

LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY, LANGUAGE RIGHTS AND LANGUAGE ECOLOGY

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The plenary presentation defines “linguistic diversity”, “language rights”, and “language ecology”, and discusses them in relation to the education of ITM children/people(s) and their languages (ITM = Indigenous/tribal, minority and minoritized). It is left to the audience to decide which ITM categories are applicable in Lithuania. Is Lithuanian, for instance, a minoritized language in some contexts? I also define “linguistic genocide” (using the UN Genocide Convention’s definitions of genocide), and relate it to the education of ITMs. Then I ask if there are binding or even non-binding language rights that would support ITM language maintenance (and thus the world’s linguistic diversity), and prevent language endangerment. If there are such rights, are they being implemented. If not, why? Finally, I discuss why linguistic diversity and language rights are important for the maintenance of biodiversity and thus a healthy ecosystem.