10th Conference on Names in Mainz (Germany): Call for Papers

Migration Onomastics: Personal Names in the Context of Migration Movements

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We invite you to the 10th Conference on names in Mainz "Migration Onomastics", which will take place from September 29 to October 1, 2025, at the Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur Mainz (Academy of Sciences and Literature). The goal is to examine anthroponyms in connection with linguistic biographies and migration processes.

Questions related to migration have increasingly become an established field of linguistic research in recent years (see the 2024 introduction "Migrationslinguistik"). The focus is on multilingualism, variation, and language contact. However, despite their central role in migration processes, personal names have so far been overlooked.: In the course of migration, given and/or family names are retained, adapted, or abandoned. Thus, names tell individual or group-specific migration stories. Anthroponyms can act as markers for migration, potentially leading to stereotyping or discrimination, e.g., in the job market (Kaas/Manger 2010; Handschuck/Schröer 2010: 105, 142; Goldstein/Stecklov 2016) or in housing searches (Lütkenhöner 2011; Bursell 2012).

The conference builds on the results and research perspectives of the international workshop "Personennamen in Migration" which took place at the University of Münster in 2023. The aim is to discuss grammatical adaptation processes, transliteration, situational-pragmatic variation, or changes in given, family, or both:

Grammatical Integration Processes
– What kind of adaptation processes have personal names undergone in language contact areas such as Alsace, Silesia, Bohemia, or the Sorbian settlement area? This includes, among other things, Germanizations of family names of French (e.g., *Chevalier > Schwalie*) and Dutch origin (e.g., *Vermeulen > Vermöhlen*), as well as especially Slavic origin (e.g., *Řehoř > Seehorsch > Seehorst*, *Gąsior > Gansohr*), indicative of immigration or language contact. How can the geography of names shed light on migration movements? (Nübling/Kunze 2023: 90–177)
– Which changes occur with the transfer to another writing system (e.g., from Cyrillic or Greek to the Latin alphabet)? How are Chinese characters transferred? Are foreign graphemes or diacritics retained or replaced (*İlkay Gündoğan* vs. *Ilkay Gündogan*)?
– What adaptations do full names undergo when moving from a three-name to a two-name or even a single-name system? Are Eastern Slavic patronyms such as *Ivanovich/Ivanovna* ('son/daughter of Ivan') kept or discarded? How is the typical Chinese name order (family name before given name) handled? (Woo Louie 1998)
– In which way are gender-marked family names dealt with? (e.g., Greek *Zervakis/Zervaki*)
– What characteristics do personal names in German varieties outside Europe exhibit, such as Namdeutsch in Namibia (Zimmer 2021), Pennsylvania Dutch in North America, Volga German in Argentina, or Riograndenser Hunsrückisch in Brazil?

Situational Variation or Complete Name Change
– Under which conditions do persons change their names during migration? Which criteria play a role in the decision process? To what extent do characteristics of the source and target languages and their name inventories influence this decision?
– What given names do migrants give their children? (Gerhards/Hans 2009; Schiller 2024)
– Do old and new names coexist, are they varied situationally? Do personal names become in-group/out-group markers? For example, migrants of Russian-German origin were encouraged to adapt or change their names in the 1980s and 1990s (e.g., *Jewgenij > Eugen*). Former names of-

ten continued to exist within the family, while new names were used for external communication (Krüssel 2020).

– Which surname do intercultural couples choose upon marriage? Is this decision influenced by national or ethnic origin and other social distinctions such as gender? Which surname do children receive?

– To what extent does a name change mark a break in a personal (linguistic) biography? (Nübling 2021)

Legal or Ideological Framing

– To what extent do names act as markers of ethnicity or migration? Consider the change of Polish names in the Ruhr area (Menge 2000).

– Is a name change intrinsically or extrinsically motivated (Bidder 2013)? What roles do strategies to avoid discrimination play (Gerhards/Hans 2009)?

– What language or naming ideologies are evident in the context of migration (König 2014)? How common are adaptations imposed by authorities? Cf. the language-nationalistic suggestion for name changes for people with German migration backgrounds in Hungary between 1881 and 1918 (Maitz 2008).

– How do legal regulations influence name changes and name choices? (e.g., the mandatory name change when becoming an Icelandic citizen until 1996)

Abstracts (maximum 400 words) should be submitted by March 31, 2025, to migrationsonomastik@adwmainz.de. Presentations (30 minutes + 10 minutes discussion) can be held in German or English.

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