

PUBLIC Invitation



PROFESSORIAL LECTURE

*TOPIC: Teaching in a Multilingual and Multicultural Country with
Special Reference to Intercultural Communication and Translation*



Date: Thursday, 13 October 2016

Time: 18h00

Venue: PK 2 Lecture Hall, University of Namibia, Windhoek Main Campus

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Professor in German Studies

ABSTRACT

Culture is a concept frequently used by all of us, yet when pressed to define it most people stick to those aspects that can be seen, like clothes, food, traditional artefacts and rituals. Edward Hall depicted this effectively in his Iceberg model which also shows that, there are essential aspects of culture that are more often not visible like attitude towards time, power, self and space, to name but a few.

Namibians who did not have the opportunity to actually get to know each other well before independence now do have this chance but in the process generally overemphasise the differences that exist among them rather than look at what unites them. No wonder that at the recent Heroes Day commemorations in Walvis Bay our president was warning against the new invisible enemies like "corruption and tribalism" (Namib Times 2016).

It is furthermore quite interesting to experience again and again that Namibians, who can speak more than one language, believe that they are natural translators. Just because one has two hands does not make one a piano player. Translation is much more than converting words from one language into another.

This lecture will strive to show how incorporating intercultural teaching across disciplines could assist in overcoming tribalism and instead focus on unifying cultural factors without denouncing what is perceived to be one's own culture. At the same time it will aim to point out how translating within the framework of cultural awareness can enhance this process.

BIOGRAPHY

Prof. Dr. Marianne Zappen-Thomson is Namibian by birth. She studied at the University of Stellenbosch, obtained her B.A. (German and Philosophy) in 1979 and her doctoral degree in 1999. Her main areas of interest are intercultural communication, translation and interpreting as well as teaching German as a foreign language in Namibia.

Prof. Zappen-Thomson served as academic staff at the University of Stellenbosch, Rhodes University and University of the Western Cape. From 1983 – 1984, she was a Teacher and Subject-Head for German as third language at Ella du Plessis High School, Windhoek, Namibia. In 1985 she started as lecturer at the then Academy for Tertiary Education later known as University of Namibia (UNAM). In 2000 she was promoted to Senior Lecturer and in 2007 to Associate Professor. In 2014 she was promoted to the rank of Full Professor.

Prof. Zappen-Thomson is the President of the Association for German Studies in Southern Africa (SAGV). From 2005 – 2014 she was Chief-Editor of the online journal for Germanic Studies *eDUSA* and now serves on the Editorial Advisory Board. In 2007 she accompanied the Speaker of Parliament Dr. Theo Ben Gurirab as interpreter to Germany.

Besides more than 45 articles in peer reviewed journals and chapters in books, she has published the books *Interkulturelles Lernen und Lehren in einer multikulturellen Gesellschaft – Deutsch als Fremdsprache in Namibia (2000)*, *English – German Glossary of Namibian Terms (2012)*, *Von Schelmen und Tatorten Von Literatur und Sprache (2014)*. Prof. Zappen-Thomson is involved in international research with colleagues from the University of Potsdam, Freie Universität Berlin as well as Universität Duisburg-Essen. In Namibia she serves on various organisations and committees.

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