times earlier, my informants were quite positive about the development of Skolt Sámi language use in the Orthodox Church and look optimistically into the future. I asked my informants what measures should be done in order to make better

environment and possibilities for the Skolt Sámi language in the Orthodox Church. The answers were often very similar and in addition resembled measures proposed by a former of the Orthodox Parish of Lapland Viatcheslav Skopets, known as Fr. Slava. He spoke at the conference about Skolt Sámi language and culture in June 2012 about six measures that might improve the Skolt Sámi language situation within the Orthodox Church (Skopets, n.d.). I will now discuss his proposals together with what my informants proposed.

Fr. Slava asked at the conference as follows: “How can we then strengthen Skolt Sámi language in the Finnish Orthodox Church? In my opinion, we might begin with the following six measures”²⁶ (Skopets, n.d., p. 3, my translation from Finnish).

In two first points, Fr. Slava mentions a better cooperation when it comes to the Skolt Sámi issues, with the Norwegian and Murmansk Orthodox diocese. He also suggests that the church council should support and encourage the staff in the northern region to learn Skolt Sámi at least on the basic level. As discussed earlier, education of clergy in Skolt Sámi at least on a basic level is necessary in reading the liturgical texts. Advanced knowledge of Skolt Sámi language would also enable Skolt Sámi homily or informal interaction of the priest with parishioners in Skolt Sámi. I am sure that such a development would be much appreciated among the Skolt Sámi population.

As the third point, Fr. Slava says that the work with the youth and development of such a work should be discussed on both diocesan and parish level. He says: “We have to awaken an interest in the Skolt Sámi youth towards church matters and bring up church staff from the Skolt Sámi people themselves”²⁷ (Skopets, n.d., p. 4, my translation from Finnish). This very topic has been often discussed by my informants and I would like to present their opinions on the topic since it is something that a lot of them feel as a big wish, but that they also perceive as a big challenge.

Some of my informants said that the ideal situation would be if there was a Skolt Sámi priest as illustrated by following quotes.

(27) Well, it would be wonderful, if someone who speaks Skolt Sámi would study theology or become a priest. That would be the best situation (Seija, 2015).

²⁶ Original Finnish text: *Miten sitten voimme vahvistaa koltansaamenkieltä Suomen ortodoksisessa kirkkokunnassa?*

²⁷ Original Finnish text: *Meidän on herätettävä nuorissa koltansaamelaisissa mielenkiintoa kirkollisia asioita kohtaan ja kasvatettava kirkon työntekijöitä koltansaamelaisten omista riveistä.*

(28) Like in the Skolt Sámi language situation in general. More language workers, more materials, more literature. Same in the church. And actually, a really perfect situation would be if, if we would get a priest that would have the Skolt Sámi education and background (Tanja, 2015).

However, at the moment it does not seem very likely as illustrated for example on the quote nr. 25 earlier in the chapter. The young people do not go to the church. Therefore, the question of how to engage the youth in the church arises. This question was important to Sergei and he expressed his concerns about the future of Orthodoxy among the Skolt Sámi youth. He appreciated the work of the contemporary priest Fr. Rauno, in relation to children. But the fact that the Skolt Sámi youth are not very interested in active Orthodoxy is obvious. However, such a development is natural since the number of churchgoers is usually quite low at the moment.

Sergei is very concerned about such development and the situation disturbs him. He says that religious education from home might be poor and parents do not take children to the church. Sergei during this discussion mentioned a very interesting thing, in my opinion.

(29) Well, in my opinion, it's not really enough that they [pupils] are there in the church listening to prayers. They should also sing in the choir. Then this choir song tradition would be built up. That also pupils would participate (Sergei, 2015).

This suggestion developed into a very interesting discussion between me and Sergei. I find this suggestion quite remarkable especially because of two main reasons. Such an activity might have a positive impact. First, by participating in the choir, youth might become active within the church. Secondly, by practicing hymns, one's language skills might improve. Such an activity, of course, would not by any means be a substitute for language education improving one's communicative skills, but rather an additional language training that would also broaden vocabulary, especially the one related to the religious terminology. This might have a positive effect in both religious and language education. In addition, this activity would develop other skills such as the musical talents, for example. By engaging youth into the church, this one is just an example, of how youth might become more engaged in church matters also in their adulthood. This way, there is also a higher chance that one day a Skolt Sámi would be interested in becoming an Orthodox priest which is a wish of many. Fr. Rauno reacted positively to this suggestion, stating that they would like to include children in the choir. Sadly, both in Ivalo and in Sevettijärvi, there are very few children.

As a fourth point, Fr. Slava points towards the gospel translation project organized by the Finnish Bible Society that should be done as soon as possible. As mentioned earlier in the chapter, nowadays, the work on the Gospel of Luke is in progress. Unfortunately, as I was informed by Erkki, it seems that it is in a dormant stage at the moment. When I asked my informants what improvements they would suggest, the Bible translation and religious literature translations into Skolt Sámi in general were very often mentioned. I would also add as implied earlier that Skolt Sámi should be even more visible in communication of the Orthodox Church towards its Skolt Sámi members. This visibility could be enlarged at some level on the notice board in front of the church in Sevetijärvi, on the official webpage of the Finnish Orthodox Church and on Facebook page of Orthodox Parish of Lapland.

