

# African Languages in Public Spaces: Opportunities and Challenges

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

11TH MAY 2018, SOAS, UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

## **Welcome to the 2018 annual conference of the BAAL Language in Africa Special Interest Group**

### **About us**

The overarching goal of the Language in Africa SIG is to provide a forum for the exploration of applied linguistics topics in African contexts.

There are three main aims, two of which reflect the kinds of research topic which are of central interest within our forum, and a third which reflects our commitment to providing networking for scholars in Africa to connect with scholars based in the UK or elsewhere.

1. To examine how educational, political and social contexts affect the learning and teaching of languages in Africa, and learning through more than one language. Studies may focus on practices in the local context (formal or informal sectors), language planning and policies in relation to education, or the cultural politics of language teaching.

2. To investigate various sociolinguistic aspects of language in use in Africa. Relevant topic areas include the following:

- Languages in contact: code-switching, new 'mixed codes', cultural diversity and language ecologies, language maintenance and shift.
- Nativised Englishes in Africa and attitudes to these and to external models.
- Stylistic aspects of language in use – registers, genres and the 'expressive inventories' available to speakers and writers.
- Language and identity, including studies of gender and ethnicity.
- Critical discourse studies in specific African contexts or dealing with representations of Africa.
- The effects of globalization and new communication technologies

3. To support and promote the work of African scholars and others engaged with language issues inside African institutions and NGOs, as well as those currently studying in the UK. The main purpose of this is the exchange of information, and understanding others' interest agendas. We are committed to providing information about research projects that focus on developing knowledge and skills inside Africa.

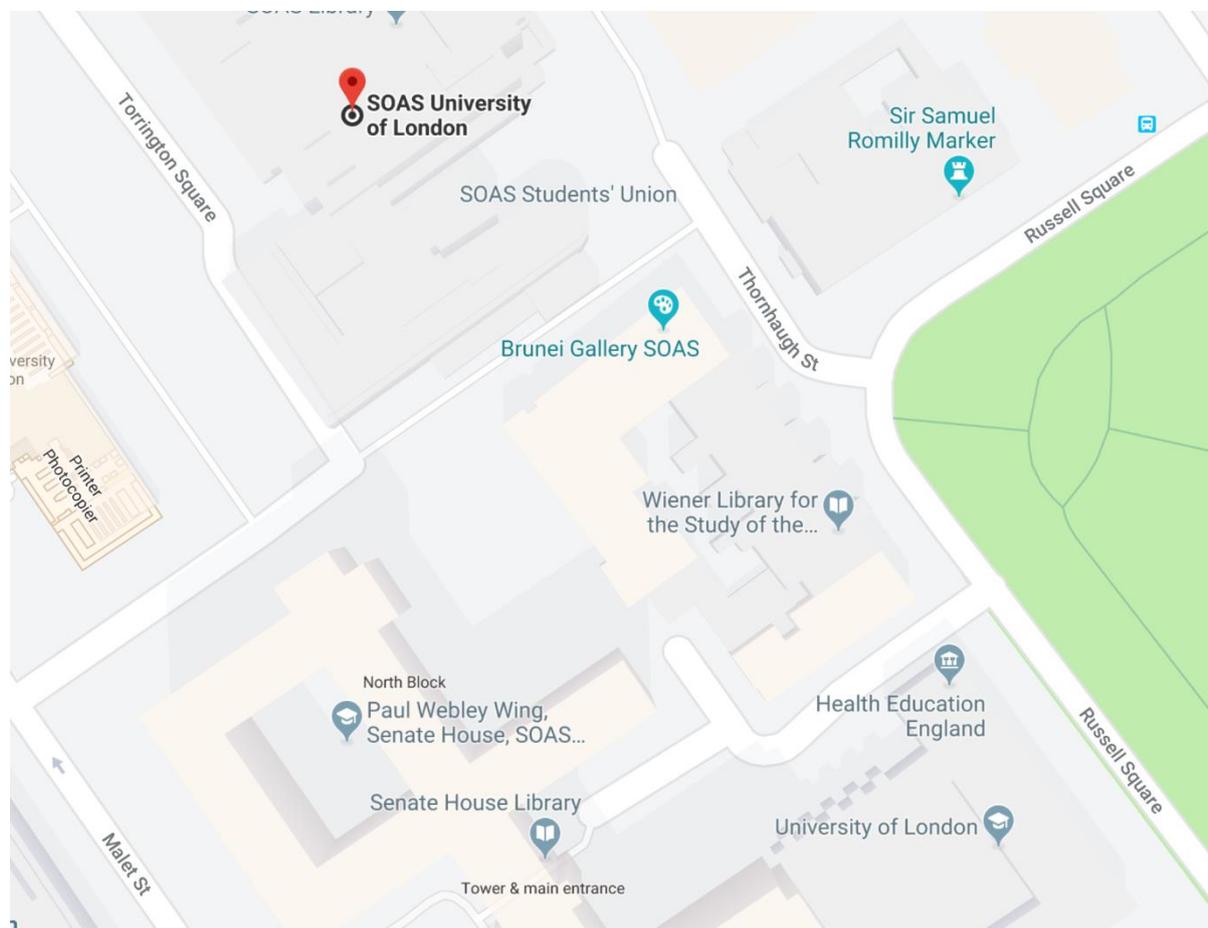
*For more information and to join our network, please contact*

