

# Way better than the original!! Music video covers and language revitalisation: A sociosemiotic view

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*The development of the social media has opened up new spaces and genres for minoritised languages. As argued in previous research, access to new media spaces can contribute to the revitalisation of minoritised languages by generating new functions and values for them. Combining sociolinguistic and sociosemiotic approaches and bringing together data from four minority language contexts, Irish, Welsh, Sámi, and Corsican, this study addresses the potential of music video covers on YouTube to contribute to language revitalisation. The investigation suggests that music video covers in minority languages can have significance in language revitalisation in both language ideological and practical terms. However, these effects are not just a matter of access to a new media space (YouTube) or a new genre (music video cover) but, in a much more complex manner, a question of practices of relocalisation and the semiotic resources used. As semiotic aggregates, music video covers can not only endow minority languages and their speakers with a new glamour, but also recirculate and reinforce old, stereotypical notions. While ‘new glamour’ may be desirable, the study points, on the other hand, to the need for critical interrogation of the terms on which minority languages are commodified in the context of contemporary media culture.*

*Keywords: language revitalisation, new media, sociosemiotics, globalisation*

## 1 Introduction

The rapid development of the social media has opened up new spaces and genres for minoritised languages (Deumert, 2014; Jones & Uribe-Jongbloed, 2013; Kelly-Holmes, 2011; Lenihan, 2011; Pietikäinen & Dlaske, 2013). One such genre is music video covers, which make today a vital constituent of video sharing websites, such as YouTube. As has been argued in previous research, access to new media spaces, and especially to the (post)modern space of the Internet, can contribute to the revitalisation of minoritised languages by generating new functions and values for the languages (e.g., Cormack & Hourigan, 2007; Crystal, 2001; Honeycutt & Cunliffe, 2010; Moriarty, 2014; Pietikäinen, 2008). In this respect, music video covers, reflecting the spirit of the “performance era” (Kelly-Holmes, 2015; Pietikäinen & Kelly-Holmes, 2011; see below), seem to have particular potential.

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The point of view of previous research on minority languages in new media spaces has mostly been a sociolinguistic one, looking at the presence and uses of minority languages in new media domains. Less attention has been paid to the sociosemiotic side: how minority languages are mediated and accompanied by an array of other semiotic modes, or resources, and how this affects the meanings and values attached to the languages (see, however, e.g., Leppänen & Pietikäinen, 2010; Pietikäinen, 2014). This question is especially crucial in the context of the Internet, a fundamentally multimodal medium in which the different modes interact and influence each other and meanings emerge (only) as a result of this interaction (cf. e.g., Kress, 2010).

This study, part of a larger research project<sup>1</sup>, combines sociolinguistic and sociosemiotic approaches (e.g., Blommaert, 2010; Kress 2010; Pennycook, 2010; Pietikäinen & Dlaske, 2013; Pietikäinen & Kelly-Holmes, 2011, 2013) to address the potential of music video covers to contribute to language revitalisation. Drawing on data from four peripheral minority language contexts, namely Irish, Welsh, Sámi and Corsican, the paper analyses music video covers on YouTube performed in the four minority languages and goes on to examine the comments on the videos posted by social media users. Although the four contexts show differences, being peripheral minority language contexts, they also share, as will be discussed below, a number of similarities, which make them particularly fit for a multi-sited approach (cf. Marcus, 1995). This approach, in turn, not only broadens the scope of the study, but, more importantly, brings out aspects about the operation of the videos as cultural products that would not show in an examination focusing on one context or data set only. While the investigation of the music video covers seeks to unravel their operation as cultural products, the examination of the user comments sheds some light on their potential effects on the actual viewers.

The investigation suggests that music video covers in minority languages can have significance for language revitalisation in both language ideological (e.g., Blommaert, 1999) and practical terms. As regards the former, these new media products can contribute to altering the indexical values attached to minority languages by making them seem attractive, 'cool' and 'sexy'. As regards the latter, they can promote the visibility, accessibility and use of the minority languages. However, these effects are not just a matter of access to a new media space (YouTube) or a new genre (music video cover), but also, in a much more complex manner, a question of practices of relocalisation (Pennycook, 2010) and the semiotic resources drawn upon in these practices, ranging from the particular original videos/songs covered to the visual, auditive and other elements used. As semiotic aggregates (Scollon & Scollon, 2003), music video covers can endow minority languages and their speakers with a new glamour, but also recirculate and reinforce old stereotypes. While 'new glamour' may be desirable, the study points in conclusion to the need for critical interrogation of the terms on which minority languages are commodified, i.e., rendered into objects of consumption, in the context of contemporary media culture.

In what follows, I will first discuss the key theoretical starting points of the study, then provide a brief overview of the four sociolinguistic contexts, introduce the four music video covers in the focus of the study and outline the analysis. The subsequent analysis, then, examines the data from three perspectives, each revealing something of the potential of music video covers to contribute to language revitalisation. The concluding section sums up the findings and discusses their implications.

## 2 On minority languages in the media and music video covers as creative practice

In their examination of the presence of minority languages in the media, Pietikäinen and Kelly-Holmes (2011) identify three eras, which also tie in with shifts in the ethos of language revitalisation (cf. Moriarty & Pietikäinen, 2011; Pietikäinen, 2008). The first era, which they call the “era of gifting”, was characterised by the practice of allocating limited media space in the state-run media to programmes in minority languages. The second era, the “era of service”, introduced a shift from merely being part of the picture of the nation-state media landscape to having the aspiration to serve all speakers of the minority language community and to cater for language revitalisation and identity construction by means of a “functional completeness” (Moring, 2007) of the minority language media. The third, “performance era”, the most important one for the present study, is emerging as a result of current globalisation processes and technological changes. In contrast to the two previous eras, in the performance era the media products and processes are rather fragmented and individual and they are brought about bottom-up. Instead of pursuing or even advocating the functional completeness of a minority language, the media practices of this era “explicitly make[-] use of the multilingual repertoires of the community and the target audience” (Pietikäinen & Kelly-Holmes, 2011, p. 60). The media engagement is characterised by global connections, conscious stylisation, creativity, humour and play (Kelly-Holmes, 2015; Pietikäinen & Kelly-Holmes, 2011, p. 57–62; cf. also e.g., McLaughlin, 2013; da Silva, 2015). These features also characterise an emerging ethos of language revitalisation, as suggested by the studies by Moriarty (2014) and Pietikäinen (2014) on Irish-language stand up comedy, Inari Sámi rap and Northern Sámi TV comedy shows and, further, by the data of the present study (see also Jaffe, 2015; Moriarty & Pietikäinen, 2011). As Moriarty and Pietikäinen (2011) show in their studies, the new media engagements of the performance era can invest minority languages regarded as old-fashioned and unglamorous with a new sense of up-to-dateness and coolness.