As a fifth point, Fr. Slava suggests that the Church Council should prepare a project in order to translate the texts for baptisms, burial services, house blessings and vespers (evening prayer service). In addition, the contemporary priest Fr. Rauno mentioned that it is important to support Orthodox traditions of Skolt Sámi people. He talked similarly to Fr. Slava about baptisms, weddings, burial traditions but also about house blessings.

(30) Then when somebody dies, they ask a priest to drizzle with water, holy water, the house. Especially if someone dies at home. But there are often also cases when a person dies somewhere else, but they want to bless the house, where the deceased person lived, thus house blessing. Such a thing, thus house blessing, we Orthodox have also other places in Finland, but not like this, thus that they would always do it again when someone dies. This is a Skolt tradition (Rauno, 2015).

Also the contemporary Archbishop Leo who was a metropolitan in Diocese of Oulu mentions in his text from 1995 that young families that built new houses asked for house blessings (Leo, 1995, p. 66). These Orthodox traditions are still deeply rooted in Skolt Sámi culture and therefore availability of these religious texts in Skolt Sámi language would be a good step in strengthening Skolt Sámi within the Orthodox Church, also with regard to its utility. As mentioned earlier, availability of the Skolt Sámi translations of such texts that are used for Orthodox services and rituals together with priest's at least a basic knowledge of Skolt Sámi is essential to widen the field of possibilities for the use of the language within the religious domain. More translations of such texts is not only the main prerequisite of widening the possibilities for Skolt Sámi at such services, but also one of the most frequently mentioned wish of my informants. Of course, translation of this literature and its publication costs money and the resources are limited but in the digital age, and the costs can be reduced by using

possibilities of e-books, for example. Such an option was also mentioned by Fr. Rauno. However, more translations of religious texts are a crucial necessity for the development of Skolt Sámi in the church arena, but also for the language development in general.

As a sixth point, Fr. Slava talks about Skolt Sámi and their religious identity. He says that the Skolt Sámi people themselves should think about how significant Orthodoxy is for their nation and their identity. He says that if Orthodoxy is important for Skolt Sámi, they would activate themselves from within. Even though the youth do not seem to be very engaged in the Orthodoxy, Rantakeisu (2015, p. 92) expresses a certain hope in this regard: “The third generation Skolts are greatly influenced by the present revitalization movement and thus their relationship with the Orthodox Church might be reaffirming.”

The process of the religious revitalization of the Skolt Sámi Orthodox community or “renaissance” as Fr. Rauno refer to this in the quote nr. 26 earlier in the chapter, would also have a positive impact on the use of Skolt Sámi in the Church. In the opposite case, the use of Skolt Sámi in this domain of language use might decrease.

6. SUMMARY

Material and materialistic beings though we be, we still have not totally lost either the capacity or the need to live for ideals, for loved ones, for collective goals. It is via the primary sociocultural institutions that language is first related to the verities that make life worth living and it is to these institutions that policy makers must turn if they are to reconnect language with those verities. Every language needs an idea—a goal and a vision above the mundane and the rational—to keep it alive. The basic and minimally essential ‘idea’ is the imperative of remaining a separate ethnolinguistic entity, and a struggling language community must safeguard this idea before all others. In healthy languages the ‘idea’ need not even be consciously recognized by the bulk of the speakers; in struggling languages, consciousness of personal responsibility for the language (the symbolic integrator of all that is good and precious), needs to be developed early and stressed repeatedly. The family, the neighborhood, the elementary school, and the church need to be urged, instructed, rewarded, and guided to play their irreplaceable roles in this connection. There is no substitute for them, nor for the ideas that they can espouse from the very earliest and tenderest years and, thereafter, throughout the life span (ideas such as the inherent right to continue, the duty to continue, the privilege of continuing the language-in-culture association of any community’s historic preferred collective self-realization), no substitute, certainly, if vernacular functions are to be stabilized (Fishman, 1988, pp. 9-10).

This Master’s thesis deals with the topic of the Skolt Sámi language situation in Sevetijärvi and focuses on the domain of the Finnish Orthodox Church. The Orthodox Church has had a very important role in shaping the Skolt Sámi culture and identity. This thesis aims to present the relationship between the Orthodox Church and the Skolt Sámi people in Sevetijärvi from a sociolinguistic perspective. Ultimately, this thesis aims to answer the research questions introduced in the section 1.1., of what dynamics constitute the domain of the Finnish Orthodox Church as a domain of language use in Sevetijärvi and what role does the Church have in the Skolt Sámi revitalization process.