- The LiASIG Secretary- Colin Reilly [c.reilly.1@research.gla.ac.uk](mailto:c.reilly.1@research.gla.ac.uk) or
- The Convenor, Goodith White [anne.goodithwhite@ucd.ie](mailto:anne.goodithwhite@ucd.ie)

**We hope you have an enjoyable conference!**

## General Information

The conference will take place in the Main College Building and Senate House at SOAS, University of London. Please see the map below.



## Wifi and Twitter

If your device is already configured to connect to 'eduroam' it should connect the network automatically. If you have never configured your device for 'eduroam' or experience any problems connecting please contact the IT support desk at your home university for assistance. You would need to have set-up your device for 'eduroam' at your home university before attempting to use 'eduroam' at SOAS.

To check if your university is a member of 'eduroam' visit the ['eduroam' website](#).

In addition, there is guest wireless available on the 'WiFi Guest' network. This is provided by The Cloud and is free of charge to use.

We encourage participants to actively tweet during the conference using the hashtag #BaalLiA2018 and to follow the BAAL Language in Africa SIG [@BAAL\\_LIA\\_SIG](#)

## **Plenary Speaker: Professor Leketi Makalela**

### **Re-imagining multilingualism as a cultural competence in Africa: leaking boundaries, ubuntu and multilinguaging in public spaces**

Leketi Makalela

University of the Witwatersrand

#### **Abstract**

While Sub-Saharan Africa is generally regarded as one of the highly complex multilingual regions in the world (with 30% of languages spoken in the world), this framing often reflects monolingual and ontological biases, which divide the languages into fixed entities that are capable of being placed in boxes. It is therefore not surprising that very little is known about the mobile discursive language practices that form the everyday ways of being and making sense in public spaces. In this plenary, I question the validity of bounding African languages and demonstrate that some form of speech 'discontinuous continuity' is the norm among speakers of Bantu languages. Data sets presented include *kasi-taal*- a fluidlect variety from major Black townships in Johannesburg-, soap opera clips, and cultural artefacts. The results reveal that traditional linguistic boundaries between indigenous African languages have been re-negotiated, after colonial and apartheid boundaries, to express expanded identity positions. Using Ubuntu multilinguaging framework, I argue that uses of African languages in public spaces challenge traditional notions of language and provide a gaze into future possibilities for merging these 'languages'. In particular, I use the value system of Ubuntu to advance a view that these fluid language practices are an embodiment of an African cultural competence of infinite relations of dependency that disrupts orderliness and simultaneously domesticates strangeness. At the end of the presentation, I consider implications for re-imagined language policy, planning and management options that are innovative and relevant for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century in comparable contexts.

Professor Makalela is Head of the Division of Languages, Literacies and Literatures at Wits School of Education, University of the Witwatersrand. Professor Makalela's research interest relates to the interface between languages and literacies in the 21st century and the prospects of alternating languages of input and output to enhance identity construction and epistemic access for multilingual students. Professor Makalela chairs a research programme, the Wits Abafunde-bahlalefe Multilingual Literacies Programme (WAMLIP).

