

Dr. Svenja Völkel



Academic positions

- since 2006 Scientific assistant
(Institute of Language Typology, Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz)
- 2004 – 2008 Associate lecturer
(Institute of Cultural Anthropology, Ruprecht Karls University Heidelberg)
- 2004 – 2006 Associate lecturer
(Institute of General Linguistics, Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz)

Education

- 2001 – 2007 Dr. phil. (PhD) in Language Typology (Focus: Anthropological Linguistics)
(Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz)
- 1998/99 Study abroad in Linguistics (Focus: French as a Foreign Language) & Cultural Anthropology
(University Paul Valéry, Montpellier/France)
- 1997 – 2002 Supplementary studies in African Studies (Hausa) & German Studies (focus: German as a Foreign Language)
(Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz)
- 1995 – 2000 Magistra Artium (MA) in General Linguistics/Cultural Anthropology/Media Studies
(Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz)

Research areas

- Thematic fields: anthropological linguistics, language typology, cognitive linguistics, cognitive anthropology and language contact
- Individual topics: honorifics, verbal taboo, kinship terminology, spatial descriptions, possessive constructions, theory of mind, word classes, personal names and naming
- Regional focus: Oceania, particularly Tonga/Polynesia

Research & teaching projects

- Currently ‘Kinship from an anthropological linguistic perspective’

- 2014 – 2018 Development of a curriculum for a comprehensive introduction to linguistic research with its multiple approaches ((Johannes Gutenberg University of Mainz)
- 2015 – 2016 ‘Word classes and lexical flexibility’ (based on a workshop with a focus on Austronesian Languages, University of Amsterdam/NL)
- 2007 – 2010 Postdoctoral researcher within the cognitive anthropological project on ‘Theory of Mind in the Pacific’ as part of the overall research project ‘Person, Space, and Memory in the Contemporary Pacific’ (Ruprecht Karls University Heidelberg)
- 2001 – 2007 Doctoral research on ‘Social structure, space and possession in Tongan culture and language – an ethnolinguistic research’ (Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz)

Fieldwork

- 2015 Tonga (3 months), Australia (3 weeks)
- 2007 Tonga (3 months, together with a Psychologist), Australia (2 weeks), Hawaii (2 weeks)
- 2003/04 Tonga (3 months), New Zealand (3 weeks), Australia (2 weeks)
- 2002/03 Tonga (9 months), Samoa (2 weeks), Australia (2 weeks)
- 2001 Fiji (1 week), Tonga (2 weeks), Cook Islands (1 week)
- 2000 Australia (4 weeks)

Grants & Awards

- 2018/2019 Gutenberg Research Funding – Start-up Funding for Grant Applications
- 2014-2016 Gutenberg Teaching Council (GLK) – Innovative Research-oriented Teaching Grant (total funding: 30.000 €)
- 2007 German Research Foundation (DFG) – Travel Funding
- 2003/04 German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) – Graduate Fellowship
- 2002/03 German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) – Graduate Fellowship
- 1998/99 European Commission-Socrates/ERASMUS – Study Exchange Grant (University Paul Valéry, Montpellier/France)

Membership & functions

German Anthropological Association (GAA/DGSKA, formerly DGV)

European Society for Oceanists (ESfO)

Association of Language Typology (ALT)

Austronesian and Papuan Languages and Linguistics research group (APLL)

Polynesian Society

Tonga Research Association (TRA)

- since 2021 Spokesperson of the working group ‘Anthropological Linguistics’ at the Center for Intercultural Studies (ZIS), University of Mainz

- since 2018 Founding member (together with Antje Lobin & Damaris Nübling) of the working group 'Language and society' at the Research Center of Social and Cultural studies (SOCUM), University of Mainz
- since 2014 Co-head (together with Christoph Antweiler) of the working group 'Cognitive and Linguistic Anthropology' within the German Anthropological Association (GAA/DGSKA)
- 2014-2016 Co-project leader (together with Franziska Kretzschmar) of the Innovative Research-oriented Teaching Project, University of Mainz
- since 2006 Co-coordinator of the Japanese Studies, University of Mainz

Other professional experiences & consultancies

- 2006 Tonga-Exhibition in the Anthropological Museums of Heidelberg
- since 2005 Radio Interviews (Deutschlandfunk, WDR, etc.)
- 2004 Consultant of the ZDF/medi cine production 'Traumfischer'
- 2002 – 2005 Language teacher for German as a Foreign Language, French and Spanish at the Adult Education Center (VHS) in Rüsselsheim
- 1997 & 1998 Business internships at Hoechst Marion Roussel in Barcelona/Spain (4 months)