

Active and Backgrounded Agency Concerning Language Maintenance in Karelian Minority Media Texts

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Karelian is a language spoken mainly in the Republic of Karelia in the Russian Federation. It is an endangered language, which the children typically no longer learn in the home (UNESCO, Karjalainen et al. 2013: 56–57). Its current state calls for urgent revitalization efforts. The aim of this study is to examine how the current state of the language and language revitalization efforts, most of all language teaching, are presented in the Karelian-language newspaper *Oma Mua*, a visible part of Karelian minority media. I pay particular attention to the following issues:

1. What kinds of choices concerning agency can be found in newspaper discourses on teaching and learning Karelian?
2. Can these choices affect language maintenance?

Karelians are a linguistic minority in need of protection and support, but it is not certain that the majority can recognize these needs. A further question is, to what extent the minority itself recognizes them. In this study I examine how these needs are made visible on the pages of a minority newspaper.

The method applied in this study is based on critical discourse analysis (eg. van Dijk 1993; Fairclough 1995). Critical discourse analysis, an interdisciplinary approach to the dialogic relationship of discourse and society, has since the 1980s established itself as a versatile and practically oriented approach to media discourses (van Dijk 1991: 108–109). Its fundamental idea of language as social action, both reflecting and modifying social reality, makes language use a significant factor in minority – majority dynamics.

1. Karelian language in the Republic of Karelia

The main speaking areas of the Karelian language are in the Russian Federation, mostly inside the Republic of Karelia. There are also estimated at least 10 000 Karelian speakers in Finland (Sarhimaa 2017: 114). Karelian language is a Finno-Ugric language closely related to the other Finnic languages such as Finnish and Estonian. The main variants or dialects of Karelian are Olonets Karelian and Karelian proper (ibid. 28–29; Karjalainen et al. 2013: 3–4).

Olonets Karelian and Karelian proper have a standard literary language and are used in the media. They can also be taught at schools and kindergartens (Sulkala 2010: 13–14). However, the use of Karelian language in education and media is scarce. For example, Karelian is not used as a medium of instruction in schools (Karjalainen et al. 2013: 38–44).

My study deals with Olonets Karelian that has approx. 14 000 speakers or less (Karjalainen et al. 2013: 2). During the last century there has been a significant decline in the number of speakers of Karelian. This is mostly due to dramatic changes in living conditions, caused by World War II and the subsequent settlement policy, which brought large numbers of non-Karelian speakers to the Republic and also demolished several small Karelian settlements as “perspectiveless” (Pasanen 2010: 101). In addition, Karelian did not have a standard literary language before the 1990’s and was not used in the public sphere, although in the late 1930s Karelian was standardized (with poor success) and made second official language in the republic aside Russian. This was done in order to abolish the official status of Finnish, associated with capitalist Finland, and replace it with Karelian. This state of affairs only lasted, however, until 1940. After WWII Russian was actively promoted, and in the 1970s and 1980s russification took place extremely rapidly. Language shift was due to education policy and changes in economical and social networks caused by urbanization (Sarhimaa 1996: 75–78; Karjalainen et al. 2013: 56–57).

The negative demographic development taking place among the Karelians does not support the preservation of the language. Simultaneously, as living conditions in villages have worsened, more and more Karelian speakers have migrated to towns and cities, where they form a small minority of the population and often do not wish to exhibit their ethnic and linguistic background. Mixed marriages are frequent. Linguistic assimilation has a long tradition as a means of social ascent. At the moment, only 7,24 % of the population of the Republic of Karelia is ethnic Karelian. It is likely that the diminishing tendency will remain the same in the future (Lallukka 2012: 178–189).

The facts presented above show that Karelian is in need of urgent revitalization. Language revitalization means attempts to reverse the decline of a language, to increase its vitality and thus eventually prevent its death. Central tools in this work include changing the attitudes of the community to respect multilingualism as well as ensuring possibilities for language transmission to the younger generations (home, day care, schools) and for using the language outside of the home (eg. Fishman 1991; Romaine 2007; Crystal 2000).

Most Karelian speakers are of age and the transmission of the language does not usually happen in families. Attempts have been made to pass on the Karelian language through children's day care. The first Karelian language nests were established in the early 2000s in the northern part of the Republic and one was opened in Petrozavodsk in 2009. Later on, due to administrative changes, these have become rather Karelian language-oriented day care centres with elements, such as games and songs, in the heritage language. Such day care centres with Karelian-language elements function also elsewhere in the republic. Karelian is being taught at schools, but only to a minor extent, and it is not the language of teaching. Consequently, doing a vocational or university degree in Karelian is not possible (Karjalainen et al. 2013: 40–44).

Possibilities for using Karelian outside of the home are very limited. The main forums for using Karelian are the national cultural organizations such as the numerous Karelian folk music groups, which are considered as carriers of linguistic and cultural tradition. These, however, rarely reach the younger generations (Pasanen 2011: 102, 106–107). The Karelian youth organization *Nuori Karjala* ('Young Karelia') organizes its own events, and there are some music and theatre groups founded by and aimed at the young. Their possibilities are, however, limited, and these activities reach only a small part of the Karelian population. Especially Karelian-language activities for the young are rare.

A central forum for using and cultivating the language is the Karelian language media, of which local newspapers are the characteristic type. In the Republic of Karelia there is currently one weekly newspaper (*Oma Mua*) in Karelian and two magazines with may include some content in Karelian. As often is the case with minority media, they are being used not only for informative purposes, but also for the maintenance and development of the language. TV and radio broadcasts are scarce, new media practically non-existing (Karjalainen et al. 2013: 11, 38–39). In the following I will give a brief overview on the role the media plays in minority language maintenance in general.

2. Media and minorities

The media are powerful actors in the modern daily life. They have the power to focus on some topics and ignore others, thus shaping our idea of what issues are important, and, for their part, steering public discussion (van Dijk 1991: 110).

