Diversifying the Concept of Language Ideologies, and Exploring their Assemblages: A Dialogue with Paul V. Kroskrity

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On July 10th, 2025, Curtis Green-Eneix and Paul V. Kroskrity virtually met to discuss the epistemological evolution of understanding language ideologies as something that coalesces from a series of encounters with others and our material context. In discussing how language ideologies as a concept needs to shift to consider the contradictions and intertwined factors, there is a need also to consider the contaminated and dynamic nature of language ideologies that is mediated between social structures, language structures, and real-world practices that impact social actors. Paul Kroskrity stresses the importance of collaboration, genuine engagement, and realistic models to understand and support linguistic diversity and community resilience. Finally, they discussed the future of language ideology research, considering the need for integrating decolonial and intersectional approaches in language ideological assemblages, along with the ethical responsibilities of scholars and institutions in addressing historical and ongoing injustices.

Keywords: assemblages; decolonization; language ideology; linguistic justice; ontology

1. INTRODUCTIONS TO THE DIALOGUE

Since its beginnings in linguistic anthropology in the 1970s (Rosa & Burdick, 2016; Woolard, 2021), language ideologies emerged as a necessary field of inquiry to understand the political and moral interests that shape people's understanding of language's role within society along with the way language ideologies are shaped in settings such as local communities, schools, governments, and (online) cultures. This field of inquiry has extended beyond the discipline of anthropology in areas such as education (e.g., Bale et al., 2023) and applied linguistics (e.g., Montgomery et al., 2024) to understand "the relationship between language and power in schooling" as language ideologies underpin "what counts as language and as *legitimate language use in schooling*" (McKinney, 2017, p. 161; emphasis added). As a result, language ideologies have spurred a plethora of books (e.g., De Costa, 2016; Gal & Irvine, 2019; Kusters et al., 2020), special issues (e.g., Mukhopadhyay, 2024; Uysal & Sah, 2024; Walsh, 2021), and journals such as *the Journal of Education, Language, and Ideology* dedicated to understanding the role it plays.

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Before language ideologies emerged as a field of research, a group of linguistic anthropologists established the theoretical and methodological foundation, with Paul V. Kroskrity being one of the foundational members. Paul V. Kroskrity is a Distinguished Professor of Anthropology and American Indian Studies in the Department of Anthropology at the University of California, Los Angeles. As a linguistic anthropologist, his work has focused on language usage and practices in Native American societies in Central California as well as the Western Pueblo region. Specifically, he has worked with the Village of Tewa and Western Mono communities to understand how language ideologies impact these ethnopragmatic contexts—or how a community understands their speech practices "in terms of indigenous values, beliefs and attitudes, social categories, emotions, and so on" (Goddard, 2006, p. 2).

His work within language ideologies started in the 1990s when he, with Bambi Schieffelin and Kathryn Woolard, began to establish work focusing on language ideology that moved it from the neutral explication[1] (e.g., Silverstein, 1979; Rumsey, 1990) to a critical orientation that takes into account political-economic interests (e.g., Kroskrity et al., 1992; Schieffelin et al., 1998). Kroskrity wrote a series of articles focusing on the theoretical overview of language ideologies designed to establish a foundation for researchers to better engage with the concept (Kroskrity, 2000, 2004, 2010). It was also during this time that he would build on his work with the Tewa (1993, 1998) and Western Mono (e.g., 1998; 1999) along with the works of Susan Gal and Judith Irvine (2000, 2019), Bambi Schieffelin (1994), and Kathryn Woolard (1985; 1998) to explicate language ideologies as follows:

> [The] beliefs, feelings, and conceptions about language structure and use which often index the political economic interests of individual speakers, ethnic and other interest groups, and nation-states. These conceptions, whether explicitly articulated or embodied in communicative practice, represent incomplete, or 'partially successful,' attempts to rationalize language usage; such rationalizations are typically multiple, context-bound, and necessarily constructed from the sociocultural experience of the speaker. (Kroskrity, 2010, p. 192; also see Kroskrity, 2004).

His explication of language ideology has been used across and outside of the field of linguistic anthropology (e.g., Sah & Uysal, 2023; Spitzmüller, 2024). Yet, he recently proposed a new explication (Kroskrity, 2021b).

