



RISEUP

REVITALISING LANGUAGES AND SAFEGUARDING CULTURAL DIVERSITY

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D2.2 Report on Need for Further Research



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Executive Summary

This deliverable sets out a methodologically grounded framework for future research with indigenous and minoritized language communities, drawing directly on the empirical and reflective experience of the RISE UP consortium. According to the task, an essential contribution to the identification process has been provided by interaction and exchange with language communities involved in the project, namely, the Setos in Estonia, the Cornish in the UK, the Aromanians in the Balkans, the Aranese in Catalonia, and the Burgenland Croats in Austria. The lead partners for this deliverable, the University of Tartu researchers, gained their insights for the report mostly by analysing the deliverables produced by other partners during the project, as well as discussing the need for further research during the RISE UP consortium meeting in Vienna on 4th November 2025. In the report, these insights have been grounded in relevant research literature.

The deliverable's central argument is that future research needs should not only be restricted to research topics but also engage more thoroughly with how research is conducted. The deliverable foregrounds participatory, community-led approaches, advocating for long-term, trust-based engagement with minoritized communities, rather than short funding cycles that exacerbate research fatigue in participants. It emphasizes slow research, qualitative methodologies, and ethnographic methods as essential for understanding lived practices in communities, while also highlighting the need to involve community members as co-researchers, compensate their work fairly, and ensure that research outcomes benefit the communities involved.

Moreover, the deliverable critically interrogates key analytical concepts, such as those of a community, speaker, and language data. It shows that communities are internally diverse, shaped by mobility, borders, (uneven) access to resources, and (virtual) interaction. The discussion of speakers challenges native-speaker ideologies by foregrounding new speakers, legitimacy, and authority as concepts that in many places have become important to language revitalization processes. The section on language data, standardization, and documentation highlights value judgment dilemmas around whose language is recorded, codified, and taught to others.

The deliverable is linked to other deliverables of the RISE UP project, including the D2.1 Report, which reports on past and present language policies and examines the factors contributing to language endangerment. As such, it contributes to the EU policy goals of linguistic diversity, cultural heritage protection, and social inclusion in multilingual societies.

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Acronyms & Abbreviations

Term	Description
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
D	Deliverable
T	Task
WP	Work Package

1 Introduction

1.1 Overview

The scope of this deliverable is to outline research-informed principles and methodological considerations for conducting research with indigenous and minoritized language communities, drawing on the empirical experience and reflections of the RISE UP project as well as scholarly literature. The deliverable responds to concerns about extractive research practices, research fatigue in small communities, and the constraints imposed by short-term output-driven research funding cycles.

In this report, we adopt the approach advocated by Haley De Korne [1], who argues that minority languages should not be understood merely as an objective label tied to a small number of speakers or a bounded territory. Rather, it represents *a socio-political condition characterized by a minoritized status relative to other languages*, subject to ongoing negotiation and shift. This perspective resonates with a broader human condition – namely, the tension between linguistic diversity and societal (political, economic, environmental) interdependence [2, p. 301] (our emphasis). Language itself has been defined in multiple ways: as a system of cognitive representation inherent to humans, as an abstract symbol of culture or nation, or as a form of action [3]. These conceptualizations often fall within binaries such as structural versus post-structural, or essentialist versus constructivist understandings of language and language acquisition [1]. The authors draw on a constructivist perspective when formulating future research questions, particularly in relation to non-essentialist constructs such as language, speaker, community, and space and place. Such a perspective, we argue, can yield insights that are instrumental in shaping policies aimed at supporting minoritized language communities.

1.2 Relation to other tasks and deliverables

This deliverable is related to the wider RISE UP project and other tasks and deliverables:

The University of Tartu team’s Task T2.3, *Identification of the need for further research*, and the associated deliverable D2.2 are shaped through close collaboration across all work packages.