Minority issues are a topic the mainstream media rarely take into account. When they do so, they may present the ethnic minorities in a negative light, even as sources of trouble (Riggins 1992: 2). Therefore one of the main functions of minority media is to serve as a public sphere, enabling the minority's involvement in political life and giving it a voice of its own. The media can also create a sense of belonging to a group, thus producing identities (Cormack 2007: 54–55). Riggins (1992: 2) sees minority language media as a tool against folklorization. Folklorization denotes the focusing to the traditional culture of the minority, thus making it interesting and exotic to the outside but simultaneously reducing the essence of the minority to mere (visual) tradition. Minority media may, for its part, expand the sphere reserved for the minority. It serves as a political vehicle to promote the language use, introducing new words and encouraging people to read and write in the minority language. Being able to report on modern-day phenomena requires constant language development and planning. It also has significant symbolic value in signaling the competence of the language community in the modern world. Additionally, the media may serve as a forum for language use and as a counterweight for mainstream media, which in turn accelerate language shift and assimilation (Fishman 2001: 473–474). The ability to balance majority media supports preserving ethnolinguistic vitality (Moring – Husband 2007: 76). On the other hand, discourse analysis should be sensitive towards the question of how much the majority dictates the nature of writing in the minority media, especially in cases where the minority media is financed by state organs.

3. Critical discourse analysis as a method of study

This study focuses on the representations of Karelian language teaching in a Karelian newspaper. In a text, only a fraction of the content is expressed explicitly. The rest is left unsaid and left for the reader to interpret with the help of her knowledge of the world and previous models guiding her interpretations (van Dijk 1991: 113–114). To be able to decipher these hidden messages, the researcher must know well not just the language the text was written in but also the context in which it was produced.

Critical discourse analysis derives from critical studies and is an interdisciplinary, problem-oriented approach to the relation of discourse and society. In critical discourse analysis stress is laid on social justness (Wodak 2014: 302–304). The researcher is encouraged not only to identify social injustice in the discourse, but to propose own ideas on how the identified problems could be solved (van Dijk 1995). The aim of CDA is to identify and evaluate ways in which reality is constructed in discourse and to clarify the connection of discourse and power (Jäger – Maier 2009: 36–38).

This study is loosely based on an analysis model proposed by Norman Fairclough (2001: 125). Attention is paid to the network of practices, in which the subject of study is located. In Fairclough's (ibid: 122) own definition "(...) a practice is on the one hand a relatively permanent way of acting socially which is defined by its position within a structured network of practices, and a domain of social action and interaction which both reproduces structures and has the potential to transform them." For example government, politics and medicine have different social practices. In chapter 3 I attempt to position the Karelian media in a network of practices.

In chapter 4 I identify and characterize some discourses typical for this type of interaction. By discourses I mean certain ways of talking, linguistic representations of reality, "diverse representations of social life which are inherently positioned" (Fairclough 2001: 123, 126). Discourses "regulate ways of talking, thinking and acting" (Jäger – Maier 2009: 35). In chapter 5 I focus on the explicitness of agency (van Dijk 1991: 116; Fairclough 2001: 123–126, van Leeuwen 2008: 28–32) and its connection with power relations and responsibility. This approach has been applied in the study of Finnic minority languages / varieties by Kadri Koreinik (2011) in her article on agency in newspaper texts concerning South Estonian and language rights. Division of responsibility as reflected in the representations of actors in Karelian and Veps discourses (from sociolinguistic interviews and media texts) has been studied by Puura – Tánczos (2016). This article is an attempt to continue the same line of study on a more structural level.

3.1. Characteristics of Oma Mua, a newspaper in Karelian

I have chosen for analysis the weekly newspaper *Oma Mua* ("Own land") published in Olonets Karelian. *Oma Mua* was chosen because of its relatively wide circulation and coverage and frequent long-time publication. It was founded in 1990 by the authorities of the Republic and it is published by the Periodika publishing house, which also publishes newspapers in Finnish and Veps languages. Until 2000 the paper had contents in two Karelian language

varieties, but was then split into two separate papers, *Oma Mua* in the Olonets Karelian variety and *Vienan Karjala* in North Karelian variety (VK, 25.10.2012). In 2014 *Oma Mua* and *Vienan Karjala* were merged again (OM, 25.12.2013).

In the beginning the activity of *Oma Mua* was extremely small-scale. It asked for the readers' help in producing stories and published mostly cultural materials and articles on local history. In Pietiläinen's (2002: 189) view, *Oma Mua*, albeit state-founded, could function as an organ of Karelian culture and not as an organ of the authorities.

Oma Mua was published twice per month and from January 2011 on weekly. It has a circulation of 900 exemplars (WP2) and until 2011 had four pages, from January 2011 eight pages. It receives most of its funding (75–85%) from the state (Rämenen 2007: 66). The editorial office of *Oma Mua* is located in Petrozavodsk. It is mostly read in the surrounding Olonets Karelian speaking areas (Filippova 2005: 93).

Oma Mua focuses on Karelian language and cultural and nationality issues, but also contain most important news from the Karelian Republic and other parts of Russia. It also publishes fiction in Karelian. In general it can be said that its readership consists mostly of the elderly, language activists and students learning Karelian. This is in line with the decline of Karelian speakers. Many young people of Karelian origin do not possess a sufficient language competence for reading in Karelian, or they are not accustomed to following Karelian-language media. One should note that practically all Karelian speakers are bilingual (many with dominant Russian) and thus able to turn to the more wide-ranging Russian media. This may in part explain the relatively large number of reports on festivals and other cultural events, feature stories and readers' correspondence in *Oma Mua*. Readers may be more eager to pick up a Karelian paper, if they can expect to find familiar faces on its pages.