As an emerging scholar who has focused on the role of language ideologies within and around education (e.g., Green-Eneix, 2025a, b), Curtis Green-Eneix was invited by the editors to contribute to the journal by carrying out and writing up an interview. He took up the opportunity to reach out to Paul Kroskrity as he wanted to better understand his new trajectory of language ideology as a form of an assemblage that he has employed in

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[1] We use explication to refer to how individuals develop an idea or principle in detail. We use explication for this interview rather than operationalization, the act of defining abstract concepts in a way that allows them to be measured or observed in a study, due to the latter historically being indexed to objectivist projects. The data of social phenomena are not amenable to this type of analysis because it is irreducibly human interpretations of other humans.

a range of recent studies (Kroskrity, 2021a, 2022a; 2022b). Specifically, Paul Kroskrity proposed the following:

> Language ideological assemblages are dynamic configurations of human actors and their beliefs, feelings, and conceptions about language(s) and communication as they are produced and expressed within their individual milieus and the intersubjective worlds of mutual influence from institutions, political economic structures, state power, technologies, global systems, and mediated mediatized and multimodal forms of expression (Kroskrity, 2021b, p. 139)

As they meet on July 10th, their interview sets out to understand language ideologies as something that coalesces from a series of encounters with others and our material context, and what that particularly means in relation to racial and linguistic justice during a time of increasing social inequality and racialization. What was meant to be a one-hour interview spanned over two hours.[2] During this time, they discussed a range of topics which are presented across the following themes: (1) Establishing foundations and tracing developments to language ideologies as assemblages; (2) Contamination and language ideologies; (3) Language justice and the role of the researcher; (4) Future research on language ideologies and their assemblages. The themes of the interview are broken down by the specific questions asked to improve readability due to the length of each of these sections.

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[2] While this paper goes on some of the topics discussed between Paul Kroskrity and Curtis Green-Eneix, the transcript between the two is refined in both its prose and the content. Although it was already mentioned, Curtis reached out to Paul, considering his interest in being part of the interview. Curtis provided both the initial aim of the interview and the full interview protocol. The interview protocol was developed with 15 interview questions based on Paul's work. Due to the proposed time being 45 minutes to one hour, Curtis pre-selected questions that would foster a good dialogue. As this interview protocol was sent over to Paul, he was free to refine the initially selected questions, choose the other provided questions, or develop his own questions he wanted to answer. After receiving Paul's input, the interview commenced, where Curtis took up an informed learner and collaborator orientation, building on Paul's answers in order to further learn from him. Being aware of the time, Curtis asked Paul in between questions if he was okay to continue the interview or if he needed to end it. After the interview concluded, Curtis used Otter.ai to do the first round of transcription, with him reviewing the transcript to correct any errors the machine made (e.g., incorrect words and phrases, speaker identification, and punctuation, amongst others). Following this, Curtis wrote up the main manuscript. Due to the length of the interview, the final manuscript could not cover all the topics covered in the interview due to space requirements. Therefore, the topics covered were selected because they nicely built upon one another while limiting the amount of additional information needed to provide for readers. The other way the content was refined for the final manuscript was by removing instances such as repetition and restarts of sentences. Additionally, we added sentences to parts of the interview. These decisions were made to improve the clarity and readability of the final interview. Once done, Curtis sent Paul both the interview transcript and the full manuscript for his review to see if there was anything he wished to amend, extend, or remove from either the interview or the main document. After receiving his input, Curtis conducted a final review of the manuscript for copy-editing.

2. ESTABLISHING FOUNDATIONS AND TRACING DEVELOPMENTS TO LANGUAGE IDEOLOGIES AS ASSEMBLAGES

2.1 How does This Framework Extend or Challenge the More Bounded and Systemized Understanding of Language Ideology Evident in Your Earlier Work?

Curtis: Language ideologies as a construct and theoretical framework take on a multiplicity of theoretical stances to investigate sites of ideology, with many building on your work, specifically your explication in Kroskrity (2010). While you have engaged in this conceptualization of language ideology in your recent work, you have written on how those researching language ideologies need to understand the complexity that surrounds language ideologies beyond the single named ideology, while resituating individuals within and across linguistic communities. As a result, you proposed language ideological assemblages (LIA) in Kroskrity (2021b) as "an extension of language ideological theory" that "encourage[s] new lines of inquiry and new ways of understanding complex social phenomena" (p. 135). How does this framework extend or challenge the more bounded and systemized understanding of language ideology evident in your earlier work?