WAMLIP is a growing field that is attracting an increasing number of PhD researchers to the following on-going projects:

- Biliteracy development trajectories
- Reading development in intermediate phase
- Socio-cognitive aspects of reading development in complex multilingual schools
- Ubuntu translanguaging/ Interdependent multilingualism
- Fuzzy languaging logic
- Transliterations

**Featured speaker: Rosemary Wildsmith-Cromarty (University of Kwazulu-Natal)**

**Building a knowledge base for language teaching through isiZulu and English**

The aim of this study was to explore the effects on student learning and performance of the use of two languages of instruction, *viz.* isiZulu and English, in a course on the teaching of isiZulu as an additional language at school level. The course was for third year BA students considering a language teaching career. The content of the course came from the Applied Linguistics field and had not been translated from English into isiZulu. In addition, the content was to be taught by a non-isiZulu speaking applied linguistics lecturer who had recently learned isiZulu but was not fluent. The course was thus team taught by the Applied Linguist and the isiZulu lecturer who made the content accessible to the students through translation of difficult terms and concepts into isiZulu. Students were free to use either language. The lecturers wished to see how the two languages interacted naturally in scaffolding learning and also whether and how the use of isiZulu would facilitate understanding of key disciplinary concepts when the terminology had not yet been developed. Class sessions were recorded and transcribed. Instances of translanguaging were analyzed in terms of the functions they were fulfilling within a broad discourse analysis framework. Findings revealed that students found it easier to challenge the lecturers on content and to present their own points of view in isiZulu, although they could follow the content in English. The experience also created rich affordances for building an academic discourse in isiZulu.

## **The Ethnolinguistic Vitality of Obolo**

**Marianne Aaron (University of Reading)**

Ethnolinguistic Identity theory proposes that the level of “ethnolinguistic vitality” is the strongest factor determining whether or not a group maintains their language and culture in the face of pressures from other languages in their environment. As part of a wider study of attitudes towards bilingual education in the Obolo area of the Niger-Delta area of Nigeria, this paper will explore to what extent the current status and development of Obolo has made it a suitable candidate for inclusion in a bilingual education project. First I will sketch the socio-linguistic dynamics shaping the patterns of language attitudes in the wider region (especially concerning language use in education), so as to determine the most influential issues, and next I will look through the lens of ethnolinguistic vitality theory at attitudes to Obolo as reflected in the data from my focus group interviews and participant observation. From this I will present the evidence in support of Obolo bilingual education in the area. Finally I will discuss some clues for the promotion of bilingual education in Obolo that were gleaned from this research.

## **The Right to Language of an African Deaf Child: The Nigerian Case**

**Emma Asonye (University of New Mexico)**

**Kindness Okoro (Save the Deaf and Endangered Languages Initiative, Nigeria)**

**Aniefon Mmefon (Save the Deaf and Endangered Languages Initiative, Nigeria)**

**Nnamdi Ume (Save the Deaf and Endangered Languages Initiative, Nigeria)**

**John Bamidele (Save the Deaf and Endangered Languages Initiative, Nigeria)**

Of all PWDs around the world, the Deaf are the only group referred to as a linguistic group; this is because deafness predisposes them to an alternative means of communication, and language – *language of the hands*. However, whether deaf or hearing, speech or signs, every child has a right to language, the language that embodies the culture and identity of that child. This paper discusses the right to language of an African deaf child, if and how such a right exists, towards the child's linguistic literacy.

Over 75% deafness in Nigerian children is caused by a range of preventable sickness during the most critical stage of child development (between age 0 & 5) (Asonye, Emma-Asonye, 2018). Part of the remaining 25%, labeled 'genetic' are traceable to prenatal issues resulting from maternal ignorance, accident, or medication. Consequently, over 95% of deaf children are born by hearing parents, who know little or nothing about deafness (Kushalnager, 2010), leaving an average deaf child with little or no access to language at a very critical age.

Besides the above situation, a Nigerian deaf child faces additional linguistic drought due to the presence of a foreign signed language used for deaf education, like in many other African countries. Schmalings (2003), and Asonye (2017b) have asserted the negative impact of foreign signed languages for Deaf education in Africa. This paper discusses linguistic and demographic data collected through video recordings and surveys across Nigerian deaf communities since 2014, where only 1.8% of parents of deaf children can sign, questioning the language right of a Nigerian deaf child with regard to UN 2030 SDGs, and calls for more scientific studies on this population.