Although the music video covers in focus in the present study partly relate to the eras of ‘gifting’ and ‘service’ (e.g., in that most of them are, as we will see, products of collective effort produced at least to some extent top down), in terms of their engagement with language(s) and other semiotic resources they are prime examples of minority language media products of the performance era. In recent years, music video covers have become a popular genre of video sharing websites such as YouTube. A search with the phrase ‘music video cover’ gives over 86 million hits on YouTube alone. What combines these performances into a genre is that they are all remade versions of an original musical performance and involve a song and a video. Where they differ is the professionalism, style and intention (some are parodic, some critical, others just entertaining), and what they borrow from the original performance. Given this variation, making music video covers is less about repetition than about creativity, and as such a case in point of what Pennycook (2010) has termed “relocalisation” in order to emphasise the creation “of difference into sameness” and the “always local” character of social practices (Pennycook, 2010, p. 35). From this point of view, then, the question with music video covers is not which one is the most perfect copy of the original but what is done through the practices of relocalisation, and how. The semiotic resources, including the different languages, used in these practices become of crucial

analytical importance (cf. Pennycook, 2010; Pietikäinen & Dlaske, 2013). Furthermore, the notion of relocalisation leads us to view the genre of music video covers not simply as a global, but rather as a translocal practice (Pennycook, 2010), in which the sense of globality emerges from multiple simultaneous relocalisations of the ‘same’ practice in different locations. Similarly, also music video covers of globally popular hits are rather relocalisations of (trans)local products than localised versions of something supposedly global (cf. Pennycook, 2010, p. 77). Extending this view further to power relations, instead of drawing on the notions of global and local, the present study draws attention to the dynamics of peripheries and centres. As Pietikäinen and Kelly-Holmes (2013) point out, neither ‘centres’ and ‘peripheries’ nor their mutual relationships are given, but instead they are created discursively in social practices and are therefore subject to change. Moreover, not only do these relationships change over time, but also there is an ongoing dynamics of power relations between different centralities and peripheralities – locations, practices and processes (Pietikäinen & Kelly-Holmes, 2013, p. 3–5). This dynamics also becomes evident in the following investigation into the music video covers from four peripheral multilingual sites, to which we will now turn.

### 3 The four peripheral minority language sites

The four minority language sites focused on in this study, Ireland, Wales, Sámiland and Corsica, have a number of similarities. They can all be regarded as peripheral, or marginal, in cultural, economic and/or geographical terms, especially in relation to the nation states of which they are a part in the case of Sámiland and Corsica, and in relation to England in the case of Ireland and Wales. All four sites have seen a drastic decrease in the numbers of speakers of the respective minority languages. Driven by measures taken by the dominant nation states, the languages declined, some more slowly, some rather rapidly in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, from vivid community languages into stigmatised ‘non-resources’, peripheralised vis-à-vis the dominant languages and associated with labels such as old-fashioned, unglamorous and backward. As a result, there are no monolingual Irish, Welsh, Sámi or Corsican speakers left. For the past 30 years or so language activists have worked hard for the revitalisation of the minority languages, for example by lobbying for minority language media and teaching (in) the minority languages in schools. Despite these efforts, the numbers of young speakers have remained relatively low (for a more details see e.g., Census Ireland 2011, n.d.; Census Welsh 2011, 2012, December 11; Coupland, 2013, Edwards & Pritchard Newcombe, 2005; Jaffe, 2007; Moriarty, 2014; Pietikäinen, 2008).

In the Republic of Ireland, an island located to the west of Great Britain, Irish is the first official language and a compulsory school subject for most children. However, in the 2011 Census only 41.1%<sup>2</sup> of the population reported an ability to speak Irish, and only 1.8% reported actually using the language in their everyday lives outside the school context (cf. Census Ireland 2011, n.d.; Kelly-Holmes, 2011). Wales, a neighbour of Ireland across the sea, is located in the western part of the island that is Great Britain. In Wales, Welsh has the status of an official language, being *de jure* equal with English in the public sector. Since 2000, the teaching of Welsh has been compulsory in all schools in Wales, up to the age of 16. Nevertheless, in the 2011 Census only around 20% of the three million people in the country considered themselves able to speak Welsh (Census Welsh 2011,

2012, December 11). Sámiland, the traditional area of domicile of the indigenous Sámi people, spreads across the northern parts of Norway, Sweden, Finland and north-west Russia. Depending on the criteria of definition, the Sámi community comprises approximately 60,000–80,000 people, of whom 7000–7500 live within the Finnish borders. Around half of the Sámi people speak one of the nine Sámi languages, to varying degrees. About three-quarters of them speak the dominant Northern Sámi language. All the Sámi languages are endangered, some nearly extinct. The official languages of Finland are Finnish and Swedish. In the Sámi domicile area, the Sámi languages have the status of an official language in three municipalities, and there is a possibility of doing most of one's schooling in Sámi (see e.g., Pietikäinen, 2008; Pitkänen-Huhta & Pietikäinen, 2014). Moving from the north of the north to the southern end of Europe, we come to Corsica, an island in the Mediterranean Sea, to the west of Italy. The Corsican language is close to Italian. However, being under French rule, the official and dominant language of the island is French. Although Corsican has a significant presence among older people, the first language of over 90% of Corsican children is French. In most primary schools Corsican is taught for three hours a week, while at the secondary and university levels Corsican is a subject and a medium of instruction. 20% of schoolchildren are enrolled in Corsican-French bilingual programmes (cf. e.g., Jaffe, 2007, 2015).

The media in Irish, Welsh, Sámi and Corsican has diversified over the past decades, most recently along with the development of the Internet. While there are no daily newspapers published in any of the four minority languages, there are (local) radio stations, and since the early 1980's in Wales and the late 1990's in Ireland a national TV channel in Welsh (S4C) (de facto Welsh-English) and in Irish (TG4) (likewise Irish-English). As Moriarty (2014) argues in her study, through its youthful and up-to-date image the channel TG4 has made a considerable contribution to changing attitudes towards the Irish language, especially among young people. In a somewhat similar vein, music video covers make a new media genre which, as part of the contemporary global youth culture, particularly has the potential to appeal to young people.