3.2. Location of the *Oma Mua* texts in their social and discursive context

A text published in *Oma Mua* is a means of interaction between the journalist and the reader, and also their background groups, such as the editors, the publisher, to some extent also the authorities of the Republic and the reader's community. It binds together everyday life with politics and administration. Figure 1 presents the network of a text published in *Oma Mua*. One noteworthy matter is the dependence of *Oma Mua* from the government of the republic. It is also part of the tradition of Karelian cultural activity and

of Russian Finno-Ugric minority media which has not been political by nature. It situated in the field of Russian regional newspapers. In Russia the media has not acquired the role of the Fourth Estate and although the papers do report on politics they do not often analyze it or keep watch on the politicians (Pietiläinen 2011: 12).

Besides its material location in the field of national politics and the press, the figure also shows the location of the text within discourse orders. These are conventional ways of using language inside a certain social sphere.

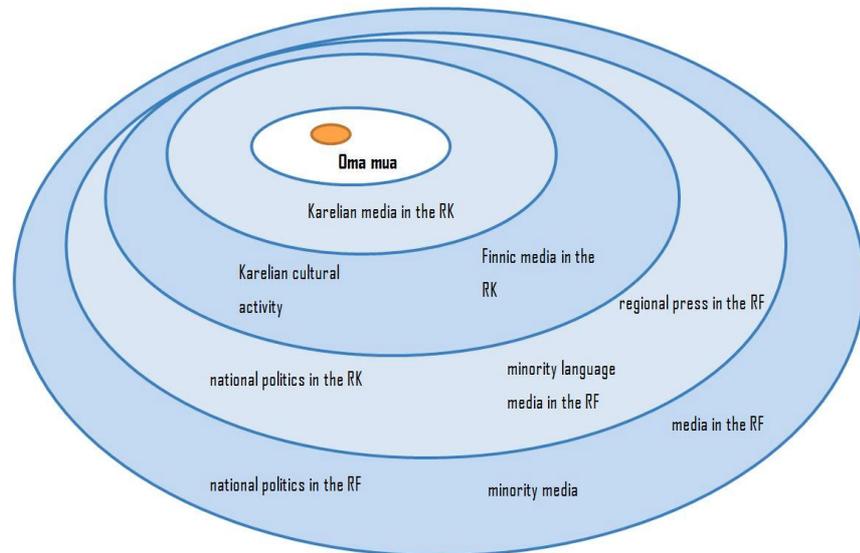


Figure 1.
The context of a text in Oma Mua

3.3. Analyzed issues and their characteristics

I have compared issues from three time periods to see, whether and how the contents of the paper have changed with time. I have collected most of the data originally for the purposes of another study in the ELDIA project (www.eldia-project.com) in 2011. In ELDIA two periods, February – April 1998 and November 2010 – January 2011 were common for all researchers of the project. The third period was left for each researcher to decide on the basis of interesting linguistic and legislative development. In the case of Republic of Karelia, I picked the period of February – April 2004, when a language law proposal was discussed in the Republic of Karelia (Karjalainen et al. 2013: 91).

I performed a rough content analysis on issues from the selected periods, first searching for articles with any reference to Karelian issues and then narrowing down the selection to articles dealing with themes of language maintenance. I have excluded material that did not meet the criteria for an "article", i.e. prose and poems, invitations, advertisements etc. This produced 144 texts dealing with Karelian language and culture. Their share is notable compared to the total number of articles and news stories (total appr. 350). Nearly all more extensive articles fall into this category. I used these texts to outline the changes in the content of the paper between 1998 and 2011. My analysis of agency in the texts is based on 16 texts selected from the issues from 2004 and 2010–2011.

To provide an overview of the contents of *Oma Mua*, I divided the articles connected with Karelian language and culture into thematic groups (Figure 2). Defining the main theme was sometimes problematic, because many of the texts actually consisted of two or more parts: the first part could for example be a report on the agenda of a meeting, while the second part of the same text dealt with language teaching in the village where the meeting was held. In such case I relied mostly on the structure and title of the article to define the main theme.

				Total
cultural events	3	10	20	33
work of national and cultural organizations	10	9	6	25
national / language politics	6	9	5	20
biographical stories	4	4	10	18
language maintenance	6	6	3	15
language learning and teaching	4	3	6	13
local history	1	2	3	6
social and economic problems	4	1		5
Karelian media	2	1	2	5
Karelian folklore			4	4
				144

Figure 2.
Distribution of themes in articles

In 1998 *Oma Mua* reported much about Karelian societal activities, meetings and seminars. The approaching republic elections gained regular attention and also opinions of candidates were presented. The language act proposal was mostly discussed in texts from readers, although they were (in-

terestingly) usually not marked as letters to the editor. Using these texts as part of the paper's journalistic content is a significant editorial choice.

In 2004 the focus has shifted towards cultural issues. Presentations of national choirs, theatre groups, literature, school and university competitions and activities take up a large part of the paper. Of political issues, the new language act of the Republic was dealt with regularly but briefly. Also assemblies of Karelian organizations were reported on. In 2010 the content was mostly the same as in 2004, but there are more texts on the everyday history of Karelians, mostly portraits of (late) relatives and friends, probably sent in by readers. The number of articles on language maintenance in general shows some decrease, but on the other hand, there are more articles dealing with language learning.

In 2010 and 2011 *Oma Mua* seems to have gone through a change in terms of content. The aim seems to have been closer resemblance to a customary newspaper. In 2010 it published horoscopes and weather forecasts and in 2011 also TV program was included.

The focus on cultural issues is not unique to *Oma Mua*, but relatively common when reporting on minorities. The comparative report of the ELDIA project covering several language communities states that "The analysis of the material shows a clear focus on cultural activities, folklore, literature and theatre, instead of minority politics and the minority's own views, even in such central issues as developments in minority legislation or changes in policy. The minority media repeats the same pattern. Could one conclude that reporting on »harmless« cultural activities and folklore is easier for both the majority and minority media?" (Laakso et al. 2013: 77).

