

The City as a New Language Stronghold? Sakha Language Practices in Yakutsk in the 2020s

March 22, 2024

This talk examines the shifting concerns speakers have regarding language maintenance and language practices for Sakha (an indigenous North Siberian Turkic language) in urban space of Yakutsk, in the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia). Yakutsk is one of the fastest-growing cities in Siberia and the Far East, populated by not only ethnic Sakha and members of other indigenous ethnicities from the region but by newcomers migrating from other parts of Russia and Central Asia. Considering research conducted with Sakha-language speakers over the last decade and a half, I focus in on current trends by which Sakha language is currently being made visible and audible in the city's public spaces, highlighting the linguistic landscape as well as the youth alternative music sphere. While in many ways the city presents a linguistic ecology in which an indigenous language is thriving, we must also consider the impacts of recent federal policy and planning on languages other than Russian, and the ways in which the other languages indigenous to the Republic (Even, Evenki, Dolgan, Yukaghir, and Chukchi) are often erased completely from urban spaces.

When: Friday, March 22nd from 12pm to 1:30pm
Where: In person room 7-152



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