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# Ethnographic, biographic and genealogic approaches to complex linguistic situations: European dialogues on transnational families

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Panel proposal by Judith Purkarthofer (Duisburg-Essen) and Isabelle Léglise (CNRS, SeDyL)

### **Ethnographic, biographic and genealogic approaches to complex linguistic situations: European dialogues on transnational families**

Families as basic social institutions (Rawls 2001) are held responsible for transmission of languages, continuation of social practices and the integration of the individual into society.

The idea for this panel emerged from a cooperation of two research teams from France and Norway that started in 2017. In this dialogue relevant topics were collected that we are now exploring with a particular focus on methodological issues. The different linguistic and social backgrounds allow each researcher to reflect on conscious choices regarding participants and methods, and they also help to uncover unconscious bias potentially linked to expectations towards ‘good family life’, what constitutes a ‘family’ and ‘successful’ language policy in the context of transnational mobility.

Ethnographic, biographic and genealogic approaches have certain characteristics in common: they start from the multilingual individual and their surroundings and try to relate the individual experiences to larger social and discursive contexts. Everyday (language and social) practices are at the core of ethnographic research while biographies center around the language portraits, the lifestories and the lived experiences of speakers. These lifestories open ways into genealogies that can illustrate language shift as well as changes in language orientation across several generations.

In a first part, we will revisit a number of available methodologies for research on family language policy, inspired by short presentations from ten contributors who will talk about their experiences in different settings. The geographical range covers Norway, France, Germany, Colombia, Brazil and Guyane as well as other countries as part of the transnational repertoires. In the second part of the panel, we aim to facilitate a discussion about further methodological challenges arising around the oral use of languages. Family language practices are a good observation point of oral uses of languages as well as transmission strategies whereas interviews and lifestories may bring ideologies about orality in its relation to written forms of language at the front core.

#### **Contributions :**

Isabelle Léglise (CNRS, SeDyL): Mixing methodologies to address language and mobility in transnational families

Santiago Sánchez Moreano (Open University & SeDyL): Exploring language biographies of transnational speakers in the Amazonian Trapezium through language portraits

Nanfei Wang (SeDyL): Starting an interview through language portraits with young children from Franco-Chinese mixed families

Kristin Vold Lexander (Innland U): Research on mediated repertoires in multilingual families in Norway

Anne Golden (U Oslo) & Judith Purkarthofer (U Duisburg-Essen): Longitudinal insights into complex family repertoires – choosing English between Tigrinya, Amharic and Norwegian

Guri Bordal Steien (Innland U): « On comprend pas ce qu’il dit » Challenges of an ethnographic approach to the language practices of Congolese refugees resettled in Norway

Suat Istanbulu (INALCO, SeDyL): Analysing intergenerational language practices in multilingual transnational families

Seyed Hadi Mirvahedi (U Oslo): The interplay between agency and structure – how can it be investigated in FLP?

**Keywords : methodology, ethnography, biography, genealogy, family language practices**

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Isabelle Léglise is a senior researcher at the French National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS, Paris) where she heads programmes on Multilingualism at the (CNRS INALCO IRD) SeDyL Center. Since 2000, she is engaged in research projects in French Guiana, Suriname and Brazil with a special focus on multilingualism related to migration and educational issues. She is also engaged in scientific cooperation, in Amazonia or South-East Asia along with the IRD where she heads the Federation of Research Centers in Social Sciences in the Global South. She published widely on language variation linked to contact linguistics, languaging and heterogeneous corpora, discourse analysis and language policy related to education and health in postcolonial settings.

Judith Purkarthofer researches multilingualism and linguistic integration in education, with families and in other social spaces. PhD from the University of Vienna with Brigitta Busch, then research and teaching at the University of Oslo, the Humboldt University in Berlin and now as a junior professor at the University of Duisburg-Essen in Germany. She is particularly interested in participatory research and creative methods with children and adults, as well as in transfer projects between science and practice.