I found out that dynamics constituting the Orthodox Church in Sevetijärvi are very complex. I have shown what religious written sources are available in Skolt Sámi, what languages are used during religious services and what language people usually use during spiritual activities. I have also shown some of the factors influencing these language choices. Skolt Sámi people, in general, have a very positive attitude towards the Finnish Orthodox Church. The cultural and historical ties between Skolt Sámi people and the Orthodox Church are strong as well. As I argued in the analysis, I interpret Skolt Sámi entering into the Finnish Orthodox Church in the 1980’s as a response to the sociocultural changes and needs and revitalization movement starting in the 1970’s. Comprehensibility and the practical value of

the language in the Church have been some of the main driving forces. In my opinion and also in the opinion of some of my informants, the role of the Finnish Orthodox Church in the Skolt Sámi language revitalization movement has been quite remarkable. Skolt Sámi had not been used in the Orthodox Church as a liturgical language before the 1980's, therefore I would argue that if talking about Skolt Sámi language entering into this religious domain, we should call it *vitalization* rather than *revitalization*. When talking about the wider process of Skolt Sámi language, the term *language revitalization* is appropriate. The Finnish Orthodox Church intersects also with other language domains like education, media, family, friends etc. The mere fact that the language is used in the church strengthens the positions of Skolt Sámi and upgrades it. The Finnish Orthodox Church has contributed to development of oral and written Skolt Sámi language by its language work in its own domain as described earlier. In my opinion, the Orthodox Church still has great potential for helping the Skolt Sámi language revitalization efforts. How large the potential will be depends to a large degree on the Skolt Sámi community itself, meaning how important the Orthodox Church as an institution will be in Skolt Sámi lives. Challenges for the development of Skolt Sámi in the Orthodox Church are also described in my analysis.

In order to strengthen the Skolt Sámi language in the domain of the Orthodox Church, the following measures might help in my opinion: more translations of religious texts into Skolt Sámi in co-operations with other institutions, at least a basic language learning of Skolt Sámi for the clergy in the Orthodox Parish of Lapland, better visibility of Skolt Sámi in communication of the Orthodox Church towards its Skolt Sámi members and the work with Skolt Sámi youth.

This Master's thesis focuses especially on the relationship between one church and one language – the Finnish Orthodox Church and the Skolt Sámi language. However, I hope that this thesis will also attract the attention towards the importance of the research of the interaction between language and religion. The field of sociology of language and religion is relatively new, but I hope that the interest of scholars in this research will grow. As mentioned earlier, language and religions have influenced each other since time immemorial and continue to do so. Therefore, it is important to pay attention the intersection of these two. Examination of the relationship between language and religion might also help language revitalization movements around the world.

Even though my Master's thesis deals with a narrowly focused topic, I believe there is much to be examined and discussed in the relationship between the Finnish Orthodox Church

and the Skolt Sámi language. My research focused only on Sevettijärvi, but most likely many similarities will be found also in other parts of the Skolt Sámi region. Another interesting area might be to look at Skolt Sámi living outside of the Skolt Sámi area, for example in Rovaniemi, Oulu or Helsinki, and to examine how the Orthodox Church in urban areas contributes to the Skolt Sámi language and culture. As written earlier, many Skolt Sámi belong to the Lutheran Church nowadays. Thus, the relationship between the Lutheran Church and Skolt Sámi might be examined from many different perspectives.

The Finnish Orthodox Church is a very important sociocultural and religious institution that has its crucial role like family, education and other domains in the process of language revitalization. The Finnish Orthodox Church has helped in this process and I have a full conviction that it will continue to develop the Skolt Sámi language both in and outside its domain. I hope that also this Master's thesis will give a benefit to the academia but especially to the Skolt Sámi community in Sevettijärvi and in other parts of the Northern Europe, and also other indigenous groups and language minorities around the world.

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APPENDICES

1. Vuá'nelm (Abstract in Skolt Sámi)

Vuásp'po'd maainast še säämas: Ortodookslaš ceerkav kiõl domee'nen nuõrttsä'mmlai se'st Če'vetjääu'rest

Muu tuu'tk'elm ä'sšen lij Lää'dd ortodookslaš ceerkav kiõl domee'nen Če'vetjääu'rest. Pro gradu -tuájstan ta'rkstõõlam, mõõn'nalla Lää'dd ortodookslaš ceerkav Če'vetjääu'rest toimmai kiõl domee'nen le'be kiõl ââ'nnevuv'dden da mõõn'nallsem rool ortodookslaš ceerkvest lij leämmaž nuõrttsää'mkiõl kiõl revitalisaatiost le'be jeálltummšest. Nuõrttsää'm kiõl mainste arvvlõõzz mie'ldd nu'tt 250-300 nuõrttsä'mmli'žžed, kook lie Lää'ddjännmest, Taarrjännmest da Ruõššjännmest jälsteei alggmeer.