Paul: I've thought about that in almost two different semi-contradictory ways. One, I see it as very much tied to the original mission of linguistic ideology, as Silverstein (1979) defined it: "Sets of beliefs about language articulated by users as a rationalization or justification of perceived language structures and use" (p. 193). Yet, like you say, expanding the boundaries and blowing out the sort of norms for what you would call the "context" of use. To some extent, a semiotic framework tends to tie you to, I would say, a notion of context and environment that is much more narrowly, or focally, conceived, whereas what I was trying to do with LIA was to bring in the entire unruly environment around us that is often rife with contradiction, intertwined factors, and multiple layers. I mean, it's the mess of life that I wanted to get at. I wanted models that were more realistic in terms of the way they captured the kind of phenomena that entered the experience of social actors. The original models were somewhat nice and tidy, and very academically elite, but perhaps lacking in their reach. In some ways, like I say in Kroskrity (2021b), there is a basis for everything that LIA does, right in the original charter of linguistic ideologies. Because if you take a look at some of Silverstein's early works (e.g., 1979, 1996), he's talking about that dynamic instability of language. And that's really what I'm trying to get at with LIA, because I think it just provides a larger canvas for exploring that dynamic instability. And I think, you know, his notion of the mediational function of language ideologies is how speakers use them as resources operating between social structures, language structures, on the one hand, and contextualized real-world practices, on the other. I think that inevitably brings us into this dialectical, mediational issue.

Firstly, I think that's driving it both ways. And I think that in some ways, language ideology offers a kind of even new insight into Benjamin Lee Whorf's (1956) idea about the relationship between these two things, where there was always what he called "linguistic lag." But indeed, and perhaps in contrast to Whorf, it operates in both directions. They're continuously tugging each other to the point where structure and practice are always in this kind of dialectic, and I think that we just have to get into some more realistic notions of what's out there and what's relevant for the actors whose lives we are, in some sense, trying to interpret and represent. We are trying to see that it's not just simply ideologies for their own sake. It's somebody's ideologies, and often, like I say, and as you mentioned as well, it's always in the plural. Because not only do we have multiple ideologies, often contradictory in our own minds and in our own societies, but we are also in contact with so many other sources of ideological diversity. So, any true answer is going to have to reconcile with the fact that we are living in a very complex environment that is continuously churning and creating a context that's almost never the same twice. I think that all our models kind of falsify the stability, even in the assemblage models we have to make them loose enough to capture the dynamism, and I think this is a representational problem with the assemblage approach; they often look like it's more static than it really is. But the reality is, if you make sure that people understand this as a sort of dynamic imbalance in which we never know a final outcome, the wheels never stop. The impacts are always continuous. We are better able to understand why a larger canvas is necessary to grasp people's experiences and how things actually change in the world, because some models of language contact and language change are unrealistic unless they consider these kinds of factors. And I think that's why I moved in that direction.

I think in some ways I've been very influenced by ecological models that are also doing the same kind of thing, and assume that in order to understand the messy nature of the way the world works, you have to create this kind of complexity, no matter how much it defies the quest for simplicity. That is really the history of linguistics, you know? The bounded, idealized, simplified object, and we have to go the other way. It's partially the nature of being a linguistic anthropologist, where part of me wants to understand the structures of language, but in order to do that in a socially competent way, I must also construct that larger social order and disorder that is society and the social influences. And I think the material world, basically. I mean, quite a bit of it becomes relevant, and to some extent, every representation that I've ever done of a LIA really needs the three dots—the ellipsis after it. And for every kind of analysis I do, I have to draw on different factors within that assemblage. So, it's really a broad analytical resource. But I think it's also dangerous, because it could be seen as the way people are prone to view language, as a simplification of the process, and even too orderly a representation.

Curtis: So, you primarily lean on Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) work, where they take a non-dialectic philosophy of becoming, challenging notions such as identity and ideology that derive from non-linear, interconnected systems. Specifically, the essence of their work centers on the idea of a conjunction of disparate bodies, ideas, passions, desires,

political economic patterns, hegemony, force, social categories, and the natural world. This is particularly evident as you highlighted that language ideologies through this lens are heterogeneous and inherently multiple in nature. To focus further on the aspect of assemblages, you mentioned earlier. Deleuze and Guattari (1987) use a book as an example to explain the concept of assemblage:

> An assemblage, in its multiplicity, necessarily acts on semiotic flows, material flows, and social flows simultaneously (independently of any recapitulation that may be made of it in a scientific or theoretical corpus). There is no longer a tripartite division between a field of reality (the world) and a field of representation (the book) and a field of subjectivity (the author). Rather, an assemblage establishes connections between certain multiplicities drawn from each of these orders, so that a book has no sequel nor the world as its object nor one or several authors as its subject. In short, we think that one cannot write sufficiently in the name of an outsider. The outside has no image, no signification, no subjectivity. The book as assemblage with the outside, against the book as image of the world. A rhizome-book, not a dichotomous, pivotal, or fascicular book. (p. 23)

While this example presents a constellation of non-uniform elements that come together and are mapped through the relations between them, which presents new ways of functioning (DeLanda, 2016; Masny, 2019), you were inspired by Tsing's (2015) explanation, where she uses polyphony to capture the dynamism and complexity that occur to compose social entities:

> Polyphony is music in which autonomous melodies intertwine. In Western music, the madrigal and the fugue are examples of polyphony. These forms seem archaic and strange to many modern listeners because they were superseded by music in which a unified rhythm and melody holds the composition together. In the classical music that displaced baroque, unity was the goal; this was "progress" in just the meaning I have been discussing: a unified coordination of time. In twentieth-century rock-and-roll, this unity takes the form of a strong beat, suggestive of the listener's heart; we are used to hearing music with a single perspective. When I first learned polyphony, it was a revelation in listening; I was forced to pick out separate, simultaneous melodies and to listen for the moments of harmony and dissonance they created together. This kind of noticing is just what is needed to appreciate the multiple temporal rhythms and trajectories of the assemblage….The polyphonic assemblage is the gathering of these rhythms, as they result from world-making projects, human and not human. (pp. 23-24)

With your point of the three ellipses, Tsing notes that an assemblage has this kind of cutting point that the collection actually stops, and the ordering happens. Since not everything is connected, the nucleus of a social entity brings these components together to give it a form, and then it could sprout in another direction, in another assemblage (DeLanda, 2016; Deleuze & Guattari, 1987; Masny, 2019). The things you are highlighting also tie in with this point. Yet, that turns to the next point of this discussion.

2.2 How can This Definition Present a Different Way of Approaching Language Ideologies in Research?

Curtis: In focusing on the role of assemblage, LIA don't necessarily front the power and politics like in your older definition. And I'm wondering if you could talk a little bit more on this, because you do note political, economic structures and state power here, but you focus those on maybe the larger *milieu* of society, and not necessarily the individual that this kind of definition is focusing on, compared to your 2010 piece. So, how can this definition, or restructuring of the definition, present a different way of approaching language ideologies in research?

Paul: It's like you say, the political economic dimension is still there, but I do think that we must be aware that it's not the only factor that enters people's social experience, and it enters in certain kinds of ways. So, I'm trying to make it a part of a totalizing way of looking at this larger environment that people are operating in, with all the entanglements that we, as analysts, and they, as social actors, want/need to look at. In any given analysis, we want that full set, but that's not always the most relevant thing, as it turns out, and oftentimes it's really how people are interpreting their political situation or their economic situation that becomes more relevant. And that's often figuring out the kind of ideologies they are producing. So, there's a kind of trick about LIAs; They look slightly objectivist, and yet, when you think about the *milieu* situation, you really want to get into the subjectivity of social actors and how they are experiencing this. And that's really what language ideologies are. They're right on the cusp of being an objective thing, but also a very experience-based, more subjective take on what's going on around you and its impact on your understanding of language and communication.

Curtis: Some of the points that you've mentioned right now are that this orientation to language ideology centers on the ecological nature of it that might not have been maybe highlighted as much in prior conceptualizations (Montgomery et al., 2024; Spitzmüller, 2024). Correct me if I'm wrong, but the orientations to language ideologies often focused on a form of ideologies that were residing only in the head of the individuals, rather than the things that were also within the context and the material that we were engaging with. So, in a way, it seems like you're trying to bring back a take on a new materialistic orientation to language ideologies of maybe a return to phenomenology (Spitzmüller, 2024), in a way, through such a definition that you proposed within the 2021 explication.

Paul: To some extent, one of the things that might have influenced me was my original attraction to language ideologies going way back. And if you go back to the book that nobody reads of mine (see Kroskrity, 1993), I was attracted to a Tewa conception of language. I began to understand how these practices originated from the people's experiences, and how the indigenous economy contributed to the language ideologies that emerged within their community. Between the religious infrastructure, or social structure, and the sort of ecology of planting corn in the desert in this most improbable

way, and still surviving, this community had developed these ideologies about what is good, what is bad, purism, and compartmentalization. These ideologies were seen as the nature of things in the way the world works, which carried over into language, and it was influencing me.

One of my former students is Jan Hauck. During Jan's first published work on language ontologies (e.g., Hauck, 2018, 2023), he pointed out to me that my early interest was probably very ontological in nature, in the sense that I was trying to figure out what the local concept of language really was. And, how the Tewa community thought about it in a very cultural manner (Kroskrity, 1993, 1998, 2021, 2024). I think that does carry over into the idea that I was still anticipating diversity. I think that a lot of my colleagues who are more attracted to the semiotic paradigm are probably approaching it a bit more from a political direction. In other words, they find language ideologies attractive in part because they explain the social phenomena they see in European and North American societies (The Global North) and they label it not from the inside out, but rather from the outside in, so that they talk about ideologies of linguistic purism without also devoting significant attention to local cultural categories and metalanguage. They come from a very different direction, where they have not started from an ecological approach, the way I ultimately did. I didn't know it initially, but it came out of the kind of field work that I did and continue to do. I've worked in the same community for 50 years. Fortunately, I keep on going in and out even though I am there year after year. So, I think I'm able to continuously remind myself of what's "noticeable," and what's interesting, as opposed to just becoming numb to another set of cultural norms, to the point where I can't notice anything remarkable about it. I've been able to work in each of two Native American communities over such a long period of time, thanks to their collaboration, friendship, and patience, that I've been able to see patterns that escape some researchers, because they don't look at it in this longitudinal way.

