

Grassroots Literacy



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The ease with which people and messages flow around today's world poses significant questions with regards to literacy and its mobility and inequality in the age of globalization. Displaced from their original context to sophisticated literacy environments in the form of letters, police declarations and pieces of creative writing, 'grassroots' literacies are unsurprisingly easily disqualified, either as 'bad' forms of literacy, or as messages that fail to be understood. Through close analysis of two unique, handwritten documents from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Jan Blommaert considers how 'grassroots' literacy in the Third World develops outside the literacy-saturated environments of the developed world and how literacy environments should be understood as relatively autonomous systems. "Grassroots Literacy" will be key reading for students of language and literacy studies as well as an invaluable resource for anyone with an interest in understanding the implications of globalization on local literacy practices. Jan Blommaert is Distinguished Professor of Linguistic Anthropology at the University of Jyväskylä, Finland, as well as Professor of

Linguistic Anthropology at Tilburg University. His publications include "Debating Diversity" (co-author, Routledge, 1998), "Language Ideological Debates" (editor, Mouton de Gruyter, 1999) and "Discourse: A Critical Introduction" (author, Cambridge University Press, 2005).

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