

Family language policy: Where are we going and why?

Dr. Kendall King

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12:00 – 1:00 PM

1107 Benjamin Building



Family language policy (FLP) research examines how parents and caretakers arrive at decisions about language use with children, and how those decisions are conceptualized and enacted in everyday interactional practices, with an eye to unpacking inter-generational transmission as conceptualized by Fishman (1991). This line of research has expanded markedly over the last decade (e.g., Wright Fogle, 2017; Gallo, 2017; Smith-Christmas, 2017), but also is characterized by methodological and conceptual constraints. This talk briefly traces the foundations of this line of work and highlights the major theoretical and empirical contributions to date; these include deeper understanding of the role of input, child agency, and ideologies of ‘good’ parenting. I then consider the limitations of FLP, in particular an over-reliance on certain sorts of data; narrow conceptualizations of ‘family’; and an under-emphasis on theory building. Lastly, I offer a modest proposal for potentially productive future directions for FLP research and theory in the decades ahead.

Kendall King is Professor of Second Language Education at the University of Minnesota. Her research documents language loss and revitalization, and analyzes the policies and practices that best support minority languages and language learners. Her work has been widely published in journals such as *Educational Policy* (2017), *Language Learning* (2017), and *International Multilingual Research Journal* (2017), and she has been elected Vice-President/President-elect of the American Association of Applied Linguistics (AAAL). At the University of Minnesota, she teaches graduate-level courses in sociolinguistics, language policy, and language research methods; directs the undergraduate TESL minor; and advocates and consults on multilingual practices in state (K-12) schools. Most recently, as an outcome of that work, she co-developed the Native Language Literacy Assessment (NLLA), now in statewide use with adolescent EL newcomers.

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