

Linguistic diversity in a time of crisis: Language challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic

Ingrid Piller

Abstract:

In this seminar, I explore the language and communication challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. Linguistic minorities have, by and large, been excluded from timely high-quality information, as research brought together in the first concerted sociolinguistic research effort dedicated to the pandemic shows (published in a special issue of *Multilingua* due out in September).

The severe limitations of multilingual crisis communication that the pandemic has laid bare result from the dominance of English-centric global mass communication; the longstanding devaluation of minoritized languages; and failure to consider the importance of multilingual repertoires for building trust and resilient communities.

I will also reflect on the dynamics of academic knowledge production at a time of crisis and close with implications for sociolinguistics.