Tu'tk'keei lie tuõttâm, što ortodookslaš ceerkav lij leämmaž naanâs kulttuur kuõ'ddi viõkk da seämma ärra ceälkkmõõžžid ku'llem še muu informaantin tuájmmää'tkstan Če'vetjääu'rest. Lij pe'ccel, što tu'tk'keei lie vuämmšam tá'lk vää'neld ortodookslaš ceerkav da nuõrttsä'mmlai kõskkvuõd. Ortodookslaš ceerkav ij leäkku tu'tk'kuum kiõl vuei'nlmest, ij-ga kiõl jeálltem vuei'tlvaž neävvan. Tõn diõtt ta'rkstõõlam pro gradu-tuájstan täid kõõččmõõžžid. Teoretlaš vue'lğgempäi'k'ken âânam ameriikklaš sosiolingviist Joshua Fishman õõudeem fi'ttõõzz kiõl domee'nest le'be kiõl ââ'nnevuu'dest. No'rrem aunstõõzz tuájmmää'tkstan Če'vetjääu'rest ee'jjest 2015. Teättnoorrâm-mõõnte'lmmen õ'nnem tee'm-meäldlaž mainstättmõõžžid da vuässõõ'ttji vuämmšummšid. Muu aunstõs nãrrai låå'jest tee'm-meäldlaž mainstättmõõžžast da jiõččan vuämmšem aa'sšin. Jäänmõs muu mainstã'ttem oummin le'jje ortodokss-sä'mmla.

Što va'stte'čem tu'tk'keemkõõččmõõžžid, le'be mõõn nãä'leld ortodookslaš ceerkav Če'vetjääu'rest toimmai kiõl domee'nen da måkam rool ceerkvest lij leämmaž nuõrttsää'm kiõl jeálltummšest, leäm juâkkam muu aunstõõzz neellj vä'lddvue'zz lie tãk: ååsklvaž keerjlažvuõtt, sluu'žv da jee'res ceerkvallaš kãäzzkõõzz, åskldõkmãtt'tõs da kommunikaatio ceerkav domee'nest (pappkãã'dd da sie'bbrkã'ddnni'k'ki kõõsk, õhttu sie'bbrkã'ddnni'k'ki kõõsk, piãrrjin, takai jie'llmest da molldõõttãmjie'llmest).

Tãt pro gradu-tuãjj çuã'jat, mõõn'nalla ortodookslaš ceerkav Če'vetjääu'rest lij toimmjam kiõl domee'nen, mõõk faktoor vaaikte kiõl va'lljumšã tän domee'nest, mõõn'nalla tãt domee'n lij mõõnnãm õõudãrra da mõõn'nalla tõt lij vaaiktam nuõrttsää'm kiõ'lle še tän

domee'n oolgbear'lnn. Muu tuu'tkelm čuä'jat, što ortodookslaš ceerkav lij tue'rjjääm nuörttsää'm kiöl da tön õuddnummuž da jealltummuz. Seamma poodd čuä'jtam, mii meälgad nuörttsää'm kiöl õuddnummuž ceerkav domee'nest da mää'd äšša vuäi'tei tue'jjeed pue'tti ääi'jest.

2. Tiivistelmä (Abstract in Finnish)

Jumala puhuu myös koltansaameksi: Ortodoksinen kirkko kielen domeenina kolttasaamelaisten keskellä Sevettijärvellä

Tutkielmani aiheena on Suomen ortodoksinen kirkko kielen domeenina Sevettijärvellä. Pro gradu -työssäni tarkastelen, millä tavalla Suomen ortodoksinen kirkko Sevettijärvellä toimii kielen domeenina eli kielen käyttöalana ja millainen rooli ortodoksisella kirkolla on ollut koltansaamen kielen revitalisaatioissa eli elvytyksessä. Koltansaamen kieltä puhuu arviolta noin 250-300 kolttasaamelaista, jotka ovat Suomessa, Norjassa ja Venäjällä asuva alkuperäiskansa.

Tutkijat ovat todenneet, että ortodoksinen kirkko on ollut vahva kulttuuria kantava voima ja samankaltaisia lausuntoja kuulin myös informanteiltani kenttätyömatkallani Sevettijärvellä. Valitettavasti ortodoksinen kirkko kolttasaamelaisten keskellä on saanut vähän huomiota tutkijoilta. Ortodoksista kirkkoa ei ole tutkittu kielen näkökulmasta, eikä kielen elvytyksen mahdollisena välineenä. Siksi tarkastelen pro gradu-työssäni näitä kysymyksiä. Teoreettisena lähtökohtana käytän amerikkalaisen sosiolingvistin Joshua Fishmanin kielen domeenin eli kielen käyttöalan kehittämää käsitettä. Aineistoni keräsin kenttätyömatkallani Sevettijärvellä vuonna 2015. Tiedonkeruumenetelminä käytin teemahaastatteluja ja osallistuvaa havainnointia. Aineistoni koostuu kymmenestä teemahaastattelusta ja omista havainnoistani. Suurin osa haastateltavistani oli ortodoksi-kolttasaamelaisia.

Vastatakseni tutkimuskysymyksiin, eli millä tavalla ortodoksinen kirkko Sevettijärvellä toimii kielen domeenina ja millainen rooli kirkolla on ollut koltansaamen kielen elvytyksessä, olen jakanut aineistoni neljään pääosaan. Nämä pääosat ovat seuraavia: uskonnollinen kirjallisuus, jumalanpalvelukset ja muut kirkolliset palvelukset, uskonnonopetus ja kommunikaatio kirkon domeenissa (papiston ja seurakuntalaisten välillä, seurakuntalaisten keskellä, perheissä, yksityiselämässä ja rukouselämässä).