4. Discourses on language teaching

In the following, I provide an outline of the genres and discourses employed in 16 texts. I chose texts published in the periods of 2004 and 2010–2011 that were connected with Karelian language teaching. I also analyzed active and backgrounded agency in these 16 texts (see chapter 5). Their particulars are given in the end of this study.

Oma Mua follows the conventions of a newspaper genres, containing news stories, reports, feature stories, interviews, summaries and writings that are best classified as columns. I approach the notion of genre from a functional perspective: a genre is a way of using the language to achieve a particular, culturally established task (Eggins – Martin 1997: 236). Karelian language teaching is typically brought up in reports on cultural events, seminars

or meetings. There are also some columns that address the topic. However, characteristic of *Oma Mua* is that also genres that traditionally are considered “objective” and “neutral” openly contain opinions, i.e. mix fact and opinion story types. It also makes more references to certain groups (typically “we” meaning journalists or Karelians and “you” meaning readers or Karelians) and requests and promises of action than one would expect from a newspaper text. The style of the texts is often emotional, which is characteristic of Russian minority cultural rhetoric, in which the texts are embedded. In my view, these features are also connected with the double role of *Oma Mua* as a means of communication, of which objectivity is expected, and as the representative of the Karelian minority.

I introduce four recurring discourses concerning Karelian language teaching that emerged and could be identified from the analyzed issues.

1) “Heroic teachers vs. unsupportive authorities.” Karelian teachers are quoted saying that they do not have sufficient resources for teaching Karelian. The teaching material is scarce and too difficult and the amount of lessons is too small. The teachers need to work hard to create the conditions for learning.

(1) *Anuksen piirin lapsienkavvattajat kannatettih kielipezien avuandua piiris, monil on jo neruo täs ruavos, äijäthäi lapsien kel paistah karjalakse. Mägriän školan johtai Raisa Nikitina paheksi, ku vallasolijat ei äijäl piädy kallata karjalan kielen elävyttämizeh.* [The teachers of the Olonec district supported the establishing of language nests in the district, where many already have skills in this work, as many already speak Karelian with the children. The director of the school of Megrega disapproved of the authorities not giving twopence for Karelian revitalisation.]

(Rodieugo anukselazile lapsile kielipezii, OM 29.12.2010, Natalja Judina)

2) “Enthusiastic children vs. indifferent parents.” Children are claimed to take pleasure in learning Karelian, while their parents (and other grown-up Karelians) are criticized for their lack of respect for the language and activity in using it.

(2) *Lapset ollah hyväš mieles, ku heil on mahto opastuo muamankieldy. Ga heijän vahnembat ollah tostu miieldy, hyö sanotah, ku lapsile nimikse ei pie opastuo nigo karjalan, nigo suomen kiieldy, paheksiu opastai.* [The children are glad to have the opportunity to learn the mothertongue. Their parents, however, don’t feel the same: they say that the children have no

reason to study neither the Karelian nor the Finnish language, the teacher complained.]

(Jyškyjärveläine karjalan kielen opastai parahien rahvahien joukos, OM 26.1.2011, Oľga Smotrova)

3) “Karelian in a performance.” Children are depicted performing in Karelian, singing songs, telling stories and reciting poetry. Their knowledge of Karelian is transferred to a ceremonial context and made an object of observation and evaluation.

(3) *Vahnembilgi moine karjalakse pagizii Pakkasukko oli mielidy myö, hos i ei ellendetty kaikkie, midä häi sanoi, ga mielihyväl kačottih, kui lapset ozutetah Pakkasukole omii kielineroloi.* [Also the parents liked such a Karelian-speaking Father Frost, even though they didn't understand everything he said, but they were happy to see the children showing their language skills to Father Frost.]

(Pakkasukko pagizi karjalakse, OM 12.1.2011, Jelena Migunova)

4) “Karelian language as part of Karelian culture and tradition.” Learning and teaching Karelian is presented as taking place within the sphere of Karelian culture and tradition (see also Puura – Tánzos 2016). Learning the language consists of playing games, singing songs and reading poems. The value of the language derives from its role as a carrier of traditional culture, and it remains the natural *muamankieli* (‘mothertongue’) for the children, even though they have not acquired it at home. This is in line with the tradition of reducing linguistic and ethnic minorities to their cultural peculiarity, rooted in the Soviet era.

(4) *Kazvatit saneltih vahnušile runoloi karjalakse da hol'aitettih karjalankielizii pajozii.* [The kindergarten children recited poems in Karelian to the elderly and sung Karelian songs.]

(Pakkasukko pagizi karjalakse, OM 12.1.2011, Jelena Migunova)

It is also important to note what is *not* there. It is sometimes mentioned that the children do not speak the language very well, if at all, and also that most of the families use Russian at home. However, the data does not contain descriptions of the children's actual use of Karelian or of possibilities for using the language outside of school or day care.

5. Active and backgrounded agency

Taking the analysis to the linguistic level (Fairclough 2001: 125), I have chosen to focus on the active and passive agency concerning the decline of the language and its future prospects. As language is shaped by the social functions it serves, the choice of passive or active agency is not arbitrary but has social motivations. Agency is a traditional target of investigation in CDA. Agent is a sociological concept and a semantic role. It denotes an active participant in social practices, someone who performs an action (van Leeuwen 2008: 23–25, 32). Van Leeuwen (*ibid*: 24) stresses that active and passive participant roles can be constructed in several ways, and often an analysis based on strict grammatical categories may result in neglecting cases of semantic agency that have technically been realized in some other way. I have tried to solve the problem by investigating my data thoroughly and hand-picking the linguistic features that seem to be most used for creating agency in this particular data.

