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Forum för Afrikastudier

Friday Seminar in Africa Studies

Decolonizing Research Methodologies: Language in International Collaborations

with **Oulia Makkonen**
Forum for Africa Studies
Uppsala University

Friday 27 January 2023, 10.15-11.30

Engelska Parken, Dept. of Cultural Anthropology and Ethnology
Room **3-2028**

The crucial place language holds in the construction of epistemologies cannot be overstated. Language plays a part in enabling or hindering access to academic resources, influencing publishing practices which act as gate-keepers of knowledge. Language has been historically and continues to be a medium and a form of colonization. And language is of course a reflection of cultural identity, which is a central piece of decolonization/decoloniality discourses. In international collaborations between universities and higher education institutions, language can become a point of contention, creating uneven relations, presenting challenges to movements of ideas, mobility of researchers and collaboration between institutions. In this seminar questions of language will be explored through observations gathered from the various pedagogical activities and fieldwork conducted within the recently funded research school project: *Decolonizing research methodologies: a research school program on empirical data collection, fieldwork relations, ethical challenges, and transnational approaches 2022-2025*. The project is a collaboration between six institutions from Mali, Burkina Faso, Tanzania and Sweden, with English and French as main languages. These reflections on language within a decolonial framework that encourages collaboration may inform us on the challenges faced by researchers and students in multilingual settings. They also bring out the privileges, patronizing attitudes, comfort zones, feelings of inferiority, questions of access that need to be challenged in our academic practices.

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