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Saami Language and Linguistic Practices in a South Saami Preschool

Short description / Abstract:

For more than 20 years, preschool education offered in Saami has been regulated in Swedish law. Preschools providing Saami language education have opened in both urban and rural areas in Sweden (e.g., Brännmark, 2024). However, little research has examined the pedagogical practices emerging within these Saami medium preschool settings.

In this paper, we draw on three researcher's visits to a Saami preschool section located in the South Saami area. During our visits, a Saami outdoor learning environment was constructed in the preschool yard. We investigate Saami language use and linguistic practices, as well as how Saami ways of being, doing, and storying function as mechanisms for decolonising place and space.

Alongside established literature from the global Indigenous world—such as the work of Jo Ann Archibald—we present our findings through concepts rooted specifically in the (South) Saami context, including Dæjmijes vuekie (Kappfjell et al., 2024) and Savka (Fjellheim, 2004). We also employ Ektietjiehtjele (adapted from North Saami searvelatnja). Parts of the presentation may be delivered in South Saami.