3. CONTAMINATION AND LANGUAGE IDEOLOGIES

3.1 How Did Working with the Arizona Tewa and Western Mono Shape Your Move to this More Dynamic and Layered Model of Assemblages?

Curtis: How did working with these indigenous communities shape your move, potentially, to this more dynamic and layered model of assemblage? Because, like you said, in a way, when we do social sciences, it's almost like looking into the mirror where we are doing the things that we're trying to figure out for ourselves (see Consoli & Ganassin, 2023; Fassin & Steinmetz, 2023). So, I wonder how these experiences shaped this growth or transition?

Paul: I think that part of this understanding came from trying to understand these communities. This led me to think about what I need to know to enter the experience of

the community. And I think I've just started adding more layers. At first, this was very language-centered. I was dealing with things you could do with Historical Linguistics. Whether it be figuring out language family relations or grammatical mysteries, both languages, Tewa and Western Mono, are very interesting. They're kind of curious in the sense that it's almost as if I had done something systematic, because they're both small communities that are diasporic communities. At the same time, they've undergone very similar kinds of influences. They both have experienced colonialism in the form of settler colonialism and settler capitalism, basically. The impact of the nation-state had a powerful effect, but to a different degree, as it turns out. And I think I was struck by the fact that when I worked with one of the communities, I was always thinking about the other one and making these mental comparisons. It was, to use the phrase, "keeping me honest"—open to seeing new things, asking comparative questions. I think it was very helpful to get that sense of the importance of a long and deep view, necessary to really understand each of the communities, partially by comparing them.

Ultimately, the Western Mono group, in particular, in contrast to the Tewa, is not as verbal about language, typically. I had to understand where this was coming from, what was valued. I had to infer many language ideologies from the practices that people were engaged in and the patterns that language was assuming now in the present, because I started working with them in 1980 and was still involved in the community until about 2005. This was a significant duration. I'm still involved to some extent. I think that both communities require a long-term analysis. And I think part of what became important for me in the Kroskrity (2018) piece was this idea that was really quite valuable to be able to distinguish the impact of relatively recent contact-influenced ideologies from that of the indigenous ideologies that were in that community for really hundreds and maybe thousands of years, in some cases. There's some value in being able to distinguish this. I think that it's still more of a testable hypothesis, but my sense is that these indigenous ideologies are undeniably present in processes like language shift, and also now in shaping the way communities feel they should engage in something like language revitalization or language reclamation practices.

So, I've tried to do reviews recently where I study everything in terms of the powerful influence of the state, and it's all about colonization and hegemony. But I'm coming from an American Indian Studies model where decolonization is not enough. It's the first step of a two-step process. (Re-)Indigenization is an important part of this process. You have to go back to ancestral practices and take a look at those. I want to look at that and see how some of these indigenous ideologies were originally, and what kind of influence they continue to have. And I was again struck by their relative persistence. Some people have challenged that. But I think more people see value in that kind of analysis. The communities themselves have seen value in it, too. I think that in some ways, it allows them to have resources, to sort things out directly, to identify what the beliefs and practices are coming out of those original instructions, so to speak, in the community, versus the kind of things that have been imposed on you post-contact (with the state).

Curtis: Just as scholars have begun to acknowledge the multilingual reality, where people don't speak or have a singular linguistic resource but have a cacophony of resources they use every single day (see May, 2014).

3.2 To What Extent Can Language Ideologies Represent a Messy Contamination That Grows and Transforms?

Curtis: Maybe, it would also be good to view this LIA as actually recognizing and beginning to accept the messy contamination of collaboration that is language ideologies. Sometimes even these ideologies spur or contaminate other aspects; they grow and morph and shape, right? Contamination is not in a pejorative or dirty connotation, for lack of a better word, at the moment.

Paul: Ecologically. It's used quite a bit in the mushroom book (Tsing, 2015).

