My conversations with minority youth in diverse, multilingual contexts have shown ways in which these young people strategically invoke scales in positioning themselves and making identity choices. Data for this presentation are drawn from my ethnographic research in the Kumaun region of North India and from ten qualitative interviews with minority youth in Québec City. As I analyzed the data from both contexts, the concept of scale emerged as significant for understanding the ways in which minority youth position themselves through their discourses. In North India, I heard Kumauni young women identifying with the Kumauni, Hindi, and Sanskrit languages depending on the scale that they chose to invoke. Although they value the language of the home, Kumauni, they also identify with the Indian nation through their school language, Hindi, and with their Hindu religion through the timeless Sanskrit language. In the Québec City context, the anglophone and other non-francophone youth who were interviewed chose to invoke national and international scales, presenting themselves as superior, rather than accept minoritization at the city and provincial levels. The youth both in North India and in Québec do not deny their minority identities but, by shifting scales in their discourses, embrace the opportunity to affiliate themselves with broader linguistic communities.

Keywords: discourse, scale, identity.