

Linguistic Discrimination in Higher Education and the Work Sphere

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*An InZentIM WorkingLab in collaboration with the IZfB
organised by Tobias Schroedler & Judith Purkarthofer*

In multilingual societies such as the *Ruhrgebiet*, linguistic diversity plays a prominent role in many spheres of public life, including education and the everyday working lives of citizens. While the use of multiple languages offers clear social, cultural, and economic benefits, a growing body of research demonstrates that language-related discrimination remains a persistent feature of the experiences of multilingual individuals. Such discrimination may take a variety of forms, ranging from the devaluation or marginalisation of certain languages or varieties to federal/national policies and institutional practices that privilege majority or standard languages in subtle or overt ways.

Research on language-related discrimination and language practices — including questions of language use, (perceived) value, recognition, legitimacy, and access — has become an important area of inquiry across several disciplines. Scholars in sociology, education, economics, and applied and sociolinguistics, among others, have examined how linguistic hierarchies are socially constructed and how they shape opportunities and outcomes in professional and academic contexts.

This colloquium focuses on the socially and economically constructed value of languages and the consequences of such value attributions — particularly linguistic discrimination — in higher education and the labour market (professional and academic contexts). We invite contributions that explore how language ideologies, policies, and practices affect individuals and institutions, as well as contributions that investigate how linguistic diversity is negotiated, managed, or contested in academic and professional settings. We are very happy to have the following invited speakers with us: **Prof. Stephen May** (University of Auckland, New Zealand), **Dr. Mi Yung Park** (University of Auckland, New Zealand) and **Dr. Stephen Lucek** (University College Dublin, Ireland).

We welcome theoretical, empirical, and methodological contributions addressing, but not limited to, the following topics:

- Linguistic discrimination and inequality in higher education
- Language ideologies, prestige and hierarchies in academic or workplace settings
- The role of multilingualism in recruitment, promotion, and career trajectories
- Language policies and practices in universities or workplaces
- Recognition, valorisation, or marginalisation of non-majority languages and varieties
- Lived experiences of language of multilingual students, academics, or workers (including questions of linguistic well-being)
- Intersections of language with class, migration, gender, or nationality

The colloquium is open to all researchers, regardless of disciplinary background or academic seniority, whose work engages with language(s) in higher education and/or the labour market. The event aims to provide a platform to showcase ongoing or completed research, foster interdisciplinary exchange, and facilitate networking among colleagues with shared interests.

Format and Registration for the Workshop: The working language of the symposium is English. To facilitate inclusive discussion, contributions may also be presented in German, provided that the accompanying slides are in English. Conversely, presentations delivered in English may be accompanied by slides in German. Should you be interested in presenting your work, **please send your title and short abstract (200-300 words)** as well as your name and affiliation to inzentim.events@uni-due.de by **Mai 10**.



Dr. Stephen May, Professor in the School of Education and Social Practice, University of Auckland, New Zealand

He is an international authority on language rights, language policy, bilingual education, the multilingual turn in language teaching, and critical multicultural approaches to education. Stephen has published over 130 articles and book chapters in these areas, along with 27 books, including the award-winning *Language and minority rights* (2nd ed., 2012) and *The multilingual turn* (2014). His most recent books are *Critical ethnography, language, race/ism and education* (2023) and *Mobilizing multilingual identities: Language policy, teaching, and learning* (2026). Stephen is founding co-editor of the journal *Ethnicities*, an AERA Fellow and a Fellow of the Royal Society of New Zealand (FRSNZ).

Dr. Mi Yung Park, Associate Professor in Korean Studies at the University of Auckland, New Zealand

She is an interdisciplinary scholar in sociolinguistics, migration and diasporic studies, and a qualitative methodologist. She has published widely on language, migration, and identity, with a particular focus on the maintenance of Asian languages and linguistic discrimination in South Korea, New Zealand, and Hawaii. Her most recent book is *Mobilizing multilingual identities: Language policy, teaching, and learning* (2026). She is an Associate Editor of the *Journal of Multilingual Theories and Practices*, and an editorial board member for *Critical Inquiry in Language Studies*, *Australian Review of Applied Linguistics*, *Korean Linguistics*, and *The Korean Wave*.



Dr. Stephen Lucek, Assistant Professor in Linguistics at University College Dublin

He specialises in Sociolinguistics and Applied Linguistic and he has recently completed a project on linguistic discrimination in Irish secondary schools and has been investigating language related discrimination at many different levels of society. This has extended to an investigation of language use amongst staff in an Irish University. This type of differentiation is unprotected by law, which further entrenches the insidious power of prestige through education and work. He has published in leading journals including the *Journal of Language and Discrimination* and *Linguistics Vanguard*.

