

Abstract: This lecture provides a general overview of the past and present sociolinguistic situation of the (Hokkaido) Ainu language. Topics examined include the late 1800s annexation of Hokkaido and the resulting language shift from Ainu to Japanese; Ainu legislation during the past century; examples of ongoing language revitalisation and reclamation efforts; as well as other contemporary use of the language. Based on my own research, I will also discuss Ainu language use in cultural tourism in Hokkaido, including the National Ainu Museum (*Upopoy*).

Bio: Saana Santalahti is a doctoral researcher at the University of Helsinki, Finland. Her current research focuses on Ainu language use in cultural tourism from a language revitalisation and reclamation perspective. Her other interests include the Ryukyuan languages, language policy and multilingualism, language and tourism, linguistic commodification, and linguistic landscapes. She has recently co-edited the book *Ideologies of Communication in Japan: Speakers, Interaction and the Creation of Difference* (2025) together with Patrick Heinrich and Florian Grosser.