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## **Analysis of Debates on the “One nation, One language” Policy in Ethiopia**

**Elfneh U. Bariso (CONEL)**

Since its inception in the 1880s, Ethiopia has implemented a “*One nation, One language*” policy whereby the Amharic language has been adopted as its official language. Non-Amhara nationalists have resisted the implementation of this policy at different historical junctures. Such resistance resulted in minor reforms such as allowing the teaching of adult and primary education in some local languages. Nevertheless, Amharic has still retained its prestige as the only federal official language. This language policy and practice seem to continue instigating political, linguistic and practical challenges to the country. The current campaign, which is conducted by Oromo activists to make Afaan Oromo a working language of the federal government and the two largest cities of Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa, is one of such challenges. This qualitative study will compare and contrast the views of proponents and opponents of “*One nation, One language*” policy. Is this policy sustainable? How? The study will suggest possible policy and practical measures that need to be considered in the current highly polarised ethos of Ethiopian politics. The paper substantiates its arguments by drawing evidence from primary and secondary data of diverse and contending perspectives. In addition to the literature review, 20 semi-structured interviews have been conducted with people from Ethiopia on their views on “*One nation, One language*” policy using judgement sampling. There is a plan to undertake an online survey to establish how widely the views emerged during the interviews are held.

## **The role of the home language in a Mathematics classroom: An examination of the terminologies of traditional games with Mathematical concepts in Chichewa Language**

**Alick Kadango Bwanali (University of Strathclyde)**

Many African languages play very minimal roles in the education system, mostly confined to media of instruction in the lower levels of primary school. One of the arguments against the use of African languages in education is their perceived lack of appropriate terminologies to express scientific and technical concepts. Malawi just like many African countries uses Chichewa as a medium of instruction only in grades 1-4 and English takes over for the rest of the education system. Mathematics is considered one of the most difficult and very technical subjects that uses specialized terminologies. It has also been observed that the way Mathematics is taught in Africa appears to turn off many children as they view it as a rather strange and imported subject. An examination of the current Malawi Mathematics textbooks for grades 1 to 4 reveals that most terminologies are derived from English through transliteration; see for example: fakitala (factor), fulakishoni (fraction), voluyumu (volume), mapatani a manambala (number patterns), garafu (graph), thirayango (triangle), seko (circle), sikweya (square), lekitango (rectangle), hafu pasiti (half past), kota tu (quarter to). This paper aims to highlight the challenges of using borrowed terminologies. It also explores the use of indigenous knowledge (funds of knowledge) in developing Mathematics terminologies by studying the terminologies used in traditional games that have mathematical concepts. The paper advocates for the use of indigenous terminologies in Mathematics to make it easy to teach and learn.

## **Translanguaging strategies in schools in sub-Saharan Africa**

**John Clegg (Independent consultant)**

Whether officially or not, teachers and learners in schools across sub-Saharan Africa are – quite understandably – using 2 or more languages in the classroom in a wholesale, informal way. Officially, however, teachers need to be taught formal, effective translanguaging. They need it not only to make pedagogical sense of their informal practice, but also to ease current arrangements for transitioning from L1- to L2-medium education and in the future to enact effective bilingual education. Translanguaging can improve L2 ability and L2-medium subject achievement.

There is no clear idea of what formal translanguaging in the L2-medium or bilingual classroom might look like in classrooms in SSA. It involves teacher use of L1 lexis, teacher questions and explanations in L1 and the encouragement of L1 learner responses. It also involves learner group and pair talk in L1, in relation to the discussion of subject concepts but also to L1-medium talk about L2-medium reading and writing tasks. It also requires learners to re-cast L1-talk into L2, for example when reporting in L2 in the whole class the outcomes of L1 groupwork.

Ministries, education aid agencies and in particular teacher-education institutions must develop an understanding of the role of formal translanguaging in schools in SSA. In doing so they must draw on what we know about it from other contexts such as the USA. In particular they must formalise teachers' good practice in SSA which must be exemplified daily in schools.

This presentation will focus on practical translanguaging strategies in L2-medium subject teaching in SSA.