First I will present cases where someone is being presented as actively affecting (or having affected or having the obligation to affect) the state of the Karelian language. Then I turn to cases where agency has been faded out of the text through different linguistic solutions.

Active agency

Here I present occurrences where people affecting the decline of the language appear as active agents and subjects of the sentence. Interestingly, the agents are Karelians, thus presented as responsible for the current state of the language.

(5) *Seminuaran aigua piettih müös paginua karjalan kielen tilas, Karjalan kandueläjih da heijän kielih suhtautumizes. Monet karjalazet mustetah sidä aigua, konzu lapset ni vouse ei maltettu ven'ua, ga "mielevüt" vah-nembat prižmittih heidü pagizemah: "Et piäze opastumah ielleh, gu et opastunne hüvin ven'akse. Paiskua ven'akse!"* [During the seminar there was also discussion on the state of Karelian, the natives of Karelia and their language. Many Karelian remember the time when children did not know Russian at all, but **the "sensible" parents demanded them to speak [it]**: "You won't be able to continue your studies, if you don't learn Russian well. Speak Russian!]

(Psalmoin kirjal da karjalazien runoloil on ühtehistü. OM 11.3.2004, Raisa Remšujeva)

In one example the Karelians are not named, but from the context it is clear that the pronouns *vähän ken* 'few' and *kaikin* 'everybody' refer to them.

- (6) *Tiettäväine, pagin koskihgi karjalan kielen tuliedu aigua. Jogahine tiedäü, ku nügöi vähä ken pagizou da opastuu karjalan kieleh, perehes sežo kaikin paistah ven'akse.* [Of course the discussion was about the future of the Karelian language. Everyone knows, that nowadays **only few speak and learn the Karelian language, in the family everybody speaks Russian.**]

(P'otr Sem'onov: "Oi-jo Karjalan külät da kieli, noskua uvvessah elämäh tüö!" OM25.3.2004, Jelena Filippova)

Nevertheless, there were also a few occurrences where the authorities were presented as not caring for the Karelian language. They are not represented as actively hindering language maintenance efforts, but as lacking the interest. One should note that in example 7 the criticism is presented as a quote from the school director. Quotes are frequent in *Oma Mua* articles. Quotes are characteristic to newspaper journalism in general, but in *Oma Mua* they are very often not elaborated in any way, which leaves them seemingly disconnected with the editorial work. They are a way of distancing an opinion from the editors and limiting it to the sphere of personal experience. Nevertheless, the fact that they have been included in the text in the first place is of course an important editorial choice and shows that the editors wish to bring up such issues. Also their textualisation, decontextualisation and contextualisation strategies are journalistic choices (Haapanen 2017: 43).

In the second example the author lives in Finland. He contributes quite regularly to *Oma Mua*, but his writings openly carry the Finnish perspective, often focusing on language rights.

- (7) *Mägriän školan johtai Raisa Nikitina paheksi, ku vallasolijat ei äijäl piädü kallata karjalan kielen elävyttämizeh.* [The director of the school of Megrega Raisa Nikitina disapproved of the authorities not giving two-pence for Karelian revitalisation.]

(Rodieugo anukselazile lapsile kielipezii, OM 29.12.2010, Natalja Judina)

- (8) *Kielipezät, kandurahvahan kielen putilline opastamine da školaopastus kandurahvahan kielel ei olla mielädy myö niilöile, kuduat kannatetah yksikielisty kanzallisvaldivuo. [...] On Suomesgi piättäjii da virguniek-koi, kuduat ajatellah samah tabah.* [Language nests, proper teaching of the autochthonous people's language and school education in the autochto-

nous people's language does not please those, who support a monolingual national state. [...] **There are policymakers and officials in Finland, too, who share this line of thought.**]

(Oigevuot da vellallizuot, OM 26.1.2011, Martti Penttonen)

In example 9 the active agents are the Vepsians, who could not find the money to attend the seminar for native language teachers. However, it is also possible that the intention is to criticize the authorities in a concealed way for not providing the Vepsian teachers with sufficient funds.

(9) *Ei voidu tulla Petroskoih vepsäläzet Piiterin alovehelpäi, ei löüttü d'engua.* [The Vepsians from Leningrad oblast could not come to Petrozavodsk, **they didn't find the money.**]

(Keräi lapsii ühteh Oma Muamankieli, OM 8.4.2004, Jelena Filippova)

Examples 10 and 11 are of active agents supporting and maintaining the language. In example 10, the state is presented as a benefactor and as the actor with the power over the language. In example 11 the active agents are Karelians, who are presented as actively working for the language.

(10) *Anuksen opastusozaston piälikkö Vladimir Lukin saneli, mih luaduh piiris opastetah karjalan da suomen kielih. Häi pidi varmuttu: – On ülen tärgei, gu valdivo andoi vallan opastuo kieleh, on hüväksüttü zakonu, ühtelläh gu jogahine meis ei ellendänne oman kielen tärgevüttü, nimidä ei rodei.* [Head of the Olonec department of education, Vladimir Lukin, reported on how Karelian and Finnish are taught in the district. He was sure: – It is very important, that **the state has given the opportunity to learn the language**, the law has been passed, but on the other hand, if not each of us understands the importance of our own language, nothing will happen.]

(”Hos kieli eule turkikse, ga toiči äijäl lämmitäü...” OM 1.4.2004, Natalja Sinitskaja)

(11) *Anuksen piirin lapsienkaszvattajat kannatettih kielipezien avuandua piiris, monil on jo neruo täs ruavos, äijäthäi lapsien kel paistah karjalakse.* [The children's nurses from the Olonets district supported the opening of language nests in the district: many already have skills in this work, as many speak Karelian with the children.]