Receives inputs from:

Table 1. D2.2 Input from other tasks and deliverables

Deliverable	Due Date	Input for D _{x.x}
T2.1	/	Analysis of past and present language policies
T2.2	/	Identification of stakeholders in the field of language and minority policies
D2.1		Report on past and present language policies including reasons for becoming an endangered language provides an analysis of how policy environments affect language vitality and offers a

		comparative overview of governance frameworks on which D2.2 builds when recommending future research horizons.
D3.1		Description of a European language preservation Ecosystem outlines the ecological model for language preservation and highlights the key actors, relationships, and contextual factors that shape language revitalisation across Europe. Building on this analysis and others, the D2.2 outlines priority areas and knowledge gaps for future investigation.
D3.2		Guidelines for language revitalisation informs D2.2 by highlighting areas requiring deeper investigation.
D4.3		The report on good practice strategies informs D2.2 by highlighting effective approaches. Based on this, we are identifying remaining gaps for future study.
D5.1		The description of the pilot case studies provides background on community needs, key stakeholders, and local conditions across the five study communities. This deliverable helps keep the conclusions of D2.2 grounded in ethnographic findings.

Provides outputs to:

Table 2. D2.2 Output for other tasks and deliverables

Deliverable	Due Date	Output from D2.2
T2.1		Analysis of past and present language policies
T2.3		Identification of need for further research

1.3 Structure of the deliverable

The first section (Ch. 2) outlines key methodological recommendations for research involving minoritized language communities, as reflected in RISE UP deliverables and broader scholarly debates. The sections below foreground approaches that are participatory, community-led, and qualitatively oriented, with a particular emphasis on long-term engagement, and reusing and sharing the data to fill research gaps to avoid research fatigue.

This deliverable then emphasizes that researching language communities requires careful consideration of what is meant by community, language, and speaker, as well as the affordances that space and place provide for speakers. Work with language communities involves conceptual problems – complex, interdependent issues that resist simple solutions and require context-sensitive solutions. Under a constructivist paradigm, knowledge is understood as co-produced and situated; meanings of

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“community,” “language,” and “speaker” are not fixed but constantly re-negotiated. The second section (Ch. 3) also provides explanations of these challenges. While this reflexive, constructivist stance does not eliminate problems, it equips researchers to navigate uncertainty, articulate limits, and design informed research methodologies.

2 Methodologies for research with minoritized language communities: principles and practices

During the RISE UP consortium meeting in Vienna on 4th November 2025, its members emphasized that future research projects involving indigenous and minoritized language communities should focus not only on what is researched but also on how research is conducted. Such projects should prioritize trust-building, participatory methods, transparent practices, and ensure that results benefit the communities involved.

In small communities, research fatigue can occur when members have been repeatedly studied without clear benefits. New projects should therefore demonstrate tangible advantages for participants and respect their autonomy, time, and effort. Based on RISE UP's experience, this challenge is particularly evident in the Cornish context.

To address these concerns, the consortium recommends long-term research initiatives that foster relationships with communities and avoid duplicating previous studies.

2.1 Participatory and community-led research

As much of the research that seeks to explore indigenous and minoritized language communities would be impossible without the assistance of people who provide the necessary information, research involving such communities should pay attention to developing and sustaining these relationships [4]. At its best, such research should be participatory and community-driven, or even community-led, wherever possible, “to reach beyond the walls of the university” [5, p. 1].

Research approaches such as participatory action research [6], [7], and community-based participatory research [8] advocate to “take the critical step towards attempting to make communities equal partners in the research process” [5, p. 2]. This means “blurring the distinction between researchers and research participants, minimizing power imbalances, and researching in partnership with communities towards positive community outcomes that are sustainable beyond the life of the research” [8, p.1]. The community-led approach, as proposed by Flexner, Rawlings & Riley [5], takes a step further by attempting to invert the traditional positions of researchers and research participants. They argue for enabling the community to “tell researchers what *they* want [5, p. 2]. The RISE UP Consortium has endeavoured to put these ideas into practice when it came to designing the surveys, and to take respondents' feedback into account, as described in deliverable D4.2. In such an approach, the researcher becomes a “facilitator, using their expertise not to direct but to serve community research interest” [5, p. 2]. Empirical evidence shows that the interaction of researchers of diverse skills and different viewpoints is important for advancing research [9].

Collaborative research efforts require people to invest time and resources [5, p. 4], for example, to achieve common ground. The RISE UP consortium (4 Nov 2025) recommends that future project funding calls advocate for and credit teamwork, and that community members are involved in the entire research process, from the project design to the dissemination of results. It is of utmost importance that their contributions are compensated.