## **Just food, fashion and fun? English on Algerian walls**

**Camille Jacob (University of Portsmouth)**

English has historically been 'absent' from many former French colonies such as Algeria, but policy-makers and academics have suggested that there is an exponential growth in interest in the language, from increased demand for English tuition (Algeria) to changes in the education system (Cameroon, Madagascar) and a linguistic shift from French to English in the public sphere (Rwanda). In Algeria especially, these changes are happening against a backdrop of decades of political debate over linguistic authenticity (Taleb Ibrahim 1995, Chachou 2013). Within this context, English has often been described as 'neutral', 'deethnicised' and 'de-colonised' (see for instance Benrabah 2013) and as a catalyst for linguistic, economic and political opening (Benstead & Reif 2013, Euromonitor 2012, Mostari 2004). Based on an analysis of the linguistic landscape of Algiers and informed by year-long fieldwork, this paper will investigate the effects that English is having in multilingual public spaces. It will also explore the relationship between dynamics within the linguistic landscape and wider socio-cultural and linguistic transformations.

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## **The challenges from dialectal variation to standardisation and pedagogical implications: Revisiting the case of Ghɔ́málá', a Grassfields-Bantu language from Cameroon**

**Seraphin Kamdem (SOAS, University of London)**

So many African languages are still totally excluded from being used as mediums of instruction in the education system of their speakers. And for many of those languages, the selection of the dialectal variety to be used for the development of the writing system and for use in education and the production of literature remains one of the major challenges.

This paper will examine the case of Ghɔ́málá', a Grassfields-Bantu language from the West region of Cameroon, Africa; building its discussion on document analyses, field notes, and data collected on the current evolution of Ghɔ́málá'.

Cameroon is an officially French-English bilingual country, but actually highly multilingual with 286 local languages, all at various levels of their standardisation. Ghɔ́málá' is one of those languages that are thriving, in comparison to the majority of the Cameroonian languages, and in terms of its print-richness and use in formal education – schools and literacy classes (Nissim, 1972, 1975, 1981; Kayum Fokoue, 2011).

While sitting in a theoretical framework of corpus planning and status planning within language planning (Kaplan and Baldauf, 1997; Liddicoat and Baldauf, 2008), this paper focuses on reference standard dialect theory and standard language development in terms of three core areas: development of a writing system, production of literature, and teaching in educational contexts (Sadembouo and Watters, 1987; Sadembouo, 1989; Bergman, 1989; Watters, 1990).

The importance of this paper lies in its investigation of the process of selection of the dialectal variety that has been promoted to become the standard, and in its revisiting of the implication of this selection of one dialect out of more than a dozen equally valid varieties on the development of the writing system for Ghɔ́málá', the production of literature in and the pedagogic issues related to this dialectal variation and selection.

## **Minority languages and Education in Uganda: Challenges and Opportunities**

**Judith Nakayiza (Independent Academic)**

This paper looks at the minority languages of Uganda, and the process of inclusion in education as one main functional domain. The focus of this paper is on Luruuri, a minority language spoken in the Lake Kyoga basin, but will also make reference to other small languages and language communities in Uganda. Although the local language policy that aims at including all Uganda's local languages in education was implemented in 2007, ten years later, many local languages especially minority languages still face significant challenges despite the advantages of improved performance, improved student participation, and good indications of higher esteem and Identity. Increased dominance of English and the main indigenous languages continue to dominate all official domains and communications including Education. Aspects of language policy and language exclusion/discrimination and language policy and politics, (e.g. Batibo 2005) all which play a significant role in language maintenance and shift in Africa will also be discussed.

The paper draws from the theory of language planning and policy (e.g. Spolsky 2009, Tollefson 1991) to examine the position of minority languages in education in Uganda and how these challenges can be overcome to utilise and maximise the advantages and opportunities that local languages provide.

### **References**

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## **Grassroots initiatives promoting literacy and literature in Luganda: A case study from Uganda**

**Zaahida Nabagereka (SOAS, University of London)**

This presentation will look at the work of Ugandan author and activist Waalabyeki Magoba and how his efforts of establishing literature and literacy festivals in Masaka and Lukaya are contributing to the educational development and impact of Luganda in primary education in these areas. Uganda's attitude towards African languages in education has been ambivalent with little sustained improvement since the 2007 Thematic Curriculum which stipulated local languages as the medium of instruction from Primary 1 to Primary 3.

