



Afrikanistisches Kolloquium

Freitag, 22.05.2026, 12-14 Uhr,
Campus Westend, SKW-Gebäude, Raum 5B.113

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Multilinguals' linguistic repertoires and their adaptability across time and space

Language and mobility can be explored from multiple perspectives in Africa and beyond. "Language" itself is a mobile resource for its users, constantly shifting and adapting across time, space, and interaction. Mobility, in contrast, is often narrowly understood as people being physically on the move. Yet even those who remain geographically stable experience mobility through their lives; through the movements of others in their local environment, through various kinds of connections, and through digital technologies that open up new channels of information exchange and interaction. Based on more than a decade of ethnographic and sociolinguistic research in Senegal, this presentation will show how versatile linguistic repertoires are shaped, established, and continually reconstructed over time and across space. I focus on the lived experience of languages and highlight the versatility and fluidity of repertoire users' linguistic practices. Particular attention will be paid to how social networks, mobility, and communication transform repertoires and how users negotiate belonging, identity, and everyday interaction in these shifting contexts. The talk therefore explores what influences change in linguistic repertoires, how certain languages become adopted, represented, or revalued, and how mobility creates opportunities to learn additional (identity) languages, languages associated with future aspirations, or languages that are necessary in a given moment. The cases include experiences of national mobility, the transnational diaspora, as well as digital mobility. A central theme will be how translanguaging and the fluid use of linguistic repertoires is in many contexts the most natural and least effortful way of communicating. At the same time, certain combinations of languages and words appear to be socially more accepted than others, raising questions about power, legitimacy, and social positioning. Finally, I reflect on my own, or our own positionality as a researcher(s) and the role of intrinsic reflexivity in the analysis of multilingual practices. By adopting a multi-perspective approach, the talk argues for an expanded understanding of linguistic repertoires that goes beyond the obvious to capture the layered, interconnected, and technologically mediated realities of contemporary sociolinguistic life.

Fachbereich 09
Sprach- und Kulturwissenschaft

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Miriam Weidl ist wissenschaftliche Mitarbeiterin und Postdoktorandin an der Universität Wien, Österreich, und arbeitet im Rahmen des SAG'S MULTI-Projekts am Institut für Germanistik. In ihrer Rolle innerhalb von SAG'S MULTI konzentriert sie sich auf die Nutzung von Mehrsprachigkeit in mehrsprachigen Forschungskontexten und erforscht deren positive Auswirkungen auf den Unterricht von Deutsch als Fremd- und Zweitsprache (DaF/DaZ). Außerdem ist sie Postdoktorandin und Co-Investigatorin im Udele-Projekt am Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik der Universität Wien. Ihre Forschungsinteressen umfassen Mehrsprachigkeit, Translanguaging und Bildung, mit einem besonderen Schwerpunkt auf ethnografischen Ansätzen zu Sprachpraktiken, Sprachideologien und sprachlicher Vielfalt in pädagogischen und sozialen Kontexten.