

**(364 words)**

## **ABSTRACT**

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### **Action research - tool for decolonization and revitalization of culture and language in Sámi/Indigenous schools**

The context for the study Sápmi, an indigenous area within the states of Norway and Sweden. The Sámi schools/preschools have to follow the national regulations, but additionally develop their own school plans. Teachers and parents have a vision of a cultural sensitive school that takes the culture in account as a strength as well as to be a part in the vitalization of the Sámi culture. On their own initiative, the Sami schools contacted researchers requesting them to collaborate and to coordinate a research project aimed at enhancing the Sami perspective within the work of the school. The «participatory action research model” was the methodology chosen, presupposing that researchers and workers cooperate in reviewing and altering existing practices. The study shows how Sami teachers transform their culture to be part of their pedagogy in Sami schools and also how they implement this into the school curriculum. The study also presents how the teachers strengthen their own identity as Sami teachers.

It is important that research contributes to the benefit of cultural revitalization and the deceased Professor Anton Hoëm stated that over the past 50 years, the development of research methods in the field of social sciences and pedagogy has not been impressive. He especially underlined the lack of methods adjusted to those societies in the world who face the challenge of revitalization and the modernization of their traditional cultures and languages.

As researcher my task was to monitor the learning of teachers and the process of their promotional work and elucidate what happened and how it progressed. The investigations brought to light the struggle teachers face in finding a space for Sámi tradition and content in the school activity. The need for decolonization, to re-centre their sámi values and cultural practices as legal expected. To deconstruct people’s colonized minds, to reflect on how the colonizing process has influenced their thinking and understanding is a process that cannot be undermined. They need learning, advice and renewal of practice and decolonizing efforts demand in order to succeed. However, with these terms it will be possible to promote Sámi content and bring Sámi teaching methods into the schools. The research should also become an example in encouraging politicians, school authorities, headmasters and teacher groups to initiate similar endeavors in Sámi/indigenous schools in their own areas.