By creating a space outside of the normal school routine in which children are able to enjoy learning and encouraged to have fun in their first language, Magoba is promoting Luganda as a language of prestige within the educational system, which is significant and this space is by and large reserved only for English. Through producing books in Luganda and working with schools throughout the year, the literacy and literature festivals he has established allow for pupils to reflect on the books they have read and improve their literacy skills. These grass roots activities also demonstrate how Luganda as a language in education is being developed by activists working outside and around the Ugandan government's education policy.

## **Oxford Global Languages three years on: insights from African languages**

**Richard Shapiro (Oxford University Press)**

The Oxford Global Languages initiative from Oxford Dictionaries is an ambitious programme to make lexical content in over 100 languages available online over the next 10 years. It has a special focus on languages that are digitally under-represented on the global stage – those languages which are spoken by millions of people but which are increasingly disadvantaged in social, business, and cultural areas of online life where other languages dominate.

The programme was formally launched in September 2015 in Cape Town, with two southern African languages, Northern Sotho, and isiZulu. Since then, websites in a further 14 languages have been launched in languages as diverse as Urdu and Quechua, including a further 3 African languages: Setswana, Swahili, and isiXhosa. Meanwhile, lexical content is being gathered and developed for Igbo, Yoruba, Hausa, and others.

This presentation will cover the mission and goals of the programme, progress to date, the challenges faced in acquiring and building this content and making it available online, and how the programme works with language communities to expand its offering and reach. Particular attention will be given to the African languages included in the programme, outlining how initiatives relating to community-building, content creation, and web publishing have developed for these languages.

## Language Policy in Education in Post-apartheid South Africa

**Susan Stewart (SOAS, University of London)**

**Simon Voget (SOAS, University of London)**

Post-apartheid South Africa was full of promise, when the rainbow nation's 25 spoken languages were given recognition in 1994, with 11 of them being granted official status. The National Language Policy Framework spoke of a "fresh approach to multilingualism" and a promise of "supporting the learning and teaching of all official South African languages at all levels of schooling". The National Education Policy Act underlined the principle of using home languages for teaching and learning and the right of every learner "to receive a basic education in the language of his or her choice". At the tertiary level, the Language Policy for Higher Education of 2002 and subsequent legislation includes similar goals, calling for "the development of other South African languages for use in instruction, as part of a medium to long-term strategy to promote multilingualism."

A short perusal of language options in former 'white schools' in the Cape area provides an insight into current language beliefs and language priorities. Linguistic and cultural diversity is lacking in curriculum offerings, and there has been little innovation in terms of multilingual schooling models. Similarly, the goal of having languages other than English as languages of instruction at universities remains largely aspirational: whilst the "window dressing" on university websites might reflect a post-apartheid image, there is little change in opportunities to study, research and develop some of the major South African languages.

What has prevented the top-down policy from being realised 20 years after the fall of apartheid?

This talk will briefly discuss the national policy framework regarding languages in education in South Africa, before focusing on two cases that reflect the current state of affairs: language policy implementation at former 'white schools' in the Cape, at some of the country's major public universities

## **Language Dimensions for Algerian Readers**

**Akila Tabbi (Canterbury Christ Church University)**

This qualitative interpretive research looks at the leisure reading experiences of young Algerians holding higher education degrees. Data was collected through focus groups and individual interviews with a total number of nine participants. One of the emergent themes of my research is the 'choice of language' that my participants decide to use when indulging in leisure reading. In this respect, there seems to be a grand narrative behind choosing to read in a particular language. My participants' native language is Arabic. Their first foreign language is French (due to the French colonization in the past). English is also gaining ground in Algeria. These three languages, in addition to Spanish, are the languages that had been mentioned by my participants. The conflict, however, is more about whether to read in Arabic or in French. Reading in any of these two languages seems to have a great significance for them. They see the use of these languages, be it in leisure reading or in everyday life, as more than just a means of communication or a means of gaining knowledge. They see it as something which defines them and choosing to use one and not the other reflects their identity. I will comment on my relationship to this research and how this language conflict affected me and my identity.

