

## **Project Summary**

### **Modeling the Diachronic Divergence of the Saami Languages**

The Saami languages, belonging to the Uralic language family, encompass ten living or recently extinct languages: South Saami, Ume Saami, Pite Saami, Lule Saami, North Saami, Inari Saami, Skolt Saami, Akkala Saami, Kildin Saami, and Ter Saami. These ten languages form a continuum, with perfect mutual intelligibility between the neighboring languages but with little (or almost no) mutual intelligibility between the varieties from opposing edges.

Traditionally, the Saami linguistic continuum is subdivided into three parts — Southern vs Central vs Eastern — or two parts — Western vs Eastern. These classifications rely on phonological innovations, with minimal consideration of morphology. Despite using similar features, they draw different conclusions. The scenarios of Proto-Saami divergence remain almost unexplored systematically through modern computational phylogenetic and dialectometric methods.

My research aims to reassess the internal structure of the Saami group, taking into account a much broader range of parameters if compared to traditional approaches, namely, not only historical phonology but basic vocabulary, inflection markers, and morphosyntactic features. In addition to the existing formal parameters for controlling homoplastic and contact-induced innovations in the basic vocabulary, I will propose a set of guidelines to distinguish between the innovations in phonology and inflectional markers valid as classificational criteria within the cladistic approach and those that demonstrate a wave-like distribution thereby blurring the original subgrouping.