#### **4 The music video covers and the analytical approach**

In the following analysis, we will examine four music video covers from the four minority language contexts presented above. The Irish and the Welsh video have their origin in language revitalisation initiatives, the Sámi and the Corsican video are of different origin. Music video covers in the respective minority languages are an emerging genre in the social media: The Welsh example was the only one found in Welsh, the three others have been selected among a number of similar ones, which, in turn, were the only ones in the respective contexts. I will elaborate on the selection of the videos when I introduce them, below. All four videos are uploaded on YouTube. In the case of the Irish, Sámi and Corsican videos, we will subsequently examine the comments posted on the videos on YouTube. In the case of the Welsh video, the commenting function on YouTube has been blocked. For this reason we will instead look at the comments the video received on the Facebook wall of the online magazine *Wales Online*, where it was also uploaded. Although Facebook is a different social media space, it provided a similar platform for comments and discussions about the video to the one offered by YouTube.

The example from the Irish context is a remake of the song *Wake me up* by Avicii, the Swedish DJ and record producer. The original song was one of the global chart-busters of 2013. The Irish performance is the production of Coláiste Lurgan, an independent Irish language summer school in the region of Gaeltacht, on the west coast of Ireland (the Irish-speaking region). The video, a joint production of students and teachers at the school, was made and uploaded on YouTube directly after the release of the original by Avicii (AviciiOfficialVEVO, 2013, July 29; TG Lurgan, 2013, August 9). Making Irish language versions of popular (English) songs and turning them into music videos or videotaped performances has for years been used as a way of learning Irish at Coláiste Lurgan. Many of the performances, often with subtitles so that people can sing along, are uploaded on the summer school's own website and other social media spaces, especially on YouTube via the channel TG Lurgan (Coláiste Lurgan, n.d.).

The video examined here is thus not the only one of its kind, but it is arguably the most popular one. After two years on YouTube it had gathered nearly five million views and almost 6,000 comments. Besides, the video was featured by a number of online magazines, which commented on this “amazing version” in overwhelmingly positive terms (e.g., Walsh, 2013, September 9). The performance was also noted and taken up by other media: national radio stations, newspapers and TV shows. Some of the group starring on the video were invited to perform the song in the Late Late Show, “Ireland's most popular and prestigious television show” (RTÉ One, The Late Late Show) broadcast by the national TV channel RTÉ, and the lead singer, Stiofán Ó Fearail, a teacher in Coláiste Lurgan and a primary school teacher in Dublin, was interviewed in the RTÉ Morning show. Last but not least, the media reported Avicii himself as having “profess[ed] his love for the Irish version” on his Facebook profile the night before his show in Belfast, linking the Irish cover version on his profile and writing: “This one is so cool! I can't understand a word but I love it” (Ó Fátharta, 2013, August 17). This link will at least partly explain the amount of views the cover video attracted.

The Welsh performance, too, is a remake of a global mega-hit released in 2013. The original song, *Happy*, made for the animation film *Despicable me 2*, was written, produced and performed by American musician Pharrel Williams. The original video features various people, among them a number of celebrities and voice actors from the animation film, dancing around Los Angeles and miming along (iamOTHER, 2013, November 21). The video spawned a surge of cover videos on YouTube in which people from different cities all over the world dance to the song. These videos are usually called “Pharrell Williams – Happy – We Are from [name of the city]”. The videos are collected on the site <http://wearehappyfrom.com/>. In December 2015 the site featured 1950 videos from 153 countries.

The Welsh version of the music video joins this wave. However, whereas the ‘we are from’ videos put the emphasis on the new place and recycle the original song sung in English by Pharrel Williams, the Welsh version makes over the language dimension by performing the song in Welsh<sup>3</sup>. The video, entitled *Hapus* [‘happy’], was produced by a Welsh language initiative, Menter Iaith Caerffili, an organisation whose “aim is to promote and increase the use of the Welsh language” (Mentercaerffili/about us, n.d.). The video was launched on YouTube in May 2014 (Menter Caerffili, 2014, May 6)<sup>4</sup>. By December 2015 it had received 11,700 views. The launch of the video was noted by a number of online magazines, including *The Welsh Online* which, as in the Irish case, shared the video on their

websites. In this case, however, the tone was informative rather than celebratory (cf. e.g., Gidley, 2014, May 20).

The example from the Sámi context has a different origin. The video examined here is part of the comedy show *Märät säpikkäät/Njuoska bittut*, co-written and presented by two young Sámi women. The show, the first season of which was broadcast in spring 2012, the second a year later, was the first comedy show made by Sámi to be shown primetime on national Finnish TV. As a result, the launch of the show was noticed and the presenters were interviewed by a number of Finnish newspapers and magazines. Although the programme was not produced in the context of language revitalisation, the two creators of the show are well-known actors in Sámiland, with a background in documentary film and Sámi radio journalism and an investment in the Sámi language and culture. This is reflected in the comedy show, a considerable part of which deals with Sáminess and ‘Sámi issues’. Although the main language of the comedy show is Finnish, the presenters use (Northern) Sámi in various parts of the show. One such part is parodic music video covers, re-creations of popular Finnish songs performed in (Northern) Sámi (for more details of the show see Dlaske & Jäntti, 2016; Pietikäinen, 2014; Pietikäinen & Dlaske, 2013). The music video chosen for analysis in this paper was shown in the first episode of the show (that is, in the spring of 2012), but it was uploaded on YouTube as a teaser for the programme as early as December 2011 (Käyttäjän MaratSapikkaat kanava, 2011, December 13). By December 2015 the video had gathered over 310,000 views and 230 comments. The video is a parodic remake of the song *Missä muruseni on* (‘Where is my sweetheart’) and the accompanying video by Jenni Vartiainen, who is currently one of the most popular pop artists in Finland. The original song and the video were launched in 2010 (WMFinland, 2010, October 28). The music video covers by *Märät säpikkäät/Njuoska bittut* are to date the only ones of their kind in (any) Sámi language in Finland.

The example from the Corsican context differs from the others in a number of ways, which will be analysed in detail below. The video examined here is one of two similar videos, the only examples found in the searches for this study which could be considered music video covers in Corsican. However, it is exactly the differences vis-à-vis the three other videos that render the Corsican example a reflective surface for the others and, as such, a particularly revealing example.

The song is a Corsican version of an old lullaby originally recorded in 1976 in Kabyle, a Berber language, by the Algerian singer Idir. The original song, *A Vava Inouva* (‘Father Inouva’), became an international hit, spawning a number of covers in different languages, Arabic, Spanish, Greek, French, and Corsican, among others. The Corsican version, entitled *Lasciala passà* (‘Let her go’), is performed by the Corsican group *Diana Di L’Alba*, a group that performs Corsican songs and traditional music. There are two similar videos featuring this Corsican version on YouTube. One was uploaded in autumn 2013, not by the performers themselves but via a channel called HenryDeKabylie. The other was uploaded in January 2014 via another channel called Calamità DZ<sup>5</sup>. Neither of the videos features any performers, but the one by Calamità DZ shows a photo collage (reminiscent) of Corsican landscapes, while the one by HenryDeKabylie shows shores from above, which could be Corsican but could also be other shores around the Mediterranean(?) Sea. Since the one by Calamità DZ has a little more in it, we will focus on this one. The audience rates and viewer responses are similar in both cases. In December 2015 the video by Calamità DZ (Calamità DZ, 2014, January 22) had received 12,050 views and six comments.

