This paper presents the visibility of an indigenous Saami language in education through the concept of linguistic landscape. The concept of linguistic landscape can be used to analyze the visible written language in an educational institute. The focus is to describe language as a material environment. Recently, the research of linguistic landscape has emerged as one concept to describe and investigate the power relations between minority and majority languages.

This presentation focuses on the linguistic landscape in a Saami secondary school located in the North Saami language area in Northern Norway. The status of an indigenous minority language and linguistic practices in a bilingual school make the core questions of this research. The materials for the analyzes in this research consist of 201 pictures of the linguistic landscape taken in a Saami secondary school years 2009 – 2011. In addition to the photos student interviews and questionnaire inquiries on language attitudes and experiences were collected.

This research on linguistic landscape creates new information about the linguistic practices in Saami education. According to this research the educational and identity supportive role of the linguistic landscape is not fully recognized in a Saami school. Thus the linguistic landscape reestablishes the dominant position of the majority language. The linguistic landscape in a Saami school is a construction of individual language choices of different internal and external actors and it is not controlled by a common language policy guideline. The linguistic landscape of the Saami school reflects the language situation in the region, the hierarchy between Saami and Norwegian languages as well as the socio-historical status of the Saami language.

Keywords: Indigenous language policy, Saami education, Linguistic landscape.