

**Morven Beaton-Thome**

**Institute for Translation and Multilingual Communication, TH Köln – University of Applied Sciences, Cologne, Germany**

**"Language and Migration: Experience and Memory"**

**Abstract**

**Superdiversity in institutional contexts: Language use and language contact in the lives of migrants – what role(s) do interpreters and translators play?**

The role of interpreters and translators in communication between migrants and institutions has traditionally been viewed as relatively static and embedded in a theoretical framework which assumes full monolingualism on the part of all interlocutors other than the interpreter or translator (conduit model). However, particularly in the context of widespread refugee and migrant movements worldwide, recent research has questioned the assumption that interpreters and translators mediate between two fixed language and cultural systems. Rather, it is posited that communication in such scenarios takes place in a highly complex context in which a multitude of factors (e.g. (language) biographies, attitudes to language, assumptions and bias, English as a lingua franca, migration trajectories etc.) play a significant role. In such superdiverse (Vertovec 2007) institutional contexts, the positioning of interpreters and translators is particularly interesting in terms of identity work and inclusion/exclusion performed through language use. This paper will lay the groundwork for a future ethnographic study on the positioning of interpreters and translators in the context of language use and language contact by refugees and migrants in Cologne, Germany.