To summarise, the key data on the four videos are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Key data on the four videos.

<b>Name and performer of the original</b>	<b>Wake me up, Avicii</b>	<b>Happy, Pharrel Williams</b>	<b>Missä muruseni on, Jenni Vartiainen</b>	<b>A Vava Inouva, Idir</b>
<b>Name of the cover version</b>	Avicii Vs Lurgan Wake me up as Gaeilge	Hapus	Leivänmuruseni	Lasciala passà
<b>Maker/Performer</b>	Coláiste Lurgan	Menter Iaith Caerffili	Njuoska bittut/Märät säpikkäät	Diana Di L'Alba (song), Calamità DZ(?) (video)
<b>YouTube Channel</b>	TG Lurgan	Menter Caerffili	MaratSapikkaat	Calamità DZ
<b>Release date</b>	9 August 2013	6 May 2014	13 Dec. 2011	22 Jan. 2014
<b>Views (Dec. 2015)</b>	4 979 104	11 700	312 560	12 050
<b>Comments (Dec. 2015)</b>	5969	50 (Wales Online Facebook site)	232	6

In the following analysis, we will examine the four videos from three perspectives that arise out of the data, each perspective revealing something of the potential of the music video covers to contribute to language revitalisation. First, we will look at the ways in which the performances relate to and reconfigure centre-periphery dynamics (cf. Section 2, above). Secondly, we will examine the logics of their operation, i.e., the features through which the performances appeal (or do not) to the audience. Thirdly, we will turn to the reactions of the audience to the videos. In the examination of the first two aspects, we will analyse the semiotic resources the makers draw upon in the relocalisation practices, i.e., in the creation of the music video covers (e.g., Blommaert, 2010; Pennycook, 2010; Pietikäinen & Dlaske, 2013). The semiotic resources include, for instance, the appearance of the performers, the settings in which the videos are shot, lighting, and camera angles, as well as the genre of music video covers and the particular original videos/songs the covers draw upon. The subsequent examination of the user comments focuses on central three discourses, signification practices (Fairclough, 1992), that emerge from the flow of comments posted on the videos. These relate to 1) the performances 2) the performers and 3) the languages used in the videos.

## 5 Music video covers as local practice

### 5.1 Reconfiguring centre-periphery dynamics

As argued above, the music video covers examined here are not merely about translating songs into minority languages. Rather, what is going on is the relocalisation (Pennycook, 2010) and the refunctioning (Rose, 1993) of globalised practices and products to promote and centralise (Pietikäinen & Kelly-Holmes,



2013) minority languages and identities. This being the case, the video covers represent a resource to make the power of centres work for the peripheries. The globally popular and, as such, central, genre of music video covers gives these local performances from peripheries a sense of up-to-dateness and coolness. However, this resource is used in different ways in the four contexts, with different consequences for the minority languages and identities in each case. While the Welsh and Irish performances create a connection to a global centre by tapping into the power of the globalised popular music industry, the Sámi performance does the same sort of thing on a national scale by drawing on a highly popular product from the Finnish popular music scene. Moreover, these three performances relocalise and refunction cultural products in the historically dominating language, English and Finnish respectively. In so doing, they also shift power relations between the dominating and dominated languages and, further, language-political centres and peripheries (cf. Jaffe, 2007; Moriarty, 2011). The Corsican performance creates a different vector, one between two peripheries, the Corsican and the Kabylean, with consequences in both language ideological and practical terms. Next, we will examine these relocalisation practices in detail, taking each performance in turn and beginning with the Welsh example.

As the title *Happy* indicates, the song is about being happy. It begins as follows:

It might seem crazy what I'm about to say  
 Sunshine she's here, you can take a break  
 I'm a hot air balloon that could go to space  
 With the air, like I don't care baby by the way

[Chorus:]

Because I'm happy  
 Clap along if you feel like a room without a roof  
 Because I'm happy  
 Clap along if you feel like happiness is the truth  
 Because I'm happy  
 Clap along if you know what happiness is to you  
 Because I'm happy  
 Clap along if you feel like that's what you wanna do

In the Welsh version, *Hapus*, the lyrics of the song are adapted to Welsh. The video virtually repeats the original performance with (American) celebrities dancing around Los Angeles. In the Welsh version, however, the performers are “children, learners, young people, adults and language organisations that speak, learn and socialise in Welsh in Caerphilly [a town in South Wales]”, as Bethan Jones, project officer of the Welsh language initiative Menter Iaith Caerffili, the organisation behind the video, explains. Instead of a middle-aged man (Pharrel), the lead singer in the Welsh version is 11-year-old Cerys Lloyd, who comes from a local Welsh-medium school. With these changes the performance strives towards a fundamental resignification: “The purpose of the film”, Bethan Jones explains further, “is to show that the Welsh language is very much alive in the county borough and is used and enjoyed by people of all ages in everyday life” (Gidley, 2014, May 20).

Like its Welsh counterpart, the Sámi remake utilises both the song and the visuals of the original video to create new meanings, but with a different twist. The original song by Finnish pop singer Jenni Vartiainen is about longing for the other in a long-distance relationship (see Figure 1, below). The Sámi version,

called in Finnish *Leivänmuruseni* ('my crumb of bread'), is not just a translation but is more a recreation of the original. The title plays with the polysemy of the original title *Missä muruseni on* ('Where is my sweetheart'): in Finnish *muru*, 'crumb', is also a term of endearment, meaning 'sweetheart'. Borrowing words and expressions from the original song, the remade version tells the story of a Sámi woman who leaves for a long walk over the fells with only a piece of bread and some dried meat with her. Although it is going to be a long walk, she is too hungry to spin out her provisions for the whole day, and now she is starving. In the words of the song:

COVER LYRICS	ORIGINAL LYRICS
<p>It was a beautiful autumn day and I left for a hike in the fjells. I took bread and dried meat as provisions to be a proper Sámi. They say, if you have a long journey ahead, you have to ration the food. But, fatty me, I didn't remember that, I was so hungry. [chorus:] The wind blew off my last crumbs of bread, I ate the dried meat long ago. Now I'm suffering, so hungry am I, and it's ten kilometres home.</p>	<p>In the night, I went to sleep on the balcony again, so that he would be nearer to me. From my bed I saw the sky, I started waiting to see a star falling. They say, if you see a falling star, you can wish anything. In the night, I whispered a wish into the sky, I wish it would start blowing. [chorus:] Wind, blow to where my sweetheart is, play a while with his hair. Tell him my love, tell him how I miss him, tell him how I'm still waiting for him.</p>

**Figure 1.** *Leivänmuruseni* by *Märät säpikkäät/Njuoska bittut* and *Missä muruseni on* by Jenni Vartiainen. (English translation by the author of the article.)