Curtis: Actually, that's what I'm really drawing from, because in her second chapter, she starts with the following question:

> How does a gathering become a "happening," that is, greater than a sum of its parts? One answer is contamination. We are contaminated by our encounters; they change who we are as we make way for others. As contamination changes world-making projects, mutual world—and new directions—may emerge. Everyone carries a history of contamination; purity is not an option. (Tsing, 2015, p. 27)

Tsing goes on to illustrate this point in the rest of her book. If we are contaminated, in the interaction I have with you, in a way, the ideas that we were thinking are a form of contamination from our experiences, our understandings of the same concepts, right? Why can't language ideologies not only be a contamination with the material reality that they are situated within, but also the trans-mobility or the trans-cultural flows that happen (Pennycook, 2006). So maybe that could also be a way to begin to recognize and acknowledge through this kind of perspective you're introducing, right? For myself, that's how I could potentially engage it, and how I've tried to engage it in some of my more recent work in language education (e.g., Green-Eneix, 2025a, b).

Paul: I think that's very valuable. Like you say, this contamination is very much the nature of the way the world works. It's that we never experienced things in pure form. This whole idea of putting things in conjunction suddenly has an immediate influence. I mean, I'm continuously impressed by biological and ecological examples. In the human genome, our genetic makeup is not purely human; we're 8% virus, you know (see Bilnov et al., 2017). I mean, we're nothing but contamination. Even when we use a word like monolingual, we have to figure out where we're using this. Which society are we talking about, and have they made a culture of it? Or is it just simply some label that we impose on the outside, but there's absolutely no culture of the "monoglot standard"? Silverstein's (1996) discussion of it, in some ways, suggests comparability. That's a way of thinking about the inevitability of environmental impact as being such a critical part

of language ideologies. We need to show that the political economics of that entire community and its contact with nation-states, and even some of the histories of this, become relevant, because they enter somebody's experience in a particular kind of way. This could be through the way that they use a particular language, or the way the language itself is guarded in that community. I think these are all very important points that bear on this idea of seeing this notion of contamination. It's the nature of the world. That quest for realistic ways of thinking about language and language use, and ones that allow people to voice their understandings. People have a "take" that we should be tapping into. I think that there is a role, too, as far as the LIA is concerned. But I think researchers could say, "Well, these are not folk models by any means." But in my experience as a researcher, Mono and Tewa people do allude to all these different things, sometimes in conversation, when they're asked to explain other people's behavior, or the pattern that they feel is going on, so that it's not that removed. I understand LIA as simultaneously members' representations of the world as well as ways that academics use to think through this.

LIAs are more realistic. They enable us to concentrate on the entanglements that are crucial in all fields, particularly those with practical applications. But I think at the same time, we actually have to go back to this idea of how it enters the subjective state of the social actors whose lives we're trying to talk about in some way. Whether it's their educational experience or the way that the language is being revitalized in their communities, we have to see how this enters their perception and understanding. And the best way we can do that is both seeing what they say but also seeing what they do in context.

4. LANGUAGE JUSTICE AND THE ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER

4.1 Do You See Language Ideological Assemblages as Sites of Potential Resistance — Places Where Inherited Colonial Ideologies Might Be Reworked or Subverted, especially within Indigenous and Minoritized Communities? If So, How?

Paul: It's definitely an important question. A lot of people have also been associated with language and social justice, and with heavily applied projects creating a better world for the people that they work with. And I really love that about the approach. How would we use the assemblage approach? Again, I think that it allows you to create, looking at different kinds of entanglements that might be extremely useful to unravel for a particular purpose. In education, I've had discourses about people trying to figure out what this whole idea of translingualism is and how to use it. When is it theory? When is it practice? What is it good for? What happens if communities reject this idea, you

know? I mean, in other words, it's a very good academic idea. It makes a lot of sense. We can justify it. We have to start thinking multilingually. Again, I think that to some extent, one of the problems about being in nation-states that very much reduce the linguistic diversity conceptually is that we are in a monoglossic world most of the time in terms of thinking about practice, policy, ideals, and so on. The very concept of "standard" language is used as a kind of weapon, in a way, to start hierarchizing people (e.g., Bale et al., 2023; Walsh, 2021). And I think that one of the things that we have to do with the assemblage approach is to realize that it creates a nice set of resources for us to point out connections between things that we might want to question, and to reform. So, I think there's really good value in it being used in various practical applications. But it's a very loose framework, very flexible even as it provides a large canvas.

Ultimately, it's as loose as the sort of messy conjuncture of so many different factors that are really out there in the world, and our job is to figure out what subset seems to be important in the kind of analytical work that we do and the kind of professional problems that we're trying to solve. I think that sometimes we need theoretical frameworks that are loose but inclusive. I think the anthropologist Gregory Bateson's (2000) dichotomy of "loose" and "strict" thinking and the importance of their interplay in scientific discovery is very useful here. LIAs allow you to do a little bit of both. This orientation allows you to start seeing connections so that once you create a kind of diagram, say, of a LIA, you're able to see connections and maybe recognize them as important.

