

Language policy and practices in the Global North and South: Challenges, opportunities and future directions

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Time: 13:00 – 14:30 CET

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Policies and discourses in their ecological context: Voices and metaphors from North India

Abstract: A thorough description of the relationships among languages and their social environment in a given context, reflecting an ecological perspective, involves attention to the agency of local actors, and the policies, discourse, and ideologies that surround them. With this focus on valuing the minoritized voices of Kumauni young women, my ethnographic research in North India highlights fluidity in linguistic categories and in the implementation of top-down policies, as influenced by local language ideologies. Known to be a diverse country of multiple languages, India has faced the challenge of dealing with this resource called diversity. In response to national policies, local Kumauni concepts of language and dialect, comparable to mountains and hills, highlight Kumaunis' ability to claim both Hindi and Kumauni as their own and to refer to either as mother tongue. Meanwhile, de facto fluidity in the implementation of medium of instruction creates spaces for the unofficial use of minority language resources in the classroom. The value of multilingualism is expressed nationally and locally, yet power relations remain. Is unity in diversity really possible? Discourses vary depending on the lens, from micro to macro. I explore practical implications of these discourses and policies for young Kumauni women as they experience and negotiate them in their communities.



Cynthia Groff obtained her Ph.D. in Educational Linguistics at the University of Pennsylvania's Graduate School of Education. She conducted post-doctoral research in Québec through Université Laval and in Mexico through Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, for which she was awarded the National Academy of Education/Spencer Foundation Postdoctoral Fellowship. Her research on language policy and language ideology focuses on adequacy of education for linguistic minorities and the experiences and discourses of minority youth. Her dissertation-based book is entitled "The ecology of language in multilingual India: Voices of women and educators in the Himalayan foothills." As a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Individual Fellow at Leiden University, Cynthia's current project is entitled "Voices of belonging: Minority identities, language and education in the Netherlands."

Registration link: <https://universiteitleiden.zoom.us/meeting/register/u5UqcOGrqT0uGdS01iSiu3Xo7Bj5J5NUXxU5>
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