The resignification by *Märät säpikkäät/Njuoska bittut* transforms the original song into a parodic representation of one aspect of Sámi cultural traditions and the hardships of this traditional way of life. The visuals in the video take the same line. The original video presents the singer, Vartiainen, wearing a thin black chiffon dress with long ribbons blowing in the wind. She is standing on a desolate, dark shore surrounded by barren hills. Despite the sense of loneliness conveyed by the gloomy surroundings, the visuals do not have much to do with the lyrics of the song – unlike in the remade version. This too is situated in gloomy surroundings, not now on a shore, but on the treeless uplands of Lapland – exactly the surroundings the makers of the cover video sing about. The two female performers are wearing black dresses like Vartiainen's in the original video, which intensifies still further the sense of suffering the song conveys.

Although the performers of the cover version sing in Sámi, the song is subtitled and the video has a Finnish title. Indeed, the main intended audience of the performance is the Finnish-speaking population; as already mentioned the video was released on YouTube as a teaser for a comedy show broadcast on national Finnish TV. Also in the show itself the performers speak mostly Finnish (for more details about the languages used in the show, see Pietikäinen, 2014; Pietikäinen & Dlaske, 2013). Thus, unlike in the Welsh and Irish cases, a central function of the performance is to showcase the Sámi language and culture to 'others' (i.e., Finns), not primarily to address the Sámi audience. We will return to this point later in the article.

Turning next to the Irish example, it is, as mentioned above, a remade version of Avicii's global hit *Wake me up*, named, provocatively, *Avicii vs. Lurgan "Wake me up" as Gaeilge*. Similarly to the Welsh remake, in the Irish version the originally English lyrics are adapted into Irish and the song is performed by Irish speakers and learners. The Irish lyrics are provided in written form below the video. Unlike in the Welsh case, the song is not particularly chosen to express the sentiments of minority language speakers, but rather it is, to quote the online magazine *Joe.ie*, just one of "our favourite top tunes" that "received the Coláiste Lurgan treatment" (Collins, 2015, January). However, as a language school project the song lends itself to being interpreted as something to do with learning Irish. The first verse and the chorus of the English version and the Irish version translated into English go as follows:

ORIGINAL LYRICS	COVER LYRICS
Feeling my way through the darkness Guided by a beating heart I can't tell where the journey will end But I know where to start [--] [Chorus:] So wake me up when it's all over When I'm wiser and I'm older All this time I was finding myself And I didn't know I was lost.	A vicious circle in the middle of the night. There's nothing ever without an end. I've no clue where my story's end lies. But I am on the right way. [--] [Chorus:] So free me from this slumber of mine. Show me a fair and easy road. I'll make it to my destination. That's my goal. Whichever way is meant for me.

**Figure 2.** *Wake me up* by Avicii and an English translation of the Irish version of the song by Coláiste Lurgan<sup>6</sup>.

Unlike in the Welsh and Sámi cases, the makers have decided not to draw on the visuals of the original video but to create a performance of their own instead. In the original video, the main characters are a girl and a woman (played by the top model Kristina Romanova) who live in a small village in early 20<sup>th</sup> century USA. When they walk through the village, other residents cast critical glances at them. One day the woman gets up, gets on her horse, and rides off to a large city, where she follows others to Avicii's concert, where she seems to feel at home. In the Lurgan version, the video features hundreds of performers singing, playing and dancing. In addition to the visuals, the makers have altered the arrangement of the song by incorporating a background choir and a number of instruments (including flutes and an accordion), giving the melody, which in the original borrows from American country music, the sound of Irish folk music. Along with the Irish lyrics and the made-over arrangement, the video features close-ups of dancers performing a traditional Irish dance, made famous by the Riverdance. Together, these elements give the performance a clear Irish twist. As these semiotic features are also crucial to the way in which the performance 'works' in terms of its appeal to the audience, we will investigate them in more detail in the following section. Before that, still focusing on the centre-periphery dynamics, let us turn to the fourth example in the sample, the cover from the Corsican context.

While the Welsh, Irish and Sámi performances tap into the power of global/national music industries, and in that way into the power of global/national centres, in order to promote peripheral minority languages and identities, the Corsican case creates a different vector. As mentioned above, the

original song, *A Vava Inouva* ('Father Inouva') is a lullaby written, and originally performed in 1976, by the Berber Algerian singer of Kabyle music, Idir, as a duet with the singer Mila. The original song is in Kabyle, a minority language spoken by the Kabyle people in the north and northeast of Algeria. The Corsican version, entitled *Lasciala passà*, is an adaptation of the song into Corsican. As the original song does not have a music video, the person(s) who uploaded the Corsican version onto YouTube has/have created their own. It is in this sense that also the performance from the Corsican context can be regarded as a music video cover – as not a cover *of*, but a cover *with* a music video. As mentioned earlier, the video does not feature any performers, but is a photo slide show displaying (apparently) Corsican landscapes.

As becomes clear, the Corsican example does not tap into the power of global/national centres, nor does it touch upon power relations between the dominating and dominated languages, in this case French and Corsican. Instead, the Corsican example establishes a connection to another periphery, also historically dominated by France. This connection evokes, along with the visuals of the video, not a sense of modernity and 'hip' but a sense of peripheral solidarity and nostalgia. We will examine these effects in more detail in the next sections.

## 5.2 *Appealing through humour, cool, and a sense of nostalgia*

Above, I suggested that part of the appeal of the performances derives from the globally popular genre of music video covers and, more specifically, from their reference to (inter)national mega hits. Besides these connections, each of them draws on their own logic of operation. Typically of the "performance era" (Pietikäinen & Kelly-Holmes, 2011, Section 2, above), the relocalised versions in the Welsh, Sámi and Irish contexts operate through fun, playfulness and coolness, albeit each in a different manner. In contrast to these, the Corsican case appeals, as indicated above, through a sense of nostalgia.

The Welsh performance is a relocalised version of a feel-good song' made originally for a comedy animation film for children and of a video showcasing comic dance performances. The light-hearted feeling and the comic effect are reinforced by the choice of location: the people are dancing in various public places, streets, parks, workplaces, car parks – in other words, in places where people usually do not dance. By keeping the original message when translating the song into Welsh, and by taking over the main elements of the video, only replacing the performers with Welsh speakers and learners and locating it in a Welsh town, the Welsh version takes on the happy, playful atmosphere of the original performance. This, I would suggest, is also what constitutes the main source of appeal of the cover.