Tämä pro gradutyö osoittaa, millä tavalla ortodoksinen kirkko Sevettijärvellä on toiminut kielen domeenina, mitkä faktorit vaikuttavat kielenvalintaan tässä domeenissa, millä tavalla tämä domeeni on kehittynyt ja millä tavalla se on vaikuttanut koltansaamen kieleen myös tämän domeenin ulkopuolella. Tutkielmani osoittaa, että ortodoksinen kirkko on tukenut koltansaamen kieltä ja sen kehitystä ja elvytystä. Samaan aikaan osoitan, mikä

hidastaa koltansaamen kielen kehitystä kirkon domeenissa ja mitä asialle voisi tehdä tulevaisuudessa.

3. Teemahaastattelu (Interview guide in Finnish)

A. Henkilötiedot

- Nimi
- Syntymäaika
- Asuinpaikka
- Yleisiä koltansaamen kieltä koskevia kysymyksiä ja informantin koltansaamen kielen taidoista

B. Kuinka usein koltansaamen kieltä kuulee?

- Jumalanpalveluksissa, kun pappi puhuu
- Jumalanpalveluksissa, kun lauletaan
- Kasteissa, häissä, hautajaisissa, muissa uskonnollisissa tilaisuuksissa
- Uskonnon opetuksessa, koulussa, rippikoulussa, perheessä
- Petsamolaisen Trifonin pyhiinvaelluksessa
- Kahvilassa jumalanpalveluksen jälkeen

C. Kuinka usein koltansaamen kieltä näkyy?

- Kirkossa, kirkon pihalla (esim. ilmoitustaulussa)
- Kirkkolehdistä
- Suomen ortodoksisen kirkon nettisivulla
- Lapin seurakunnan Facebook sivulla

D. Kuinka usein käytät koltansaamea?

- Kun sinä puhut papin kanssa
- Kun sinä rukoilet
- Kun keskustellaan uskonnosta - perheessä, ystävien kanssa, muiden uskovaisien kanssa
- Kun sinä luet uskonnollista kirjallisuutta (Raammattua, rukouskirjaa...)
- Onko joitakin muita uskonnon liittyviä tilaisuuksia?
- Ymmärätkö kirkon sanastoa koltansaameksi? Käytätkö sitä?

E. Ortodoksinen kirkko ja sen merkitys kielen elvytykseen

- Mitä mieltä olet kirkon merkityksestä koltansaamelaisille ja koltansaamelaisten kulttuuriin?
- Mitä mieltä olet kirkon merkityksestä koltansaamen kielen elvytykseen?
- Miten voisi ortodoksinen kirkko auttaa koltansaamen kielen elvytystä ja minkälaisia toimenpiteitä pitäisi tehdä sinun mielestä?

4. Interview guide

This interview guide is a translation of the questions my informants were asked. The original Finnish interview guide is below. Nevertheless, this frame is only approximate, since as discussed in chapter 3, I did not use the interview guide very strictly in order to be flexible. Thus, depending on the situation, some questions were left out and some extra questions on the other hand might have been asked.

A. Basic personal information

- Name
- Date of birth
- Place of residence
- General questions about Skolt Sámi language and their Skolt Sámi language proficiency

B. How often do you hear Skolt Sámi language?

- At liturgies, when the priest talks
- At liturgies, when people sing
- At baptisms, weddings, funerals and other religious occasions
- At religious education? At school, at confirmation school, in the family
- At the St. Triphon's pilgrimage
- At the coffee drinking after liturgies

C. How often do you see Skolt Sámi language?

- In the church, church yard (for example at the notice board)
- In the church newspapers
- On the webpage of the Finnish Orthodox Church
- On the Facebook page of the Orthodox Church of Lapland

D. How often do you use Skolt Sámi

- When you talk to the priest
- When you pray

- When you talk about religious issues – in family, with friends with fellow parishioners
- When you read religious literature (Bible, the prayer book...)
- At other religious occasions
- Do you understand the church vocabulary in Skolt Sámi? Do you use it?

E. The Orthodox Church and its significance in the language revitalization

- What do you think about the Church's significance for the Skolt Sámi people and for the Skolt Sámi culture?
- What do you think about the Church's significance for the Skolt Sámi language revitalization?
- How might the Church help the Skolt Sámi language revitalization and what measures should be taken in your opinion?

5. Original Finnish transcriptions of the interview quotes

(1) Se on osa meidän kulttuuria se ortodoksisuus. Ja että, niin kuin kolttasaamelaisia ei pidetä mitenkään uskonnollisina ihmisinä kuitenkaan. Eivät he itse, eikä ulkopuolelta. Mutta se on niin kuin osa meidän kulttuuria se ortodoksikirkko. Sen kirkon merkitys meidän kulttuurin säilymiseen, niin kuin tähänkin tilanteeseen, se on ollut hyvin huomattava. Että ilman kirkkoa niin en osaa kuvitella miten... Siis, se perustuu siihen, että kirkko niin kuin tuo ihmiset yhteen ja sitä kautta se yhteisöllisyys siinä on ollut aina sen kaiken ajan (Tanja).