As entanglements that maybe you didn't quite notice before, you know, or maybe you're encouraged to run that through a second analysis. And I think that there's real value in that. Thinking about the dynamic nature of these varying and non-uniform components in relation to all the factors, it's a challenge, of course, to use them in a bounded study. All the genres we work in tend to ask us to produce a fairly tight analysis in 20 pages or less. It's not easy to take on the world in just 20 pages. And yet, sometimes we have to do that. This framework allows you to show that you know the world exists but also to confront it in terms of what the particular things are you want to focus on, and the kind of entanglements that you really want to illuminate and tease apart for analytical purposes, because they represent what you need to do. That's an important next step, too.

The next steps are in people really trying to connect the two approaches that I feel have emerged in language ideological research—semiotic intensification and LIAs. In semiotic intensification, even the smallest social acts, including perception itself, can evoke and perhaps even call into question the big picture. So, we can build up from small semiotic acts or inward from the encompassing and entangled contexts of LIA. I think it's important to take a look at that kind of role, you know, the way that it could play in both the way that you could combine these two and create even a more powerful way of looking at things that is very satisfying, perhaps, I think, in terms of being able to bring social actors into a much larger context. You know, I've tried to do this a little bit

in what I call lingual life histories (Kroskrity, 2021). I think people need to see the importance of heritage languages to communities that are trying their best to participate in the modern world, but at the same time retain cultural connections to their past and their cultural practices. That is a chain that they don't want to break. And it's a connection that I think the communities want to retain in a very important way. I think we lack sufficient representation in popular media. It's as if, right now, our representations in the public media look a lot like the salvage ethnography of an earlier era.

5. FUTURE RESEARCH ON LANGUAGE IDEOLOGIES AND THEIR ASSEMBLAGES

5.1 How Do You Think the Concept of Language Ideological Assemblages Could Be Extended or Reworked by Future Scholars, Especially in Dialogue with Decolonial or Intersectional Approaches?

Paul: In my view, the future of LIA is partially bound up with the perhaps mutual need to connect the semiotic intensification literature, you know. And I think the comparatively new development of language ontologies is another frontier to explore. The work I know best in that tradition is by Jan Hauck and Jenanne Ferguson (2019). I don't know if you're familiar with her work.

Curtis: I'm not familiar with her work, unfortunately.

Paul: She works with the Sakha Indigenous community (e.g., Ferguson 2019, *Words Like Birds*). I'm not sure whether she can continue her work in Siberia, but her work showcases the Sakha community's very interesting beliefs about language. She looks at language ontologies as something quite different from language ideologies. We have mini-debates now and then. We debate whether language ontologies are really different than language ideologies. My approach to language ideologies is one that comes at this idea of what the local conceptions of language are, and how things are being understood. And I think she's doing very much the same thing by fully exploring the cultural understanding of language. Sakha have notions about language guardian spirits and many beliefs about language use that are unique to the community. It's special beliefs that really wind up creating different kinds of practices and different conceptions about language. As a field, we need to focus more on disclosing such ontologies and understanding the challenges they present. How performative is a society's view of language, and what kind of practices is it used for, and so on?

But getting back to your question, I think that one of the things we need to do is to tie those notions together better still. This idea of looking at the work on semiotic intensification and the LIAs is almost as if we're starting from two different ends of the

spectrum. And then, we need to work toward the center, a little bit more. I see some of the most valuable work going to be done there. I also see the life histories of actual language users being understudied (Kroskrity, 2021a). You've seen the value of these individual case studies (e.g., Green-Eneix, 2025a, b). I'm seeing them more and more in people's work. And I think that we absolutely have to get individuals back into living examples of how something is embodied, you know, and how these LIAs wind up getting embodied and becoming the basis for the subjectivity of social actors (Kroskrity, 2022a).

This is, to me, the great promise of future research. Therefore, we would do ethnography, but we'd also have something similar to life history research that is a little bit more language-oriented. I think we absolutely need these kinds of things, both for moving ahead professionally and for talking to the public to convey the applied message. This is a potentially very vernacular way of reaching people, by showing how language practices and language beliefs are actually embodied in specific individuals at specific times who are engaged in specific projects. I think it's compelling to see this type of social action, and I think it's something that we can do as a way of showing the importance of language and possibly of changing language in terms of supporting the kinds of practices that would be better for communities. That's quite valuable.