The Sámi performance relies on fun as well, but more of the parodic kind. As described above, the original video by Jenni Vartiainen is not fun at all. In fact, it is the opposite: melancholic and wistful. What makes the Sámi performance parodic and fun are the rewritten lyrics self-ironically describing the 'miserable' lot of the Sámi woman (see Figure 1, above), and the video, which skilfully adopts the desolate setting and the gloomy atmosphere of the original performance and makes them seem to fit better, as noted above, to the story of the Sámi version than to the original song. Another crucial factor contributing to the appeal of the performance is undoubtedly the sense of exoticism which the indigenous Sámi language and culture arguably evoke in the Finnish audience. In the context of this performance Sáminess appears, at least to some people in the audience, as the

examination in the next section will indicate, as a kind of “peripheral ‘hip’” (McLaughlin, 2013).

Although the Irish performance also signals fun, it is less hilarious or playful than ‘seriously cool’. The video is filmed in a huge hall, lit with purple, red, green and blue stage lights and filled with students and staff of the summer school, Coláiste Lurgan. The clothes and faces of the performers are painted with colourful phosphor paint which glows in the dim lighting. Most of the performers are gathered around the sides of the hall, forming a stage in the middle for the lead singer, mixing table, and two dance groups. Some of the performers form an orchestra with guitar, piano, violin, accordion, transverse flute and other instruments. Others accompany them, banging stony-faced and with mechanical gestures on painted barrels that have been converted into drums. The rest of the group forms a huge singing and dancing choir that joins in the chorus. The choir and orchestra alter not only the visual, but also the auditive dimension of the original performance; the original song is performed by the musician Aloe Blacc alone, accompanied by guitar and drums. The massive choir and the orchestra lend the cover version quite another, rather bombastic, sound. The dance groups, each consisting of around ten female students, appear on the stage one after another: one group does a graceful ballet dance to the song; another group performs an Irish folk dance in the style of Riverdance. The video is edited to comprise quickly shifting close-ups of the lead singer and the different groups of performers. Overall, the video looks professional. The close-ups of the dancing and singing crowd, the lead singer and the mixing table in the middle create a connection to the scenes from Avicii’s concert in the original video, but also to other similar scenes from music videos and concert recordings, linking the performance to a kind of “global ‘hip’” (McLaughlin, 2013). Another feature which forms a connection not just to the canon of popular music videos, including Avicii’s, but more broadly to the mainstream media industry, is the performers’ appearance, especially of the ones selected for the close-ups. If the performers are young by virtue of being students at a summer school, they are also strikingly good-looking. The lead singer could play a part as a heart-throb in any popular Hollywood movie and the girls would easily qualify for Avicii’s original video. However, in the case of the girls this is not only because of their own beauty but also because of their clothing; all the girls on the video are wearing tight white tops and t-shirts, and in many cases tiny hot pants. As result the performance gives us an example of what Helen Kelly-Holmes (2011) has characterised in her study on current language ideologies in Ireland as “a newly emerging discourse of ‘sexy Irish’, which signals a commodification of Irish speakers as young, beautiful and mediatisable” (Kelly-Holmes, 2011, p. 511).

Interestingly, this discourse features also in the performance from the Sámi context, although there, of course, as ‘a discourse of sexy Sámi’. Although the overall tone of the video is parodic, the two performers are beautiful young women additionally sexualised through dark femme fatale make up, blushed cheeks and close-fitting black chiffon dresses. Their appearance in the video is in line with the wider context of the TV comedy show, in which the performers are represented as overtly flirty and ‘naughty’ (see e.g., Dlaske & Jäntti, 2016; Pietikäinen & Dlaske, 2013). As will become evident in the examination of the user comments below, in both the Irish and the Sámi case, the appearance of the performers constitutes a significant part of the appeal of the performance, and as such a vital selling point.

In the Corsican case, sexiness is not an issue, and neither are playfulness or coolness. Rather, the performance appeals with allusions to cultural heritage, evoking a sense of nostalgia. Instead of tapping into the power of the contemporary global music industry, it works through the attraction of the past, and the appeal of the ethno music scene, which, in relation to the global pop music industry, is marginal). As I have already mentioned, the video from the Corsican context relocalises a traditional lullaby originally recorded in 1976 by the Kabyle singer, Idir. In the song, the singer, singing to his 'daughter', describes the doings of the family members who are gathered in the house in the evening. Translated into English, the song begins as follows:

Please open me the door, father Inouva, father Inouva.  
Shake your bracelets, oh my daughter Ghariba.  
I fear the monster of the forest, father Inouva, father Inouva.  
I fear him, too, oh my daughter Ghariba.

The old one is rolled up in his trench coat, in the distance, to warm himself.  
His son is scared to earn bread, looking at the days to come.  
The grandmother sews without stopping, putting the cloth.  
The children around the grandmother, learning the teachings from the old days<sup>7</sup>.

The Corsican version *Lasciala passà* circulates the same melody, but the lyrics tell about lost love, with the singer thinking wistfully:

You are still wearing that lovely delicate scarf  
that your mother made you. That she gave you as a gift.  
No, you no longer wear that damask scarf.  
You gave it away forever to the one who looks at you.

The video to the song displays (one supposes) Corsican scenes – green hills with old, traditional stone houses on the slopes, old villages with narrow lanes, goats standing on mountain roads. Through the genealogy of the song and the imagery of the video, not only the Corsican language but also 'Corsicannes' more generally become connected to the past. Although the Sámi performance also deals with cultural heritage and creates a connection to the past, it does so with a sense of humour: the genre of parody makes it possible for the makers to identify with the Sámi cultural heritage and at the same time to maintain a humorous distance to it (Rose, 1993) while locating the actual performance firmly in the contemporary. While the parodic re-treatment of the Sámi cultural heritage seems to go down well with the audience, the nostalgic undertone in the Corsican case receives a less enthusiastic reception.

### 5.3 Audience reactions

To investigate further the potential of the music video covers to contribute to language revitalisation, we move next from the actual performances to the audience reactions. Above, we touched upon some responses of the media to the videos. In this section, we will focus on the more immediate audience reactions by examining the comments posted on the video sharing site YouTube (and in the Welsh case Facebook, cf. Section 4, above). The examination concentrates on three central discourses, signification practices (Fairclough, 1992), that emerge from the flow of comments and are of particular relevance for the present paper. The first

two discourses are concerned with the evaluation of the performance and of the performers, the third with the (re)valuation of the languages used in the videos. (For a more comprehensive analysis of the comments on the Irish and Sámi performance, see Dlaske, forthcoming).