(2) Se tuntuu nyt tänä päivänä hyvin luonnolliselta jo, että tuota esimerkiksi jumalanpalveluksia toimitetaan ainakin osittain koltaksi. Että siinä vaiheessa silloin mä muistan nyt, että ne kirkolauluthan tietysti kanttorin johdolla olivat koltaksi, niitä myöskin käytettiin, niitä myöskin opittiin, sekä että seurakunta osallistuu näihin jumalanpalveluksiin ja laulaa niitä lauluja. Mutta sitten alkoi pikkuhiljaa kuulua myöskin tuota papin toimituksissa, niissä alkoi kuulla sitä kieltä ja siihen kiinnitti tietysti huomiota sen tähden, että he niin kuin vieraskielisinä siis käyttivät sitä meidän omaa kieltä (Merja).

(3) Lukas: Huomasin, että eilen käytettiin ehkä 10 prosenttia koltansaamea jumalanpalveluksessa. Miltä se näyttää tavallisesti?

Maaria: Mä luulen, että enemmän käytetään normaalisti kirkossa koltansaamea kuin mitä käytetään pyhitysjuhlan aikaan. Koska silloin on niin paljon niitä suomalaisia, ja suomalaiset kuorot ja tavallaan niin niitä kieliä on niin paljon, että se koltansaame tulee esille, mutta tulee paljon vähemmässä määrin esiin tämmösessä ... kuin tavallisesti. Tavallisesti on paljon enemmän koltansaameksi (Maaria).

(4) Rauno: Mutta mä aina katson että onko läsnäolevat ihmiset, onko siinä koltan osaajia, jos on edes yksi niin sitten käytetään. Mutta jos ei oo yhtään niin sitten taas en niin kuin show:n takia. Mutta sitten voin käyttää myöskin kirkkoslaavia tai englantia. Jos on ulkomaalaisia, niin käytämme vähän englantia.

[...]

Lukas: Ja kirkkoslaavia?

Rauno: Jos on venäläisiä paikalla (Rauno).

(5) Kirkossa mä käyn kyllä aika harvoin. Että yleensä se on jotku häät, kastajaiset tai hautajaiset. Silloin oon kirkossa. Muuten käyn tosi harvoin. Kyllä, kirkossa kuulee koltansaamea, no vaikka niitä kirkollislauluja. Laulut ovat aika usein koltankielellä. Sitten pappi puhuu koltaksi välillä. Semmosta suomea ja kolttaa. Kyllä, kolttaa kuulee kirkossa aika paljon (Aaro).

(6) Aina hautauksissa esimerkiksi vähän lauletaan myös koltansaameksi. Meillä on esimerkiksi hyvästijättö (Erkki & Aulikki).

(7) Hetkonen. Kyllä, käytettiin ainakin häissä, mutta se riippuu vähän, mitä haluaa se pariskunta. Viime vuonna oli yhdet häät, missä käytettiin koltansaamea (Maaria).

(8) Meillä oli pappina isä Yrjö Rämö. Niin, se hyvin moitti tätä tapahtumaa ja tapausta, että kannusti. Kerran hän tuli sanomaan että: ”Älkää unohtako, rakkaat lapset, omaakieltä ja rukouksia. Rukoilkaa näitten puolesta.” Se oli rohkaisu, rohkaisun sanat (Sergei).

(9) Isä Yrjö suhtautui erittäin hyvin koltansaamelaisiin mutta todella suhtautui kielteisesti koltansaamenkieliseen liturgiseen (jumalanpalvelus) tekstiin (Erkki).

(10) Lukas: Kuinka arvostelet ortodoksisen kirkon merkitystä kielen elvytyksessä?

Tanja: Tärkeä. Minä pidän sitä tärkeänä, koska kieltä ei ole eritelty ennen näitä päiviä siinä meidän kulttuurissa. Siis, se oli siis osa sitä, se oli niin kuin äidinkieli, puhekieli. Mutta sitten kirkko auttoi kolttien olosuhteita, elämää, silloin kun Petsamosta muutettiin niin kuin Suomeen. Niin, se, että niin kuin pysyttiin elossa. Tavallaan se on kirkon suurin työ, mitä se on tehnyt, se, että kolttaa edes on. Mutta sitten pikkuhiljaa tuli kielen elvytys siihen minusta, koska sitä ei ehkä huomattu, kuinka tärkeä se kielenelvytystyö on. Mutta sitten vasta kun tuota meille tuli nämä opettajat, jotka alko miestensä ja kielityöntekijöiden avustuksella tekemään sitä kielioppia. Mutta sen jälkeen kirkkokin on huomannut. Toki ollaan huomattu, että heikkompaan suuntaan se on mennyt se kielen tila. Mutta että se joka on hoksannut tarttua. Niin heitä täytyy kyllä nyt kiittää, kirkko on yks. Mutta kirkolla on se suurin apu ollu, että me olemme olemassa (Tanja).

