



Universität  
Basel

## Research Project

# Language Education & the Global Care Work Economy. Mapping Structural Inequalities in Philippine Nurse Migration to Germany

### Project funded by own resources

**Project title** Language Education the Global Care Work Economy. Mapping Structural Inequalities in Philippine Nurse Migration to Germany

**Principal Investigator(s)** [Locher, Miriam](#) ; [Meier, Stefanie](#) ;

**Organisation / Research unit**

Departement Sprach- und Literaturwissenschaften / English Linguistics (Locher)

**Project Website** <https://edoc.unibas.ch/90104/>

**Project start** 01.04.2013

**Probable end** 19.12.2019

**Status** Completed

This study investigates the role language education plays in the labor migration of Philippine nurses who prepare, and are prepared, for the German market. The role of language in migration has increased dramatically as the demand for so-called skilled migrants has risen. With language competency as a job requirement, language adds value to future migrants. In 2013 Germany and the Philippines implemented a bilateral labor agreement that opened the possibility for Philippine nurses to migrate to and work in Germany. There are historical continuities of imperialism, capitalism and patriarchy– the centrality of language, however, is a change: Germany imposed a language certificate (B1 or B2) as a visa requirement.

This decolonial, feminist ethnography is based on a six-month research stay in the Philippines. Through participant observation and interviews, I gained insight into the personal level of migrant workers and teachers. I further accessed the institutional level through participant observation and by collecting and analyzing materials related to the regulatory framework.

The analysis shows how language education is central to the regulation of workers and border control, how it develops into a profitable business for the two states and players in the industry (including brokers and language education and testing providers), and how language learning institutions serve as places where social inequalities are reproduced. The analysis forms a derive: a critical drift maps the migration infrastructure and links its different layers. The focus is on material living conditions and affective responses of Philippine nurses who learn German – it investigates how language education and language testing with their different temporalities help prepare migrants while opening a space and the possibility of solidarities that cannot be completely regulated.

This study contributes to research in critical sociolinguistics. It can, on the one hand, be taken as a situated knowledge on the linguistic preparation of Philippine nurses migrating to Germany. On the other hand, it is intentionally embedded in the broader context of language and an international division of reproductive labor in order to provide insight on the connections between language and imperialism, language and capitalism, and language and state authority with an explicit intersectional perspective.

**Keywords** critical sociolinguistics, language and social inequality, ethnography of communication

**Financed by**

University funds

**Add publication****Published results**

4650708, Meier, Stefanie, Language education and the global care work economy - Mapping structural inequalities in Philippine nurse migration to Germany , Publication: Thesis (Dissertationen, Habilitationen)

**Add documents****Specify cooperation partners**