### 5.3.1 Evaluating the performances

The majority of the postings in the Sámi/Finnish, Irish and Welsh contexts are concerned with evaluating the performances and the vast majority of these are positive in tone. In the Corsican context, one of the six commentators posts three hearts, indicating ‘loving it’. In the Sámi/Finnish and Welsh contexts, the reactions are a little more moderate; for instance, “Brilliant”, “Well done, I love it” for Hapus and “BRILLIANT! ☺”<sup>8</sup>, “Great video, makes a real parody. ☺” for the Sámi performance. In the Irish context, in turn, the comments indicate overwhelming enthusiasm: “LOVE, LOVE, LOVE, LOVE, LOVE IT!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!”, “WOW very very cool”, “This is amazing, really impressive. This deserves huge recognition! Maith thú!” [‘well done’]. There are also several comments from people from other parts of the world expressing their admiration for the Irish production: “Russian people love this song !!!!!”, “Greetings from Barcelona. It's the first time I've listened Irish to a song !!! Congratulations, go on this way !!”, “This is amazing! Beautiful language! Come to New York and play for us! :)”.

In the Sámi/Finnish and Irish contexts a number of comments link the performance to promotion of the languages. In the Sámi/Finnish context, one of the commentators notes: “This was nice to watch. A great way to introduce Sámi language to the broad masses ☺”. In the Irish context, a similar comment reads “I can't believe how good this is, and I'm so glad to see that Irish is being promoted in this way!”. Another comments: “An amazing production. [--] Well done Colaiste Lurgan for making Gaeilge sexy and popular. I live in NZ and show it to all my friends and they are blown away. Most of them didnt realise we had our own language. Keep up the brilliant work XX.” (For similar laudatory remarks of ‘making Irish sexy’ in connection with the TV Channel TG4, see Moriarty, 2014.)

In both the Irish and Sámi/Finnish contexts there are a number of comments suggesting that the performances should participate in the Eurovision Song Contest, representing Ireland and Finland respectively. In both contexts, too, several comments relate the covers to their original versions. The Sámi and the Irish performances are invariably considered to be superior to the original: “Considerably better than the original version” states a comment on the Sámi performance. “Much better in irish!!!!”, “This is better than the wake me up in English!” read comments on the Irish version. Comments on the Welsh and the Corsican videos are less enthusiastic in this respect: “Nope - hasn't quite got the same pact has it - in fact it sounds a bit crap”, was one evaluation on *Hapus*. In the Corsican context, the uploader of the video introduces the Corsican version (in French): “The Corsican version of the A Vava Inouva has its charm but the original version cannot be beaten” (translation mine).

### 5.3.2 Evaluating the performers

Besides responses evaluating the performances, in the Sámi, Irish and Welsh cases there are a considerable number of comments directly evaluating the performers. In the Irish context, a number of postings comment on the talent of the group and the great voice of the singer. Almost equally many evaluate the appearance of the

performers: “So love this tune performed by such good-looking Irish kids singing their hearts out “as gaelige””<sup>9</sup>, comments one. “I just looove this version of this song. Haven't a clue what they are singing but its bloody brilliant and he is an absolute babe!!!! <3 <3”, comments another. Three further commentators note: “A gathering of beautiful people!”, “Besides the language, there's another mandatory requirement to join the band: must be good looking. I only see super cute girls, and this version is absolutely fantastic. Congrats to all of you!!”. “Lol Half of the girls are still just teens and under 18”. The comments on the Sámi performers go along similar lines. Although a couple of postings compliment the actors on their voices, more of them focus on their appearance, many in less than sophisticated terms: “lovely girls <3”, “fuckable-looking creatures”, “wonder, how the one with the red cheeks would look like topless?”. These comments clearly echo the discourse of sexy Irish / sexy Sámi discussed in the previous section. In the Welsh performance, the performers are ordinary schoolchildren and other, old and young people from the Welsh-speaking community. In the Facebook discussion many of the participants seem to know each other. As a result, the comments are rather personal and are concerned with other aspects than the appearance of the actors. For example: “Brilliant make over and Cerys Lloyd what a beautiful voice you have. It looks like you all had such good fun making it and it shows the world the warmth of the Welsh people. well done.”

### 5.3.3 (Re)valuating the languages used in the performances

Especially the Irish and the Sámi video elicited a range of comments expressing positive attitudes towards the respective minority languages and identities. Despite the similar ethos, however, the comments reflect the different positions of the two languages in their respective society. While in the Irish case, judging from cues in the comments indexing the speakers’ position, most of the comments are posted by Irish people, who speak as members of the community, in the case of the Sámi performance many of them seem to be posted by Finns speaking from outside the Sámi community.

In both cases, a number of comments praise the beauty of the Sámi and Irish languages respectively: “Beautiful language that Sámi ☺”, “The girls got great voices. Sámi language sounds beautiful in songs! Hopefully people with Sámi blood could finally be PROUD of their heritage”. In these comments, the pronoun *that* and the reference to the Sámi in the third person plural index the commentators’ distance from the Sámi language and people and their belonging to the Finnish majority. In the case of the Irish performance, many of the comments evaluating the language also come from outside the Irish community; for instance, “So this is Irish? Cool!”, “Great way to popularize the Irish language (which is very beautiful to me). Keep going the Irish! Greetings from Ukraine!”.

Besides comments evaluating the language, especially in the Irish and Sámi/Finnish contexts, there are a significant number of postings that express interest in learning the language. A commentator in the Irish context posts: “This cover and all the other covers that you guys have done have inspired me to learn Irish again, but this time for pleasure, and as a real language... not only to pass the leaving cert! Love it! Go hiontach! [Great!]”. Another comments: “Omg I freaking love this great way to help us learn Irish! :)”. Judging from the comments, besides having inspired learning outside the school context, the performance has also touched attitudes towards formal education<sup>10</sup>. A number of viewers comment along the lines of the following: “IS BREA LIOM!!!! <3 I LOVE THIS VERSION!!!



My teacher is making us sing this in IRISH!!!! CANT WAIT!!!!” and “OMG!!! That was brilliant!!! Im definitley going to Irish College now!!!”. In the Sámi/Finnish context, one commentator posts: “Thanks girls! You need to teach that language to us!”, another declares, perhaps with a slight twinkle in his/her eye as well “That’s it. I’ll start learning Sámi :D”. Another inquires: “Are there lyrics available to this?? :DD Would like myself learn that grand, beautiful language <3”. This question about the lyrics arises in the comments in all four sites. As another example, a commentator in the Welsh context says: “Would love the words as we are learning Happy in our singing group and would love to try the Welsh lyrics”<sup>11</sup>.