The RISE UP deliverables pay special attention to the involvement of the youth. For example, the RISE UP survey responses across all case-study communities reveal low youth participation and a shortage

of resources for youth. Engaging young people, therefore, requires innovative methodologies that might recognise youth as co-creators rather than research subjects.

2.2 Slow science and long-term projects

Short funding cycles incentivise projects that are too short to build meaningful relationships. On the one hand, community members invest time and resources in collaborative research; on the other hand, so do researchers. Community-led research is difficult to attain when researchers feel pressured for time and effort and must sideline work with the community or work extra hours to maintain relationships with community members to manage the institutional and funding pressures that accompany an academic career [5, p. 3]. Having time, however, is very important for researchers engaging in community-led research. “A community-led paradigm asks us as researchers to take the time to reach out to people living beyond the bounds of academia (sometimes quite a long way outside, physically or otherwise); to initiate, grow and maintain close relationships; and to discuss, consider and continually re-evaluate our research approaches and outcomes” [5, p. 4].

In the RISE UP project, researchers sense that they have built meaningful relationships with community members over the past three years. Without follow-up funding, these relationships would come to an end. Thus, future project funding calls should take into consideration that short-term funding might be inappropriate for indigenous and minoritized communities, and researchers alike: “Fast Science is bad for scientists and bad for science. Slow Science may help us make faster progress” [10, p. 1].

2.2.1 A holistic qualitative research approach

A qualitative approach – particularly holistic longitudinal qualitative research – offers the most nuanced understanding of the lives of minoritized communities [4], [11]. Ethnographic methods – combining participant observation, interviews, document analysis, and other methods – enable researchers to examine how (language) policies are interpreted, resisted, or reshaped in practice [12], and to capture the lived experiences of community members, for example, in issues such as unequal access to language resource, language ideological debates, and barriers to language use.

This emphasis on qualitative approaches is echoed in the RISE UP project deliverables. Deliverable D4.2 calls for qualitative methods, while deliverable D3.1 highlights the importance of targeted ethnographic fieldwork to deepen understanding and improve accessibility for respondents. D4.2 stresses the need for interviews, group discussions, and other ethnographic research, and deliverable D5.1 recognizes that survey data should be complemented by ethnographic fieldwork to probe deeper questions about language practices and policies. In addition to advocating for long-term projects and ethnographic methods, the RISE UP consortium supports enabling an emic approach – research from the insider’s perspective – and other adaptive methodologies in future project calls, to provide researchers with the flexibility required for projects involving communities and people.

2.2.2 Research fatigue

Repeated and often short-term studies that involve community members without compensating their effort and time can wear out small communities. “/.../ research fatigue can be said to occur when individuals and groups become tired of engaging with research, and it can be identified by a demonstration of reluctance toward continuing engagement with an existing project, or a refusal to

engage with any further research” [4, p. 955-956]. Clark [4, p. 956] emphasizes that research fatigue mainly occurs in two cases: firstly, in projects that require participation over time, and secondly, in areas where people are frequently requested to participate. What is at stake for the quality of research is not only that people might withdraw from the research process, but “fatigue can also threaten the type and the quality of data that are obtained from the field” [4, p. 965]. The reason behind the RISE UP questionnaire being relatively long was that the project wanted to limit having to request people to fill in another questionnaire further down the line.

In addition, research fatigue, or having been “studied to death” [5, p. 3] might be the result of having participated in research activities without any apparent benefits. “/.../ much academic research continues to work according to the extractive model, often in spite of the desires of the academics involved. Institutional emphasis on international rankings, productivity, and the continuous competition for research funding led to an impossible situation for even the most well-meaning researchers” [5, p. 3]. Peterson [13, p. 8] claims that research fatigue is less likely when the research has a clear purpose, when the participants clearly benefit from the research, and when the same people are not being asked to do the same thing repeatedly.

On November 8, 2024 at the Mercator conference, the poster presentation “RISE UP – Horizon Europe Projects as Platforms and Catalysts for Policy Recommendations” by Violeta Heinze, Gisela Hagmair & Marie Sauer highlighted mid-project findings of the RISE UP consortium. The presentation highlighted the absence of established frameworks for engaging with community members or compensating them for their support and labor, which often results in unpaid “research fatigue.” During the RISE UP consortium meeting in Vienna on 4-6 November 2025, Julia Sallabank from SOAS reported on the research fatigue in the Cornish community that she has encountered during her fieldwork.