(Rodieugo anukselazile lapsile kielipezii, OM 29.12.2010, Natalja Judina)

The use of P11 in examples 12 and 13 is a way of creating solidarity and strengthening the community. Especially in example 13, where P11 is combined with the expression *oma kieli* 'own language', it creates a strong connection between "us" and "our language", thus strengthening the identification with the language and also suggesting that the members of the community *should* care and act for the language.

- (12) *Saman školan karjalan kielen opastajan Tatjana Baranovan mieles Kipinä-lehti auttau ruavos vai suomen kielen opastajua. – Meilhäi, karjalan kielen opastajil, ei ole abuh nimidä. Omil käsäl luajimmo čomazii, paheksi inehmine.* [According to Karelian language teacher in the same school, Tatjana Baranova, the Kipinä journal only helps the Finnish teachers in their work. – We, teachers of Karelian, don't have any help. **We make pretty things with [our] own hands**, she criticized.]

("Hos kieli eule turkikse, ga toiči äijäl lämmitäü..." OM 1.4.2004, Natalja Sinitskaja)

- (13) *Luajimmo omat fol'klourujoukot, oma karjalankielinen teatru. Ei niken lapsis kieldävü omas kieles. Meijän Puadenen škola da meijän rahvas kunnivoijah omua kieldü.* [**We make** our own folklore group, own Karelian-speaking theatre. None of the children rejects their own language. **Our Padany school and our people respect [their] own language.**]

(Karjalan Rahvahan Liitto pidi vuozikerähmön mennüt pühänpäin, OM 11.3.2004, Natalja Antonova)

In (13) the people of Padany are contrasted to "others", who are not present in the sentence, through the emphasized use of the possessive pronoun *meijän* 'our'. This emphasis together with the negation in the previous sentence leads to the interpretation that elsewhere there are people who do not respect the native language, but the people of Padany do not belong to that group.

The data did not actually contain very many occurrences where someone was explicitly presented as taking action for Karelian. There were considerably more occurrences where someone was either directly or indirectly urged to take action. The next ones demand action from the Karelians. They are active agents in necessary and if-clauses.

- (14) *Viego tostu pričiniä sih pidäü, ilma sidä, gu olemmo karjalazet da oma kieli pidäü tiedü.* [Is another reason needed besides that **we are Karelians, and one must know [one's] own language.**]

(“Hos kieli eule turkikse, ga toiči äijäl lämmitäü...” OM 1.4.2004, Natalja Sinitskaja)

- (15) *Seppo Sipilä: – Kouluajois mustan: ket opastuttih hüvin suomeh, niilöile oli kebijembi opastuo toizihgi aihieloih. Gu ruvetanneh karjalazet lapset hüvin opastumah omah muamankieleh, sit opastundu ven’ahgi rubieu menemäh parembi.* [Seppo Sipilä: – From school days I remember: who learnt Finnish well, for them learning other things was also easier. **If the Karelian children start to study [their] own mothertongue better,** then learning Russian will go better as well.]

(Psalmoin kirjal da karjalazien runoloil on ühtehistü. OM 11.3.2004, Raisa Remšujeva)

One of the most interesting occurrences is the direct imperative to the readers in example 16. The interesting point is that such a powerful obligation is justified with practical gain rather than loyalty towards the mother tongue, which is much more common. To top it all, the relatively unknown phenomenon of bilingualism is introduced as a means of learning a third language, a “profitable language”, better.

- (16) *Täs tuli vähäzen tieduo vahnembile. Paiskua kois ühtelaigua kahtu kiöldü – ven’ua da karjalua. Sit teijän lapsi školas parembi opastuu suomengi kieleh.* [This was some information for the parents. Speak two languages simultaneously at home – Russian and Karelian. Then your child will learn Finnish, too, better at school.]

(Psalmoin kirjal da karjalazien runoloil on ühtehistü. OM 11.3.2004, Raisa Remšujeva)

There were no occurrences where others than Karelians would have been obliged to act for the Karelian language.

Backgrounded and hidden agency

There are several ways of hiding and backgrounding agency. I will first examine the use of impersonal structures and continue with examining different techniques of backgrounding agents.

The use of impersonal structures is a frequent way of backgrounding the agent of a certain action. Van Leeuwen (2008: 29) distinguishes between backgrounding and suppressing: if the actor is suppressed, there is no reference to him anywhere in the text. In Oma Mua texts there are cases of total suppression of the agent and of backgrounding as well. I did not consider it necessary to distinguish between these subtypes in my data.

The first example here presents a passive clause.

- (17) *Myö äijän pagizemmo karjalan kielen opastamizes školis, ga se čuas-suloiin miäry on ylen pieni, ližäkse, mindählienne **pietelläh opastuslitteratuurin ilmah piäzendiä.*** [We talk a lot about teaching Karelian in schools, but the number of lessons is very small, and in addition, for some reason **the publishing of teaching materials is being held back.**] (Festivualin tulokset da tulii aigu, OM 1.12.2010, Georgii Černobrovkin)

Backgrounding seems to occur especially in passages where the action of the authorities is criticized, but the ones responsible are left unnamed.

Another way of hiding the agent are so-called zero person constructions, where the subject has been omitted. The zero person constructions found in the data are mostly necessary structures, but also auxiliary verbs or possessive structures can be used in this way.