Besides talk *on* the respective languages and the ripple effects the videos might have had in terms of inspiring people to learn the languages, they also sparked comments *in* the respective minority languages – all but the Corsican video, on which the comments were only in French. In the Sámi/Finnish and Welsh contexts the comments are short “Màilmmi buorre, nieddat!” (sic) (‘World’s best, girls!’) or “Da iawn blantos x” (‘very good kids x’). In the Irish context, Irish is used more substantially as a language of discussion, expressing not only admiration for the performance but also the speakers’ language political spirit: “This is one of the best songs of Ireland, nothing can stop the Irish we are always up for a fight! I speak much Irish and I am Irish.”

## 6 Conclusions

Globalisation and the development of the Internet as one of its manifestations have been regarded as a threat to minority languages and cultures. The Internet, on the other hand, has also been seen as a vital arena for language revitalisation, not least because of its globalised and globalising character and the new spaces and genres it offers for minoritised languages (e.g., Cormack & Hourigan, 2007; Jones & Uribe-Jongbloed, 2013; Pietikäinen & Kelly-Holmes, 2011). Taking up the latter view, and drawing on insights from sociolinguistics and sociosemiotics and data from four peripheral minority language contexts, the Sámi, Irish, Welsh and Corsican, this study has analysed the potential of music video covers uploaded on YouTube to contribute to language revitalisation. Although the analysis has its limits especially as regards the actual effects on people – to tap into these would require other data and methodological approaches – the results nevertheless suggest some possible directions.

The investigation shows that music video covers in minority languages can be of significance for language revitalisation in both language ideological and practical terms. As regards their ideological effects, music video covers can alter the indexical values attached to minority languages; as regards their practical effects, they can promote the visibility and interest in learning and using the languages. However, these effects are not just a matter of access to a new media space (YouTube) or a new genre (music video covers) but also, crucially, a question of relocalisation and the semiotic resources drawn upon in these practices, ranging from the particular original videos/songs covered to the visual, auditive and other elements used.

The genre of music video covers can function as a resource for reconfiguring centre-periphery dynamics in that it allows making the power of centres to work for peripheries to promote minority languages and identities. Arguably, the globally popular and, as such, central, genre of music video covers alone lends local performances from peripheries a certain sense of cool. However, on closer

inspection, this is not just a question of type but also of token; what exactly is covered and how. Tapping in to the popularity of current global/national mega hits, as the Welsh, Irish and Sámi performances do, makes possible an association between the respective minority languages and identities, and the indexical values of youthfulness, up-to-dateness and coolness and attracts (media) attention (cf. Moriarty & Pietikäinen, 2011). These cases show, moreover, how minority languages can work in popular genres not only on equal terms with the dominant ones (cf. Jaffe, 2007; Moriarty, 2011), but doing it even better (cf. user comments above). Drawing on a traditional lullaby from another peripheral minority context, on the other hand, as was the case with the Corsican video, links the language, and more generally Corsicannes, to the past and (another) periphery.

The Welsh, Irish and Sámi performances appeal through humour, fun, coolness and sexiness, albeit each in different ways. While the Welsh performance conveys a sense of humour and having fun together, the Irish one draws rather on coolness and sexiness. The Sámi performance combines parody and humour with ethnic exoticism and a kind of femme fatale aesthetic. However, the Welsh performance never reached the viewer rates of its Irish counterpart, not even those of the Sámi performance, which is indicative of both the appeal of the Welsh performance to the audience and of its (restricted) circulation in the new media space. The Corsican video, with its references to history and tradition reproducing notions linked stereotypically to minority languages, did not appeal much to viewers. As a whole, the Corsican example stands out from the other three. But it also stands out as the only even remotely comparable example from the Corsican context which, again, is indicative of the circulation of Corsican linguistic resources in the (new) media space and the orientation of Corsican language revitalisation activities, especially in terms of relating to young people<sup>12</sup>.

While the Welsh, Irish and Sámi performances link their respective languages with new and, as such, positive notions, they operate on different value assumptions. 'Having fun together' is based on social inclusion, while coolness and sexiness, by definition, are based on social exclusion. Coolness, youthfulness and sexiness, besides, are not only socially exclusive, but in contemporary (media) culture also socially normative (Gill, 2007). Moreover, as is suggested by the user comments on "a gathering of beautiful people" in relation to the Coláiste Lurgan video on the one hand and on "fuckable-looking creatures" in relation to the video by the Sámi performers, on the other, the 'sexing up' of a language and its speakers can have very different repercussions. These initial observations invite a more thorough interrogation of the critical value of the new attributes and consideration of the question: if commodification as youthful, 'cool' and 'sexy' as the opposite of obsolete and backward (cf. also Kelly-Holmes, 2011; Moriarty, 2014; Moriarty & Pietikäinen, 2011) make new the attributes of minoritised languages (and their speakers) in revitalisation attempts in the political economy of languages, what does this mean to (the communities of) minority language speakers?

## Endnote

- <sup>1</sup> The article is produced in the context of the project “Peripheral Multilingualism. Sociolinguistic ethnography of contestation and innovation in multilingual Sámi, Corsican, Irish and Welsh indigenous and minority language contexts” (2011–2015, founded by the Academy of Finland), [www.peripheralmultilingualism.fi](http://www.peripheralmultilingualism.fi). In this connection, I wish to thank Sari Pietikäinen, Alexandra Jaffe, Helen Kelly-Holmes, Nik Coupland and Emanuel Silva for help and support in carrying out the study and writing the article.
- <sup>2</sup> The number marks a slight increase of 7.1% from the year 2006 (This is Ireland, 2012, p. 40).
- <sup>3</sup> Due to the emphasis on language, not place, the video is not uploaded on the ‘We are happy from’ website.
- <sup>4</sup> ‘Hapus’ was the only music video cover that was found in the Welsh context. I thank Elisabeth Barakos for bringing it to my attention.
- <sup>5</sup> My special thanks to Alexandra Jaffe for discovering this video and translating the lyrics of the song into English.
- <sup>6</sup> Translation from the site Seal Team Sloth, n.d.
- <sup>7</sup> Translation from YouTube (El Samahy, 2012, August 31). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TYwFrgJtRVo>
- <sup>8</sup> Most of the comments on the Sámi performance are in Finnish. The English translations are by the author of the article.
- <sup>9</sup> The quotes are reproduced here as written in the original.
- <sup>10</sup> For the general (negative) attitude towards ‘learning Irish in school’ see e.g., Moriarty (2011).
- <sup>11</sup> Another replies to the questioner that she can provide her with the lyrics. In connection to the Sámi performance, one user posts the first verse and the chorus of the song in Sámi. As mentioned, in the Lurgan case, the Irish lyrics are readily provided below the video. In the Corsican case, the question remains unanswered.
- <sup>12</sup> For a recent series of activities in the Corsican context, see Jaffe (2015).

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