The RISE UP consortium (4 November 2025) suggests that further research be carried out by communities, with communities and for communities, not on communities, and research should be designed in a way that gives back to people, not only expects their participation. For this to work, it is important that researchers are given the flexibility to reconsider and reevaluate research aims and community benefits during research.

2.2.3 Reusing and sharing data

Reusing data offers a partial solution to the problem of research fatigue and enables expanding the research scope. However, it remains difficult in implementation and practice, particularly in the case of ethnographic research [14]. Therefore, the RISE UP consortium advocates for long-term and holistic research that consolidates existing findings and pays attention to making new data reusable for future projects. Researchers should reuse and link existing datasets and conduct historical meta-analyses to map what has already been studied. For instance, the deliverable D5.1 drew on the results of Euromosaic from 1996 and 2004, and the FP7 project most relevant to RISE UP, the ELDIA (European Language Diversity for All: Reconceptualising, promoting and re-evaluating individual and societal multilingualism) project.

For now, the RISE UP mid-project findings highlight a lack of reliable, research-based, up-to-date, and publicly accessible data on minoritized languages and their vitality in Europe. This is not to claim that research is not carried out at all, but to highlight that a great deal of research information is behind paywalls and inaccessible to future research efforts. This leads to repeated studies, particularly in communities that have become popular among researchers (e.g., Cornish), while other communities

(e.g., Aromanian) have received far less attention from researchers. Addressing this issue aligns with Horizon Europe requirements: the Model Grant Agreement mandates that all project publications be made openly accessible, ensuring that research outputs are widely available to the scientific community and beyond.

2.2.4 Participant privacy and autonomy

The RISE UP consortium meeting (4th November 2025) highlighted the paradox between open data and the risk of identifying individuals in small communities. Even in an anonymized manner, respondents might be recognizable. Although open-access publishing and data repositories are to be encouraged, caution is required, as in small communities, individuals may be identifiable even in anonymized datasets. Thus, open data must balance accessibility with confidentiality.

When sharing data, researchers must consider aggregation, community review of dissemination, and options for controlled access. Researchers could co-develop data management plans with community members to decide what can be made public.

2.3 Addressing research gaps and expanding scope

Researchers' access to minoritized language communities differs for a range of reasons, including research traditions, community visibility, the availability of community members for research, varying levels of community trust shaped by past research experiences, legal and political constraints, territorial dispersions, and language barriers. Some communities, such as the Cornish community, have extensive research literature and resources, while others, like Aromanian, remain under-researched. Future research could allocate resources equitably and prioritise communities that have not yet been heavily researched. The consortium also advocates extending research beyond European indigenous languages to include migrant languages and global language revitalization efforts. While RISE UP is focused on local heritage languages, migrant languages are not taken into consideration. There are numerous minoritized migrant languages in Europe, which all play a big factor in the lived realities of their speakers. A wider perspective is needed, also on non-endangered minoritized languages, e.g., how Estonian has long been minoritized by Russian. Each community has unique circumstances and requires individual tools, support, and solutions" (see also Ch. 3 below). In addition, mapping revitalization initiatives worldwide could provide a comparative lens and avoid duplicating efforts.

In addition, the mid-project presentation highlighted that "public awareness is integral in three domains: 1) increasing the awareness among the general European population of the wealth of minoritized languages in the EU, 2) increasing the awareness of minoritized communities of each other, 3) increasing awareness within the communities of key socio-linguistically inclusive concepts such as "new speakers", "linguistic safe spaces", "translingual practice", etc."

3 The problem of the community

Researchers might be tempted to think that communities are coherent groups of people who share similar ideals and desires [15]. However, as Flexner, Rawlings and Riley [5, p. 4] emphasize, "in practice, of course, communities are the opposite: fractious, factional, and very difficult to understand without serious investment of time to develop close relationships with people." This tension between imagined

coherence and lived complexity helps explain why defining and delimiting a community has long posed a challenge: scholars continue to search for a concept that captures not only being together but also acting together.