(11) Miä en muista montaa pappia. Että mä muistan, sillä lailla, että niin kuin enämpi ois käytetty, kyl, mä muistan, että isä Slava ja sitten nykyinen isä Rauno, niin tuota olisivat käytäneet. Ei ole monta pappia. Ei. Ei yhtään äidinkielistä pappia ole koskaan ollut (Merja).

(12) Lukas: Muistatko, saitko sitä uskonnonopetusta koulusta vai perheestä?

Teijo: No, sekä että. Koulussa oli aika vähän sitä uskonnonopetusta. Täällä ei ollut ollenkaan, sitten kun menin keskikouluun Ivaloon, siellä oli tunti per viikko. Paljon koulussa ei ollut sitä. [...]

Lukas: Puhuttiinko uskonnosta myöskin perheessä?

Kyllä, puhuttiin uskonnostakin (Teijo).

(13) Lukas: Oliko se näin, että sä sait sitä uskonnonopetusta koulusta ennimäkseen?

Aaro: Joo. Meillä oli aina, koulussa oli tietenkin uskonnon tunnit ja sitten oli kaikkea, käytiin aina kirkossa tuossa, kun oli joku palvelus meneillä, ja kaikkea semmosta. Ennimäkseen koulussa puhuttiin uskonnosta (Aaro).

(14) Meillä ehkä seuraava askel on se, kun minä kirjoitan Inarilainen-lehdessä, aina kerran pari kuukaudessa, semmosen hengellisen kirjoituksen, että se tulis sekä suomeksi että koltaksi (Rauno).

(15) Minä toimitan Yle Sámi radiossa myös koltansaamelaisia hartauksia. [...] Nyt tällä hetkellä se on kymmenen kertaa vuodessa. Mutta se on liian pitkä, kun pitää puoli tuntia toimittaa. Kirkkolauluja siinä myös, mie otan suomea, kirkkoslaavia ja vähän koltansaamea. [...] En tiedä sitten, ensi vuonna miten paljon tulis, mutta minä pidin keskimäärin ennen, esimerkiksi viis, kuus hartautta vuodessa (Erkki & Aulikki).

(16) Haluamme olla etukenossa. Mutta myös proaktiivisuudessa pitää olla tietyt rajat, että, se ei ole vain show. [...] Siis, vastaus siihen kysymykseen, tuleeko [koltansaami] sinnekin [Facebook-sivulle], niin ehkä. Ei niin kuin show:n takia. [...] Koska meillä on hyvin pienet ressurssit (Rauno).

(17) Seija: Joo...tietysti, jos tuota juttelen näiden pappien kanssa ja jos siellä on muitakin vieraita, suomalaisia, niin silloinhan joutuu käyttämään suomea, mutta jos me niin kuin vain

keskenämme jutelemme, niin kyllä me silloin puhumme koltaksi. Onko se sitten mikä se prosenttisumma ois sitten, onko se fifty fifty. Se riippuu siitä ketä on paikalla.

Lukas: Niin, sitten kun tiedät, että se ihminen osaa koltansaamea, niin sitten puhutaan koltansaamea?

Seija: Niin, kyllä. Koltat ovat niin kohteliaita, etteivät halua jättää ketään ulkopuolelle. Niin, silloin tuota kieli vaihtuu heti, että hänkin ymmärtää. Että kaikki on sitten keskustelussa mukana. Toisaalta se on huono asia myöskin, että tuota, kun, minusta puhe sais jatkaa koltaksi, ja sitten se joka ei ymmärrä, niin tulis kysymään sitten että, mitä sinä sanoit, että voisitko sanoa myöskin suomeksi tai kääntää sitä kyseiselle henkilölle. Mutta ei sen tarvis aivan kokonaan loppua se kielen käyttö (Seija).

(18) Se riippuu niin tilanteesta, se riippuu jotenkin siitä että, mä hyvin paljon yritän, sanoisinko, että se on ehkä semmosta sekakieltä. Se on semmonen tavaallan, että jos jokin asia tulee sujuvasti ulos koltaksi, niin minä sanon sen koltaksi, mutta sitten niin, siellä täällä sanon suomeksi. [...] Joo, sekakieli, kolttu, suomi, kolttu, kolttu (Maaria).

(19) Mun mielestä koltansaamen kieli on ollut aina kirkossa mukana. Ainakin niin kuin mun käsittääkseni. Että se on niin kuin aina ollut osana sitä elämää. Se ei oo niin kuin tavallaan muuttunut. Vaikka papit vaihtuu ja kanttorit vaihtuu, niin kuin, niin silti se koltansaamen kieli säilyy siinä palveluksessa (Maaria).

(20) Lukas: Minkälainen rooli ortodoksisella kirkolla on elvytyksessä tai säilyttämisessä?