- (18) *Kerähmös tuldih yksih mielih: **omua kiely pidäy maltua, opastuo, elävyttiä da paista sih.*** Janne Saarikivi luojahti, ku **luadie tädä pidäy juuri tänäpäi, eiga vähästy mendyy roih jo myöhä, kieli voi hävitä.** [The gathering was unanimous: **one must know [their] own language, learn, revive and speak it.** Janne Saarikivi stressed, that **this must be done** today, because after a while it will be too late, the language may vanish.] (Rodieugo anukselazile lapsile kielipezii, OM 29.12.2010, Natalja Judina)

- (19) ***Olis hyvä pidäy tämänmoizii kilboi da festivualiloi karjalan, vepsän da suomen kielel, sil harjaittua lapsii oman muan kieleh da kultuurah.*** [It would be good to organize this kind of competitions and festivals in Karelian, Veps and Finnish, and thus make the children acquainted with the language and culture of their own land.] (Lapsien suarnufestivuali, OM 10.11.2010 Tamara Ščerbakova)

Deagentialization means concealing the agent and representing the action as brought about through natural forces or unconscious processes (van

Leeuwen 2008: 66). In the data there are several examples of this technique. For example, lack of resources is often formulated in an existential clause (see example 20). In these existential clauses, a product of human action has been lifted to the position of subject, thus concealing the agent behind the product. For example, in example 20 the paraphrases for “there is no literature” could be, for example, “writers do not write in Karelian” or “publishers do not publish Karelian literature” or “the schools do not purchase Karelian material”. These examples contain criticism towards the authorities, but, again, the target of criticism is not determined more specifically.

(20) *Školan opastajan Sergei Bariginan sanoin mugah opastua karjalua iel-lehpäi on jügei, gu ei ole lugemistugi.* [According to teacher of the school Sergei Barigin it is difficult to proceed teaching Karelian, as **there is no reading material.**]

(”Hos kieli eule turkikse, ga toiči äijäl lämmitäü...” OM 1.4.2004, Natalja Sinitskaja)

(21) *Školas ruadau päivykodijoukko, kus lapsii harjaittau karjalan kieleh Galina Bel’akova. Autonoumien johtajat olla sidä mielädy, ku täs joukos vois tulla kielipezä.* [In the school functions a kindergarten unit, where Galina Bel’akova practices the children in the Karelian language. The leaders of the autonomy find, **that this group could become a language nest.**]

(Kaivuo sieglal et kuivua, OM 17.11.2010, Natalja Antonova)

Agents are also concealed through the use of possessive clauses. In the next examples the focus is on “not having”, but when approached from the knowledge that the number of jobs for Karelian teachers as well as teaching materials depend from the activity of the authorities, the concealment of these background actors becomes evident.

(22) *Omas ičes tuači opastundualan hommis sanelemah Aleksandr Titov tiiöndi kerävünnüzien edeh Anuksen piirin opastusozaston piälikön Vladimir Lukinan. Häi paheksi, gu piirih tulou liijan äijü karjalan kielen opastajua, heil ei ole kus ruadua.* [Instead of himself, Aleksandr Titov sent the head of Olonets district Department of education Vladimir Lukin to the gathering to talk about education issues. He criticized, that there are too many Karelian teachers coming to the district, **they don’t have where to work.**]

(Kielen täh ego juotata, eigo külmätütä. OM 19.2.2004, Natalja Sinitskaja)

- (23) *Saman školan karjalan kielen opastajan Tatjana Baranovan mieles Kipinä-lehti auttau ruavos vai suomen kielen opastajua. – Meilhäi, karjalan kielen opastajil, ei ole abuh nimidä. Omil kăzil luajimmo čomazii, paheksi inehmine.* [According to Karelian language teacher in the same school, Tatjana Baranova, the Kipinä journal only helps the Finnish teachers in their work. – **We, teachers of Karelian, don't have any help.** We make pretty things with our own hands, she criticized.]
 ("Hos kieli eule turkikse, ga toiči äijäl lämmitäü..." OM 1.4.2004, Natalja Sinitskaja)

There is one occurrence of deagentialization using anticausative verbs (*loppih, unohtui*). The actors causing the end of Tver Karelian development in the 1930s are faded out from the text, even though the responsibility for the policies that lead to that end should not be unclear today.

- (24) *Karjalan rahvahallizen alovehen hävitändän jälles vuvennu 1939 kai kerralleh loppih da viijeksekymmenekse vuotta unohtui karjalan kieli da tverin karjalazien etnossu.* [After the abolishment of the national province of Karelia in 1939 everything **ended** and **the Karelian language and the ethnos of the Tver Karelians were forgotten** for fifty years.]
 (Kaivuo sieglal et kuivua, OM 17.11.2010 Natalja Antonova)

The term *objectivation* means backgrounding the agent by referring to him through nominalizations or process nouns that denote an action or a result connected with him (van Leeuwen 2008: 63–65). The occurrences of objectivization in the data originate from the same article. One explanation to this is the style of the article. It follows the model of a news story more closely (stylistically) than many other stories in Oma Mua. Nominalizations are characteristic of news style in general.

- (25) *Kozlovan škola – on ainavo paikku alovehes, kus karjalan kiieldy opastetah algukluasois čuassu nedälis. Se ei ole äijy, ga školan johtajan Tatjana Kiskinan da opastajan Galina Ponomar'ovan sanoin mugah, enämbiä mahtuo ei anna opastuspluanu.* [The school of Kozlov is the only place in the region, where Karelian is taught in the first classes one lesson per week. It is not much, but according to schoolmistress Tatjana Kiskina and teacher Galina Ponomar'ova, **the curriculum does not allow for more.**]
 (Kaivuo sieglal et kuivua, OM 17.11.2010 Natalja Antonova)

(26) *Karjalan rahvahallizen alovehen hävitändän jälles vuvvennu 1939 kai kerralleh loppih da viijeksekymmenekse vuottu unohtui karjalan kieli da tverin karjalazien etnossu.* [After the **abolishment of the Karelian national district** in 1939 everything ended once and for all, and for fifty years the Karelian language and the Tver Karelian ethnos were forgotten.]

