

## Revival and Threat: Language ideologies, policy, and nationalism in Kazakhstan and Mongolia

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**25 April 2017 (Tuesday), 12:30 – 2:00pm**  
**Room MW401-402, Meng Wah Complex, HKU**

### **Abstract:**

This talk will argue that in some contexts, policies and ideologies of language revival which claim to be empowering disadvantaged populations may actually be more closely linked to furthering nationalist agendas. Drawing on interviews and policy analysis, this talk examines how nationalists in both Kazakhstan and Mongolia make use of ideologies of linguistic/ethnic threat and revival to justify potentially exclusionary policies. In Kazakhstan, post-independence promotion of the Kazakh language after its suppression during the Soviet Union has come hand in hand with policies which centralize power among the ethnic Kazakh elite. In Mongolia, discourses about encroaching threats, primarily from China, are used to justify a strain of nationalism centered on keeping the nation “pure” and a glorification of selected national symbols, including the Mongolian language and traditional script. This talk will consider in what ways such discourses are different from or similar to language revival movements which have typically been celebrated by linguists and the general public. Overall this research demonstrates that a critical perspective is necessary to show how framing languages as threatened or reviving can participate in potentially exclusionary nationalist agendas.

### **About the speaker:**

Kara Fleming is a lecturer in the Department of Linguistics, University of Hong Kong. Her work focuses on the interaction between language ideologies and ethnic/national identities, particularly as mediated through education.

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