One early attempt to define community was made by the German sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies [16], who distinguished between *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*. He portrayed *Gemeinschaft* through the metaphor of a living organism, in contrast to *Gesellschaft*, which he likened to a machine – emphasizing the difference between organic, affective bonds and rational, instrumental associations. A more recent concept relevant to the domains of knowing and learning is the community of practice (CofP), which refers to “groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly” [17], [18]. Wenger [19, p. 76] identifies key dimensions of CofP: mutual engagement, a joint negotiated enterprise, which refers to the shared goals that bind the members of a community of practice, and a shared repertoire of negotiable resources such as specialized terminology, routines, greetings, or gestures accumulated over time; mutual engagement involves regular interaction.

Spatial proximity, however, remains significant, as the term community is still frequently applied to neighbourhood-based groups or to people who are placed together by circumstance. *Throwtogetherness*, a concept developed by Doreen Massey [20], describes how places emerge from the contingent and often unpredictable meeting of diverse trajectories – people, histories, materialities, and practices – that happen to coincide in a particular moment. Given the complexity of the spatial and social encounters experienced by mobile and multilingual people, the concept of *throwtogetherness* may provide a useful lens for analysing their behaviour and experiences. Another distinction that calls for researchers’ attention is that between co-location and co-presence. While co-location refers simply to people being situated in the same physical space, co-presence highlights the performative, relational, and often technologically mediated aspects of engaging with others, for example, during fieldwork [21]. Beyond research practice, the concept is also relevant to communities themselves, as virtual forms of interaction introduce modes of presence that are not spatially grounded yet remain socially and communicatively real. Anderson [22] uses the concept of the community of value to explore how distinctions between citizens and migrants are constructed through moral and social evaluation. A community of value is imagined as being composed of (good) citizens, in opposition to non-citizens and “failed” citizens, and is held together not merely by legal status but by assessments of worth, responsibility, and belonging. Bringing this perspective into dialogue with minoritized speech communities highlights how linguistic participation is similarly moralized. Speakers are often implicitly evaluated according to how well they align with normative expectations of authenticity, competence, commitment, or activism, producing hierarchies between “ideal” speakers and those whose participation is partial, emerging, or differently motivated.

Taken together, these dimensions underscore that understanding minoritized speech communities requires attention not only to shared practices but also to the diverse circumstances under which speakers come together. Engagement highlights the patterned interactions through which community membership is negotiated, even among speakers with uneven linguistic competence. *Throwtogetherness* foregrounds the contingent, often unpredictable encounters that arise when long-standing (activist and non-activist speakers) speakers, newcomers, and new speakers inhabit the same spaces – revealing how linguistic practices are continually reshaped by mobility, difference, and shifting local dynamics. Virtuality, in turn, expands the notion of community beyond physical

co-location by showing how online environments enable dispersed speakers to participate, learn, and imagine the community together.

The above discussion reflects the experience gained in the RISE UP project, where the question of what constitutes a community was repeatedly discussed. For example, defining the Aromanian community as a single entity may be problematic; it might be more appropriate to distinguish between the various Aromanian-speaking communities spread across more than five countries. In the deliverable D3.1, for instance, the authors make sure to outline the main stakeholders of the communities and provide a description of the current revitalization efforts at hand. The RISE UP consortium recommends that future research funding calls and project proposals critically examine the purposes for which the concept of community is employed and identify for whom it is useful. Furthermore, attention should be paid to who speaks or acts on behalf of the community in the proposed research.

Regarding the question of who acts on behalf of the community in research activities, researchers should be attentive to who these individuals are. Where possible and appropriate, research should aim to engage participants beyond activist circles to broaden perspectives. To achieve this, researchers might employ friend-of-a-friend recruitment strategies and collaborate with local organizations, such as youth groups. Building trust through informal networks and local partnerships can further support the inclusion of these voices.

4 The problem of the speaker

Until recently, research on minority languages and language revitalization primarily focused on native and heritage communities and speakers. Over time, however, applied linguists have increasingly questioned the concept of the native speaker as problematic [23], [24]. This shift has led to greater attention on non-native or second-language speakers, often referred to as new speakers, and on the varieties of language they use, known as new speaker varieties [25]. In many contexts of indigenous and minoritized languages, the emergence of new speakers has occurred alongside the numerical decline of traditional communities of native speakers, so new ways of speaking and new speaker profiles may have even grown to outnumber the traditional native speaker population [25]. Deliverables D4.1 and D4.2, in particular, explore the question of new speakers and the importance of usage-based approaches to language learning.