Merja: Sanon, että se on tosi merkittävä. Mun henkilökohtainen mielipide on, että se on merkittävin. Siis, tietysti oppimateriaali on tehty, et sitte tuota, et jos miettii, että mitä kaikkea niin kuin koulu ja sen opettajat siellä Sevetijärvellä ovat tehneet ja sitten plus mitä se kirkko on mahdollistanut, sen että nämä kaikki käännetään koltaksi, niin se on mun mielestä tosi merkittävä teko. Miä pidän sitä semmosena yhtenä merkittävimmistä tämmösisistä kielenelvytysasioista. Elikkä tuota, silloin ku näitä on alettu tekemään, tuota silloin ei puhuttu kielenelvytyksestä mitään, sillä termillä. Et se on niin kuin kielenelvytys, et se termi tuli myöhemmin vasta, mutta siis mun mielestä ne toimet ovat jo alkaneet ennen sitä, elikkä siinä vaiheessa, kun alettiin tuota koltasta tekemään kirjakieltä, niin hyvin nopeasti niin kuin on kirkko ollut siinä mukana (Merja).

(21) Vaikka ei olisi kirkollisista asioista kiinnostunut, niin näitä tekstejä kannattaa tutkia sen takia, koska täällä on niin kuin kaikki kohdallaan. Tää on tavallaan semmonen, nämä kirkon tekstit on semmosia, mistä voi oppia koltankieltä paljon, koltan kieliopista ja sitten myöskin sanojen johtamisesta ja kaikkia mahdollista täältä voi löytää. Ne ovat niin arvokkaita teoksia, vaikkia siis tämä [rukouskirja] on pieni (Merja).

(22) Meillä myös on pappi, diakoni ja kansa, jota kuoro edustaa. Mutta meillä voi vastata eri kielellä, kuin mitä pappi tai diakoni käyttää. Loogisuuden kannalta voi olla hyvä pysyä samassa kielessä papin kanssa, mutta mitään teologista syytä ei ole (Rauno).

(23) Siis, koltansaamen kielen tila on heikko. Meitä asuu Suomessa 700 koltansaamelaista, josta 200, 300 ehkä puhuu kieltä. Ja alle 100 minun mielestäni niin kuin osaa lukea ja kirjoittaa sitä. [...] Ne, jotka tekee työkseen, niin kuin käännöstöitä koltansaameksi, niin he ovat ylityöllistettyjä. [...] Niin, se on se syy. Ei ole osajia, eikä ole niinko oikolukijoita, niin en usko, että nyt kirkkokaan pystyy. Koska se ressurssien puute on. Sekä kirkolla, mutta varsinkin meillä niin kuin kielityössä (Tanja).

(24) Lukas: Onko se tärkeää sinun mielestä, että kirkossa puhutaan koltansaamea?

Sergei: On, tottakai. Mutta, on ikävä kyllä niin, että kirkossa kävijöitä on liian vähän (Sergei).

(25) Uskonnollakin on sellaisia vaikeuksia, että ihmiset haluavat erota kirkosta. [...] Jos nyt mietin kolttanuoria, niin heille se kirkko ei enää ole semmonen asia niin kuin ennen vanhaan, vaan se on niin kuin vähän niin kuin pakkopullaa. Tällä hetkellä nuoria ei käy kirkossa (Tanja).

(26) Kielen renesanssi on nyt menossa ja ehkä se onnistuu. Mutta nyt niin kuin odotamme, että tuleeko myöskin uskonnon renesanssi. Koska historiallisesti koltat asuivat semmosissa paikoissa, joissa pappi ei ollut koko ajan. [...] Koltat oli ortodokseja, halusi olla ortodokseja, mutta heillä ei ole osa traditiota käydä usein kirkossa. [...] Nyt me yritämme sitä muuttaa (Rauno).

(27) No, sehän olis tietysti ihanteellista, että joku lähtisi opiskelemaan sitä, joka osaa koltan kieltä, lähtisi opiskelemaan teologiaa tai papiksi. Niin, sehän olisi se kaikista paras tilanne, kyllä (Seija).

(28) Samalla lailla niin kuin koltankielen yleistilaki yleensä. Enemmän kielityöntekijöitä, enemmän materiaaleja, enemmän kirjallisuutta. Sama kirkossa. Ja oikeastaan, jos, oikein semmonen ihannetilanne olis, niin meille tulis uskonnollinen vaikka siis pappisihminen, jolla olis myös niin kuin koltankielinen opinnot ja tausta (Tanja).

(29) Niin, ei se minusta oikein riitä, että ne on siellä, niin kuin kirkkokansakuuntelemassa ruokouksia. Niitten pitäisi laulaa kuorossa. Sitten tämä kuorolaulu sitten taas kehittää. Että koululaiset siinä myös olisivat mukana (Sergei).

(30) Sitten kun joku on kuollut, niin pyytävät, että pappi vihmoo vedellä, siunatulla vedellä kodin. Erityisesti jos on kuollut kotona. Mutta myös semmosessa tapauksessa usein, että on kuollut muualla, mutta halutaan että se talo, jossa se tämä vainaja on viimeksi asunut, niin se, niin kuin kodinpyhitys. Semmosta, siis kodinpyhitys on meillä muuallakin Suomessa ortodokseilla, mutta ei tämä, että aina uudestaan jos joku on kuollut. Tämä on kolttatapa (Rauno).