

Centre - Variation - Multilingualism

Linguistic Lecture Series Winter Term 2025/26

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L2-varieties at work: Attitudes and interaction in a multilingual nursing team on a hospital ward

Abstract:

Workplace interactions offer the opportunity to study how speakers of first and second language varieties collaborate in solving recurrent real-world tasks. An example are the handover meetings of multilingual nursing teams on German hospital wards. Stakeholders managing the recruitment of labour migrants for the health care sector tend to view L2 varieties as a problem for highly qualified and communication-intensive professional occupations.

The talk presents first results of a longitudinal study observing a team with a large proportion of recently recruited international nurses with different L1s. Authentic work floor recordings and interviews are collected to investigate how members cope with variation during their daily communicative practice in German as a lingua franca. Drawing on Spolskys' (2009) distinction between language management, practices, and beliefs, we also consider team members' perspectives on the status of the varieties in contact and their impact on professional recognition and social belonging.