In contrast to earlier idealizations of native speakers as representing the purest and most authentic form of a language, the shift toward recognizing new speakers grants legitimacy – both in academic discourse and, ideally, beyond – not only to some users but to a broader range of speakers. This move challenges the traditional deficiency model applied to second-language or non-native speakers [25]. It also enables researchers to redirect their focus from reviving a romanticized language of the past to engaging with the lived experiences of contemporary speakers [25]. Building on this perspective, King [26] and Jaffe [27] reconceptualize language revitalization as bringing the language to new speakers and new contexts, rather than reversing language shift or restoring previous domains.

The question of who qualifies as a speaker is crucial in research involving indigenous and minoritized communities, as it raises issues of legitimacy, authenticity, and language ownership. Legitimacy refers to “the ability to utter the right linguistic forms at the right linguistic moments in the right situations, and to comply with the type of discourse that society expects one to produce” [28]. This is an issue

that comes up in the cases of Aranese, Burgenland Croatian, and Seto in particular (D3.1). As Woolard [29, p. 304] argues, the ideology of authenticity ties the perceived value of a language to a specific community and confers authenticity on speakers whose origins can be traced to that community within a given territory. Such beliefs may discourage individuals from using the language altogether [28], ultimately undermining revitalization efforts. Debates over linguistic authenticity are very much present in the Aromanian, Seto, and Burgenland Croatian communities (D3.1). Language authority often derives from the prestige associated with native speakers and traditional language use [28, p. 132]. Although legitimacy, authenticity, and authority are constantly negotiated among language users, the ideologies underpinning research play a critical role in either reinforcing or challenging these beliefs [25]. Costa [28] emphasizes that the category of new speaker is significant not only in academic discourse but also for advocates of indigenous and minoritized languages, many of whom may be second-language users themselves and employ the notion to support their positions.

In addition, Costa [28, p. 128] construes new speakers “as the desired outcome of language and education policies that aim at strengthening their usage”. With this in mind, O’Rourke and Pujolar [25, p. 145] highlight that successful language revitalization initiatives have “contradictory and paradoxical effects within the community”. The RISE UP consortium (4th November 2025) suggests that future research focus on long-term tracking of the effects of revitalization research, including comparing the effects of revitalization efforts across communities.

Finally, further research should pay attention to who is considered a speaker, as the results of these constant negotiations on language legitimacy, authenticity, and ownership relate to the varieties of language that are considered worthy of being described and codified in dictionaries and grammars, as well as taught in schools and other language learning platforms.

5 Whose language gets attention?

One of the central issues in linguistics and language studies concerns language change. Increased mobility and instant access to mediated content have intensified contact between majority and minoritized languages. Today, the greatest linguistic variation sometimes occurs not between social classes but across generations. Many minoritized languages are primarily used at home and in informal settings, but often intergenerational language transmission is failing. Yet their inclusion in formal domains or curricula does not automatically guarantee their vitality, which is exemplified by the Aranese case in the RISE UP project, in which the language is the medium of instruction in early childhood education, but is not spoken as often outside of the classroom. Institutional presence alone does not ensure that minority languages remain strong or widely spoken. Nevertheless, contact-induced (or standardization-induced) changes may go unnoticed by speakers, as “the use and display of ‘homeopathic’ doses of, for example, the heritage language can suffice as acts of authentic identity” [31 p. 148].

When decisions must be made under conditions of limited resources, the question arises: which language – and whose language – should be prioritized for inclusion in corpora or documentation? For inclusion in metalinguistic texts, dictionaries, or grammar books, school textbooks, or language learning apps? While there are almost no technological obstacles to collecting and storing language data, ethical considerations (e.g. how to get data on actual language use without compromising

speakers' autonomy) and value judgments (e.g. whose language is authentic but also cost-effective enough to store) remain deeply involved.

