

**AIAS Event, Monday 1 June 2026, 13.00 – 17.00**

**Science Diplomacy meets Pluriversality in Language Technology  
Recognizing and fostering alternate pathways to language technology / AI\***

Organized by: Gertraud Koch, University of Hamburg, Rachel Charlotte Smith, Aarhus University, Louis Fendji, University of Ngaoundere in Cameroon; in collaboration with the AIAS Science Diplomacy Group

The potential and need for science diplomacy in the field of AI is increasingly coming into focus as AI is an inherently global technology, as indicated by the special issue of the online journal Science Diplomacy of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), the world's largest science association, and the UNESCO report on the UNESCO Global Ministerial Dialogue on Science Diplomacy. These publications discuss AI as the most controversial emerging technology and emphasise the challenges with respect to inequality, security and sustainability.

AI technology varies widely across the globe in terms of infrastructure, resources and design approaches. While the US, in competition with China, is setting the pace in AI research and development, mainly through the private engagement of major technology companies, other countries are seeking to develop their own strategies, alliances and pathways to more reliable, accountable and sustainable versions of the technology. These initiatives for reducing dependencies and resulting vulnerabilities respond to the geopolitical dimensions of AI technology governance and development, while also highlighting socio-cultural differences in coping with AI technology and its situatedness in regional and local contexts. This is reflected in debates around sovereign AI, epistemic injustice or inclusive and participatory AI. These debates express scepticism regarding the quickly implemented frameworks of responsible AI, explainable AI, ethical AI, and so on. However, these frameworks highlight the need to navigate power relations and create space for alternative versions of AI across global scales and sites.

Pathways towards other versions of AI technology seem difficult; they are associated with fears of social and economic decline and instability. However, they also offer hope and motivation for sustainability, social inclusion and justice, building on existing activities in countries in the Global South and North to diversify AI technology. This has the potential to challenge the technological dominance imposed through AI and offer alternatives to the concept of AI as a superintelligence.

These alternative versions of AI, which are being developed on different scales and in different locations around the world, must contend with the dominance of the five major US tech companies. They must navigate the various national and supranational AI governance strategies in the US, Japan, Europe, the BRICS countries, and Africa. They require resources to develop their approaches and spaces in which to develop them into paradigms of language technology development in their own right. This requires science diplomacy to foster joint activities, bridge the gap between alternative versions of AI language technology and build collaborations and think tanks across continents. This approach challenges the idea of technological superiority of Global North solutions, promoting a broader view of technology concepts that goes beyond the unsustainable race for a technological singularity.

Aim of the workshop is to provide a space for:

- Connecting scholars from computer science, the social sciences, and the humanities, who have started to re-envision AI in ways that enable a pluralistic, participatory, inclusive, and just design and implementation of technology. This approach is in tune with cultural and ecological diversity, and maintains and facilitates this diversity through technology, rather than incorporating it into systems.
- Bridging the so-called Global South and North, as well as the historically created boundaries and power hierarchies, by exploring commonalities and diversity, and by acknowledging the richness of epistemic differences in knowledge situated in language, socio-cultural backgrounds, and ecological habitats.
- Adopting a 'Manifesto for Pluriversity in AI\*' that opens up the way we think about AI technology by discarding the idea of machine intelligence in favour of a sociotechnical system — an alternative idea of the technology that is still powerful but more viable.
- Forming a 'Plurifying AI\* Collective' — a transdisciplinary think tank dedicated to diversifying, plurifying and democratising the design of AI technology.

### **13.00 – 13.10 Welcome and Introduction**

#### **13.10 – 13:45 Conceptual Frameworks (35 minutes)**

1. Casper Andersen: Science Diplomacy
2. Gertraud Koch: Plurifying AI\* language technology
3. Questions and Answers

#### **13: 45 – 15:15 Thinking through examples of plurifying AI\* Language Technology (90 minutes)**

Short presentations (each 15 minutes presentation, 30 minutes comments and discussion) of approaches for plurifying language technology in ongoing projects give insights into the innovation done there in respect to diversifying technology design. They build the basis for discussing, what and how scientific paradigms and collaborations in language technology can actually facilitate the interest of overcoming the technological dominance of US companies in information technology. Eventhough plurifying computational practices effectively rearrange power hierarchies on local or regional scales, they often get trapped in or even fuel the dominant global technology governance of the US big tech companies. In this situation, the need of science diplomacy is obvious for navigating power relations and support the initiatives towards more sustainable, equitable and humane versions of AI on a global scale.

#### **Asking questions and doing things *otherwise in language technology / AI\**:**

##### **Fausto Giunchiglia, University of Trento, (online): Data Scientia and the LiveLanguage Initiative**

Infrastructuring for a diversity-aware version of language technology with data scientica and the LiveLanguage Initiative

Comments and opening the discussion: Casper Andersen, Maria Rentetzi & others

**Enacting other worlds (that are already there) in language technology / AI\***

**Louis Fendji: Exploring alternate pathways to AI research in Africa: the DIGITAfrica Project**

Comments and opening the discussion: Casper Andersen, Maria Rentetzi & others

**15:15 – 15:45 Coffee Break**

**15:45 – 16:15 Synthesis: What Science Diplomacy can do, cannot do and should do for plurifying language technology**

How to recognize and foster alternate versions of AI language technology with the instruments of Science Technology?

How can the idea of pluriversality feed back into the repertoire and the approaches of Science Diplomacy?

**16:15 Manifesto for Pluriversality in AI\***

Discussion & Commitments

**16:45 Closing & Farewell**

17:00 End

**Setting:**

Hybrid workshop with a small group of people for discussing the relations of science diplomacy and pluriversality in AI; only a very limited number of people can join for practical reasons.