

24. Afrikanist*innentag
Panel 2

Linguistic Biographies

Organisers:

Andrea Hollington (University of Cologne) & Nico Nassenstein (JGU Mainz)

The field of linguistic biographies has gained momentum in sociolinguistic and linguistic anthropology in the last years, since its emergence in the 1980s/1990s. Usually investigated through biographic in-depth interviews and the ethnography of communication, linguistic biographies focus on individual persons' practices, ideologies and metalinguistic knowledge and views and thus regard the people as protagonists in the creation, distribution and development of their repertoires and their (individual) linguistic performances (Matras 2009, Blommaert 2010). Following a repertoire-based approach (Lüpke & Storch 2013) enables us to examine the fine-graded nuances of individual language use and the ways in which people acquire, value and use linguistic resources which reflect and represent their life stories. Linguistic biographies, in this regard, are personal narratives that indexically link people to the world they live in through language. They are concerned with the linguistic experiences throughout life (Franceschini 2002).

While language biographies have often been investigated with regard to migration, language acquisition and learning in mostly European contexts, this panel seeks to shed light on language biographies that involve African languages and linguistic practices. Looking at African linguistic biographies promises to yield interesting results not at least through the fact that the majority of speakers of African languages is multilingual. This is not limited to the African continent (a rich source of multilingual and complex linguistic biographies) but also involves other parts of the world through migration and diaspora. We welcome contributions that shed light on various aspects of linguistic biographies and thus help to establish the field in African Studies and African Sociolinguistics.

References

- Blommaert, Jan. 2010. *The Sociolinguistics of Globalization*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Franceschini, Rita. 2002. Sprachbiographien: Erzählungen über Mehrsprachigkeit und deren Erkenntnisinteresse für die Spracherwerbsforschung und die Neurobiologie der Mehrsprachigkeit. *Bulletin VALS-ASLA* 76. 19-33.
- Lüpke, Friederike and Anne Storch. 2013. *Repertoires and Choices in African Languages*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Matras, Yaron. 2009. *Language Contact*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.