Metalinguistic texts – such as dictionaries and grammars – continue to play a crucial role in language standardization. They establish and record what is deemed acceptable in a language and what is not, thereby fulfilling a codifying function [32 p. 263], [33]. Standardization involves the imposition of a supradialectal norm onto a community's diverse linguistic practices – a norm typically promoted by the state and disseminated through its usually centralized educational system [34, p. 1]. The same applies to minoritized, often oral, languages, which may lack comprehensive reference works, which are not included in curricula or taught at school, and whose standard is continually negotiated and contested by speakers, language planners, and scholars. Traditionally, reference works have concentrated on printed texts produced by elites – at times by colonizers and missionaries – reinforcing a from-above model of standardization, while the (informal, handwritten, and digital) practices of non-elite groups such as youth, women, and L2 speakers were long marginalized. This focus mirrors broader divides within linguistics between structuralist and generativist approaches, which treat language as an abstract system, and usage-based approaches, which recognise performance, frequency, and everyday interaction as central to linguistic change [35]. In contrast, standardization from below highlights how all community members and their verbal practices contribute to the formation of linguistic norms [36].

The question remains: should minority language communities pursue standardization, as modernist language planners did decades ago – seeking to establish a norm – rather than embracing linguistic heterogeneity and instead leverage new multimodal technologies that do not require a monologic language standard?

As of now, according to the RISE UP survey, the availability of resources for all the communities covered as part of the project is very low, with the Seto respondents having the highest indication of 10% that there are “enough resources for all age groups”. Furthermore, among the Aranese respondents, not a single person approved this statement. The Aromanian community, in particular, notes the lack of resources aimed at infants and children up to 12 years of age, whereas the Cornish and Aranese communities lack resources aimed at teenagers (D4.2).

6 Space, place, borders

The vitality of any language is shaped by the connections between its linguistic elements and the non-linguistic contexts, which include a wide range of spoken and written modes as well as grammatical structures, the diverse societies, cultures, subcultures, and the realms of human experience, imagination, and ideology [37]. Factors such as the rise of nation-states in the 20th century, the establishment of official languages, and the global spread of *lingua francae* suggest that minority languages have come under increasing pressure, leading to their decline [38]. There are two main clusters of factors contributing to language loss. Many languages have become endangered, moribund, or extinct due to factors that severely compromise the physical survival of their speakers. These include disruptions – such as geophysical hazards that destroy habitats, the introduction of novel pathogens, processes of desertification, external (often colonial) exploitation of resources, and sociopolitical upheavals like civil wars or international conflicts. However, language loss can also occur

even when the community remains physically intact, typically because of cultural assimilation driven by the dominance of another culture. This dominance may manifest through demographic influx, military or economic hegemony, or sustained direct or mediated contact, whereby the dominant (second or third) language acquires symbolic authority and prestige, ultimately displacing the native (first) language [38, p. 70–90]

One of the recent concepts, which captures both types of factors is emptying – “as places and communities losing their constitutive elements, from people to infrastructure to a sense of future – takes place in a variety of ways and for various reasons” [39, p. 5]. While the concept has often been applied to the post-Soviet space, similar processes, sometimes referred to as depopulation, rural exodus, deagrarianization, peripheralization, or deterritorialization of indigenous and minoritized languages [23, p. 54], have been documented in other (post-industrial) contexts as well [40], [41], [42].

Whether an emptied place is perceived as an opportunity or as a loss depends on how its material and historical affordances, positionality within economic and political structures, relation to counter-hegemonic projects, and the presence of actors capable of envisioning and implementing new plans are articulated – what for some appears as loss may for others represent opportunity [39, p. 6]. Some peripheral – rural, post-industrial such as Cornwall – areas become gentrified as leisure spaces or second homes, attracting urban migrants and tourists seeking a higher quality of life or scenic landscapes [43]. This trend raises affordability issues, displacing communities whose cultural heritage and language practices are deeply rooted in place and risking the transformation of living heritage into a commodified backdrop; the challenge for such regions is to keep heritage dynamic and relevant while leveraging their appeal to newcomers without losing authenticity [44, p. 116, 127]. Living in such peripheral spaces historically brought social and economic challenges, yet it also fostered cultural resilience. These regions enabled communities to sustain their way of life and nurture strong ties – at least for certain periods. As Aet Annist [45] notes, Setomaa exemplifies this dynamic: a space where cultural practices are not only preserved but actively reinterpreted, serving as a site of both continuity and change. Nevertheless, migration has shaped Seto cultural and linguistic vitality in complex ways. Out-migration, driven by economic opportunities and urbanization – particularly during the Soviet era – has weakened traditional Seto culture and language due to assimilation and the erosion of community ties. Conversely, in-migration linked to cultural revival has brought new speakers, including individuals without Seto roots, some of whom have consciously adopted the minority language as part of their integration into Setomaa [25, p. 1]. Burgenland Croatian illustrates how language vitality is often linked to specific territorial contexts. Rural exodus from Burgenland to Vienna has created a sizable diaspora community in a space where regional language policies do not apply, weakening institutional support and reinforcing the perception of the language as territorially bound. This highlights the challenge of sustaining minority languages when speakers relocate beyond their traditional habitat. The transformation of the Catalan Pyrenees, including the Val d’Aran, reflects broader global trends in rural restructuring and tourism development. Once a peripheral region in economic decline, it has evolved into a high-end tourist destination. Depopulation has been supplanted by real estate speculation, and the territory’s economic and social value has shifted dramatically: low-yield livestock farming has given way to ski resorts and leisure parks [46].

