



**Short-term fellow talk, Friday 26 October 2018, 12:15 pm, Campus Golm, Building 14,  
Room 2.15-16**

Nantke Pecht (Maastricht University) will give a talk on

**Exploring the limits of variability: The pronominal system in two language contact  
settings**

The aim of this talk is to discuss systematic patterns and restrictions in the use of personal pronouns by speakers in two distinct language contact settings. The main focus will be on data of the former coalmining district of Eisden (the *cité*) in the province of Limburg, Belgium, where locally born children of immigrant miners of different European language backgrounds developed a Dutch-German-Limburgian contact variety labeled by its speakers *Cité Duits* (lit. 'neighborhood German') in the 1930s. The town of Eisden is situated in the border region in the east of Belgium, an area where Southern Dutch is the official language, which is spoken next to the Limburgian dialect Maaslands. *Cité Duits*, however, is on the cusp to disappear, with approximately ten speakers left (cf. Pecht 2015; forthc.).

To target possible limits of variability, I will pursue the question of whether pronominal forms are employed in a coherent way by its speakers. In a similar vein, I will discuss whether forms have arisen that are unknown in the contact varieties. Empirically, I will be particularly concerned with three issues: (1) Frequency: What does the distribution of pronominal forms look like? (2) Internal properties: Do we encounter phonological or lexical variation for a given pronoun? (3) Position: To what extent is variation of a given pronoun interrelated with its position to the finite verb and complementizer? As shown by others, it is often the syntactic position of a pronominal element in a given variety that gives rise to unpredictable form variation (cf. de Vogelaer 2007: 145; Benincà & Poletto 2005).

These findings will be compared to data of an urban street market known as the 'Turkish market' in Berlin-Neukölln, Germany, where speakers of diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds regularly draw on a large range of linguistic resources including varieties of Arabic, Kurdish, Turkish and German, amongst others (A01 project, SFB). While in these two settings, practices of language mixing are the rule rather than the exception, the communities differ insofar as speakers of *Cité Duits* have always had a closed social network, in contrast to speakers of the urban street market. Data in Belgium was gathered in 2012/13 and 2015/16, and in Germany in 2017/18. Both projects combined ethnographic and sociolinguistic methods of data collection such as audio and video recordings of spontaneous speech and participant observation.

Everyone is cordially invited.