



Report: Micro-project

Project Details

Title: AI minority silencing: Minority language models and digital communication practices of young Meänkieli speakers in Sweden

TAIGA Focus Area: CELS AI

Start date: 2024-05-01

End date: 2024-12-30

Responsible person(s):

Moa Eriksson Krutrök, Associate professor at Department of Culture and Media Studies, Umeå University

Pär Poromaa Isling, Associate professor at Department of Political Science, Umeå University

Summary

While the invention of AI for generative text has moved extensively in the last years, minority languages have fallen behind. While tools such as Google Translate and Chat GPT aid the majority language speaker by the immediate generation of text, translations, summaries etc., these systems have yet to include most minority languages. This project seeks to understand the precarious positions of minority language holders as they navigate digital modes of engagement with others.

This project has allowed us to investigate the language revitalization efforts of a government authority of meänkieli through the use of semistructured interviews with government officials working with the revitalization of minority languages, including language technologists, language conservators, and language promoters. Before the data collection commenced, we could apply for ethical funding (Dnr. 2024-03154-01) using TAIGA funding. We are still working on two publications that will be sent for publication in the fall of 2025.

Method

During the fall of 2024, we have conducted interviews with six government officials working with language revitalisation in Sweden. These were conducted using Zoom, due to time constraints and lack of time available in each of the researchers' schedules.





Results

As our funds from TAIGA has mainly allowed us to collect data during the fall of 2025, we are still lacking publishable results. Nonetheless, we have over six hours of recorded interviews which have been transcribed and initially analyzed in order to commence the work on two separate publications, focusing on the relevance of AI systems in language revitalization efforts for minority languages. Also, we have built long-term connections to the government agency, communicated our ongoing project using LinkedIn, and have plans to send in a VR application during the spring of 2025.

Resource allocation

Before the data collection commenced, we were able to apply for ethical funding (Dnr. 2024-03154-01) using TAIGA funding. This costed 5000 kr in total.

1. Personnel costs (inc. Overhead): 0
2. Material costs: 0
3. Travel costs: 0
4. Other costs (specify): 5000 kr (Ethical approval)

Evaluation

We believe the project has met its objective of commencing and finishing all data collection within the timeframe of the project, as well as apply for relevant ethical funding for this purpose. We believe that the project was well connected to TAIGA's focus area of Critical, Ethical, Legal and Social AI, (CELS-AI) due to its focus on the "sociopolitical realities of AI" (as expressed by Lindgren, 2024). One key takeaway was the strength of combining research fields of minority studies and digital media studies for the purpose of this project. We would also like to thank TAIGA for their cooperation.

Responsible person(s)

Date: 21 jan 2025

Moa Eriksson Krutrök

Pär Poromaa Isling





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