Curtis: You highlighted the two areas that need to be tried to be brought together. As Gal and Irvine (2019) noted in their book, the goal is to identify these sites where ideologies lie. Right, or in this case, how they are assembled within these sites, and the way they're organized within that assemblage. That might be a way to bring those together, but we also need to understand them in a different way, as we've been so focused on the concept itself. And while your very recent works are illustrating the doings that that ideology does, I would say that still needs to be done across these sites that happen to mind where the intersectionality occurs in conjunction with rather than just simply a part, instead of just simply a thing to be tacked on to, right?

Paul: I think that would be a very meaningful way of connecting these two approaches. And sites have always been an attractive concept for me, in part, because you can sort of do these kinds of connections. You start to see places and social actors doing something in them. So, it's wonderful. Then you get to see what becomes the apparatus (Althusser, 2014). The way the materiality of that space winds up entering the thinking of people, too, because it often becomes the source of images that they use when they create qualia—they show up in the way speakers characterize things, or their local discourse, and things like that. So, yeah, I think it's an excellent suggestion, and it's a very important next step for people who want to work at the interface of the semiotic activity and the LIA. This is because people will always want to try and do the work that brings us close to actual language practices, but also somehow restores and retains that connection to a meaningful context, and be free to construct that notion of meaningful context in a variety of relevant ways.

5.2 Is There Anything That You Feel Like We Need to Talk More About or That We Didn't Talk About, That We Just Haven't Been Able to Address Yet, That You Want to Talk About?

Curtis: My last question, probably the hardest question of them all. We've talked about a lot of things. We touched on language, language justice, resistance, and the role of the researcher. We talked about your evolution from language ideologies to LIAs. Then the role of materiality, and how it and social embeddedness play within that. In talking about all these things, is there anything that you feel like we need to talk more about or that we didn't talk about, that we just haven't addressed yet, that you want to talk about? That's my last question for you.

Paul: I think we've approached it a little bit. I'm trying to get a sense of where the Deleuze and Guattari (1987) model we have, the assemblage, the larger, macro-context that people are involved in, forms the *milieu* for a particular social actor. And I think to some extent that getting the social actors in, and seeing the way this is understood for them subjectively, and doing something, something powerful, you know, is relevant. But there is also a continuous pull between the subjective apprehension of that moment and the way that this understanding depends on and draws from a larger political and economic grounding for people in an environment in which this is actually happening. Sites are good, but I think we also need resources to better see their entangled connections.

Related to sites of ideological production and to issues of social justice is the genre of academic writing that I've called lingual life history (Kroskrity, 1993, 2021). It's showing up, like I say, in lots of people's work, including your own, I believe, in terms of the case study where you actually talk about individuals. But I think that seeing the constraints that are put on social actors, but also on their creativity as well, the genre has great potential both for critical social representation and for impactful social analysis—the kind of stories that speak to readers, and to a larger public. I'm still dreaming of possibly doing some kind of think tank in which I would get a bunch of people together who want to talk about this issue. There is, I would say, a sizable number of people who are attracted to these possibilities of bringing individuals back in ways that are a little bit richer than even our more recent experiments that have talked about linguistic individuals in sociolinguistic terms. So, that's the next step for me, and I hope many others.

Curtis: I agree with you that that's an area that really needs to be engaged with, especially because, right, we talked a lot about assemblages, but also Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) theory on assemblages and the threads that bind them. And some say, you know, these threads might be the emotions, the vehicles that propel us to mobilize and perform our beliefs, right?

Paul: Right! I think this is another frontier, too, in which we've been better able to talk about the cognitive conceptual than we have the emotional side of things. And I think that was one of the things that Kroskrity (2010) was attempting to do. I believe for the first time; I actually talked about emotions and feelings as part of the definition. And this was partially under the influence of Raymond Williams (1977) and his structure of feeling. But there's something about that. To understand people, we have to not just understand them conceptually, but we have to understand how they can have certain kinds of powerful feelings about things. This is often what separates communities, and it separates communities in terms of the way they think about language, too. How much emotion do you tie up into this kind of thing? How much feeling do you put into it? Where does that feeling come from? The social sciences are still woefully inadequate at talking about this. And, of course, the history of linguistics, but it's been too clunky, a kind of mechanical discussion resting on the conceptual rather than the feelingful. Yet, everybody recognizes that language is actually an emotional issue, as it turns out, and if we don't get that right, I don't know that we're doing our job properly.

Curtis: Exactly. I have a colleague who has promoted emotional entanglements (Sah et al., 2025), where emotion is the thread that binds these to form the assemblage. That could be a potential way of viewing LIAs. Both aren't separate from one another. But is there anything else you would like to hit on?

Paul: We've done some, some good rambling, I think, some combinations of loose and strict thinking, in the Bateson (2000) sense. I think that's it.

Curtis: Thank you so much for the discussion.

Paul: Thank you for creating an interesting session.

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