The experiences of minoritized communities underscore how borders shape linguistic and cultural continuity. State boundaries often intersect with historical settlement areas, imposing varying degrees of permeability. For example, the Estonian–Russian border, which also marks the EU’s external

frontier, is highly restrictive, limiting cross-border cultural exchange for the Seto community. In contrast, EU integration has relaxed internal borders, enabling greater mobility and cooperation among communities such as the Aromanians, whose networks span across both EU and non-EU states. Similarly, the Aranese community benefits from Schengen's fluidity, illustrating how border regimes – from rigid to porous – mediate opportunities for sustaining language and identity across space.

Critical geography emphasizes that both space and place are socially produced, not neutral containers [20]. They are shaped by power, ideology, and material conditions. For example, borders create spaces of exclusion, tourism transforms places into commodified landscapes, and migration reconfigures the meaning of belonging. Future research should move beyond purely linguistic concerns to examine how policy choices shape the spaces and places where speakers interact and languages are sustained. Such an approach foregrounds the spatial dimensions of language vitality, recognizing that political decisions influence not only linguistic practices but also the material and symbolic environments in which they occur.

7 Conclusions

This deliverable has articulated a set of methodological principles and proposed conceptual reframing for conducting research with indigenous and minoritized language communities. These suggestions for future research and funding calls are grounded in the empirical research experience and reflections of the RISE UP consortium, as well as academic literature.

The deliverable emphasises that future research should move away from short-term and researcher-driven approaches towards those that are participatory and community-led, where possible, and oriented toward long-term relationships between researchers and community members as well as reciprocal benefit. Data validity and ethical integrity are intertwined: without trust, fair participation and remuneration, and visible benefits for communities, research fatigue can emerge, participation may decline, and as a result, research findings risk becoming partial. Future funding calls should therefore explicitly recognise the time and effort required for community-led and ethnographic research, both by researchers and community members, to value teamwork and co-creation with community members, and allow flexibility for research aims and methodologies to evolve in dialogue with communities over the life of a project.

Several priority areas for future research emerge. Firstly, there is a need for longitudinal qualitative research, for example such that can trace changing speaker profiles and the long-term effects of language revitalization initiatives and efforts. Secondly, future research should critically interrogate foundational concepts such as language, speaker, and community. Communities should not be treated as homogenous or territorially bound, but diverse and mobile. Similarly, greater attention should be paid to new speakers in contrast to traditional native speakers, examining how they negotiate language legitimacy, authenticity, and authority. These negotiations influence which language varieties are documented, standardized, and taught – or conversely, marginalized and excluded. Thirdly, more research is needed on the spatial aspects of language vitality, including borders, to understand how languages are maintained, transformed, or lost across both traditional habitats and new settlements. Fourthly, the deliverable highlights future research needs in relation to data. Researchers should follow the FAIR principles and prioritise reusing existing datasets, and when collecting new data, make it freely available for future research, whenever it does not violate the privacy of speakers. Finally, future research agendas should be more focused on under-researched communities and broaden the scope beyond well-documented (indigenous) language communities to include migrant and other minoritized language communities, as well as comparative case studies from outside Europe.

All in all, advancing knowledge and knowledge-based policies on indigenous and minoritized language communities requires not only new empirical studies but also institutional changes in funding principles and evaluation criteria, which should align with the realities of long-term collaborative research.

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