(Kaivuo sieglal et kuivua, OM 17.11.2010 Natalja Antonova)

To sum it up, often backgrounding the agency functions to blur responsibility relations, but naturally the relationship between textual solutions and meaning is not straightforward. Agency is backgrounded through objectivation (state support) in example 27, but the textual context guides the reader into interpreting irony and identifying, who is not being supportive. This confirms that even the linguistic micro-level analysis in CDA should not be used as a tool for quantitative analysis, even though analyzing and counting certain structures would seem like an appealing opportunity, because the larger textual context simply can not be left out of the analysis (van Leeuwen 2008: 24).

(27) *Virgumiehet kiitettih karjalazii oman muan suvaičendas da aktiivizes ruavos, ga, onnuako sen periä ei jäädü konferensiele, kudamal piettih paginua sih näh, ku valdivollistu kannatustu ei ole.* [The officials thanked the Karelians for loving their land and their active work, but, perhaps because of that did not stay on the conference, where talks were given on how **there is no state support.**]

(Kaivuo sieglal et kuivua, OM 17.11.2010 Natalja Antonova)

6. Conclusions

When putting together the findings on recurring discourses as well as the active / backgrounded agency, we may achieve at least a partial view of the journalistic policy and ideological position of Oma Mua on Karelian language maintenance and teaching. The journalists of Oma Mua give an important contribution in language planning and the visibility of Karelian and Karelians. Nevertheless, the findings of the analysis show that some features in its contents leave room for criticism in terms of providing support for the Karelian language. This is important, if we consider the role of Oma Mua as the sole native-language newspaper (and the most comprehensive medium) in Olonets Karelian.

My first observation relates to the choice of contents in *Oma Mua*. The introduction of new sections (TV programme, weather etc.) in the paper was a step towards a newspaper catering to modern needs, but the thematical distribution of the texts remained mostly the same. Also the contents and the structure of the texts are often quite predictable. The stress on culture is a natural solution, since culture is the sphere in which the Karelian language can be most easily used these days. The approaches to certain topics seem somewhat fixed. An example of this are the texts on children learning Karelian, and the absence of descriptions of the children's actual use of Karelian outside of school, not to mention any brainstorming on how they could or should be using the language.

The editors of *Oma Mua* do address issues like language revitalization, but the covering of the topic remains on a shallow level. Usually the journalists state the problem in their articles, but do not go into its causes or ways of solving it. This may result from lack of resources (time, training, compensation). As such, the power relations and possibilities of action in language maintenance presented in the texts do not offer very much support for minority empowerment. I interpret the frequent use of quotes when addressing problems of language maintenance as a means of taking up language political issues while refraining from overt political commenting and the role of a political actor.

At first glance the editorial choices of *Oma Mua*, such as focusing on culture and the Karelian community, seem to be coherent with the ideas of specialists on language revitalization. Scholars (eg. Romaine 2007; Fishman 1991) have underlined the importance of language transmission in families and language use inside the community, and pointed out that without activity on the individual level there is no language transmission. Romaine (*ibid*) warns against attempting to reverse language shift by promoting the minority language in domains that are currently dominated by the majority language. However, in a situation where the traditional domains of Karelian are rapidly disappearing, new openings would be needed. In *Oma Mua* the goal of this would be not just to create and disseminate new vocabulary but to show the readership that the Karelian language can be used also in new domains. Romaine (2007) also calls for realistic prioritization. It is possible that the journalists regard demands of legislative change etc. as unrealistic and futile, and therefore they are not much present in *Oma Mua*.

Although Karelian as an endangered language is in need of support from both inside the language community and from the outside (state, republic, authorities) has often been backgrounded from the texts. These

choices may affect the revitalization process and perspectives. The relatively large number of necessary structures where the person has been omitted hints at that the paper expresses concern for the language, but will not take the role of a politically active pro-Karelian organ. There are occurrences where Karelians are urged to act, but none at all where for instance ministers, MPs and so on would be appealed to. It seems that the composition in which the Karelians are presented as language keepers and their work the main, if not sole, support for the language has been naturalized in the discourse. This may be with negative consequences concerning support from the authorities and the state: if they are presented as statically unsupportive or indifferent, it is not likely that someone will challenge this view and seriously demand them to take action.

In Koreinik's (2011) analysis on South Estonian endangerment discourse the speakers of South Estonian have been backgrounded from the texts, thus hiding the speakers' responsibility and representing language shift as caused by outside agency. In my analysis of Karelian data this does not seem to be the case. The Karelian speakers are explicitly present in the texts more than those in power. Tatjana Efremova's (2014) article on Meadow Mari media discourses provides an example from the Russian context. Efremova claims that in the Meadow Mari media one can distinguish a dominating discourse, the "activist discourse". Typical of this discourse is focusing on language-related problems (problems in language transmission, scarcity of media etc.), but the problems are often represented as natural forces or phenomena that can not be affected. Also in majority media reporting on Mari issues depersonification and deagentialization is typical. Vagueness in responsibility relations was also characteristic of an Udmurt newspaper I have studied earlier (Tánczos 2011). Further investigation into minority media in Russia would be needed in order to find out about possible spreading discourses and representations in the Russian context.

It may be argued that backgrounding agents is characteristic of news writing. This, however, does not remove the effect it has on the visibility of agency. The journalists can deviate the conventions of news writing if there is a motivation to do so, for instance the desire to bring the people behind actions to the foreground. For example, journalists in *Oma Mua* could inform the readers in more detail about the possibilities for promoting the Karelian language and explicitly name the ones who should take action. With the information I have at my disposal I cannot tell whether the journalists are aware of their backgrounding practices. For example, a recent study (Haapanen 2017) showed that journalists generally were not well aware of their

quoting practices and benefited from recalling and analyzing their own solutions taken during the writing process. I believe a similar introspection process would be rewarding in the context of minority issues and would illustrate what naturalized ideas the texts carry, and whether this is the message the authors originally wished to convey.

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Karjalan Rahvahan Liitto pidi vuozikerähmön mennüt pühänpäivän, OM
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tüö!" OM 25.3.2004, Jelena Filippova

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