## **African languages in digital spaces: Automatic textual analysis of a low-resource mixed language**

**Gladys W. H. Tyen (University of Cambridge)**

**Elisabeth J. Kerr (SOAS, University of London)**

Digital platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, and SMS have been argued to facilitate the use of local languages (Mazrui, 2008; Osborn, 2010), with growing content in African languages (de Schryver, 2002). This linguistic diversification poses the challenge of how to perform textual analysis, given the lack of Natural Language Processing (NLP) support for such languages.

Working between 2016 and 2017 as computational linguists at Africa's Voices, we were consulted by the media and social change organisation Well Told Story to adapt NLP techniques to Sheng, a mixed language broadly based on Swahili and English spoken primarily by Kenyan youth (Githiora, 2002; Bosire, 2006).

We present a method of preprocessing noisy texts from mobile text messages and social media comments, in order to perform sentiment analysis with machine learning. Firstly, words are tagged with their part-of-speech (PoS) where possible, using English and Swahili resources including lexicons and morphological stemming. Words are then clustered according to a modified Levenshtein distance algorithm which accounts for common multi-character replacements and available PoS tags. The remaining words without PoS tags are labelled with tags inferred from the clusters or the word contexts. Finally, the processed information is fed into a naïve Bayes classifier in the form of count-based feature vectors.

Overall, our method enables sentiment analysis of Sheng content, with an F-measure score of 0.83 on the classifier. This result supports the move for content creation in local languages by showing how NLP techniques can be adapted to support low-resource languages.

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## **Tensions between African Languages and English in Early Years Education**

**Jo Westbrook (University of Sussex)**

**Margaret Baleeta (Bugema University)**

**Gonzaga Kaswarra (Mountains of the Moon University)**

**Saphina Tuhaise (Mountains of the Moon University)**

**Annette Islei (Centre for Action and Applied Research for Development, Uganda)**

This paper reports emergent findings from an extensive literature review and small scale empirical pilot exploring the tensions between how African languages are used and perceived between home, Early Childhood Education and lower primary school in Western Uganda and the effects of these on the child's competence in reading and comprehension by P4. Carried out by a local Ugandan team in 2017 in a rural and urban site, this qualitative study used interviews and observations with parents and teachers in conjunction with reading assessments.

Parents with little/no literacy or English envisaged ECD as advantaging their children in learning English for P1, taking pleasure in hearing them speak English at home and community. Teachers, however, supported the LL language policy particularly in rural areas up to P3 but from P4, the 'transition' curriculum often meant no LL was taught, endangering its status as a valued language. Pedagogically, choral reading predominated while reading of continuous text was rare at P4.

Researchers were surprised at the levels of fluency and comprehension in LL at P4, especially in rural areas, indicating uneven but discernible progression, impacted by one good teacher and – erratically - a national reading programme. Comprehension in English was, however, poorer at P4 in the rural schools.

Conceptualising early years education as a precursor to confident use of African languages in adulthood, teachers – working collaboratively - need to encourage storytelling from ECD onwards, teach LL P4-P6, use English-only in English classes and read longer texts to improve language use in both languages.

## Speakers' Biodata

### **Plenary: Leketi Makelala** (Leketi.makalela@wits.ac.za)

Professor Makalela is Head of the Division of Languages, Literacies and Literatures at Wits School of Education, University of the Witwatersrand. Professor Makalela's research interest relates to the interface between languages and literacies in the 21st century and the prospects of alternating languages of input and output to enhance identity construction and epistemic access for multilingual students. Professor Makalela chairs a research programme, the Wits Abafunde-ba-hlalefe Multilingual Literacies Programme (WAMLiP).

WAMLiP is a growing field that is attracting an increasing number of PhD researchers to the following on-going projects:

- Biliteracy development trajectories
- Reading development in intermediate phase
- Socio-cognitive aspects of reading development in complex multilingual schools
- Ubuntu translanguaging/ Interdependent multilingualism
- Fuzzy languaging logic
- Transliteracies

### **Featured speaker: Rosemary Wildsmith-Cromarty** (rosemary.cromarty@nwu.ac.za)

Rosemary Wildsmith-Cromarty holds an MA in Applied Linguistics from the University of Essex and a PhD from the Institute of Education, University of London. She currently holds the Research chair for Early Childhood Development and Education at North-West University. She has served on provincial and national language bodies and is on the Editorial Board for Language Teaching: Surveys and Studies. She was also co-editor for the journal Southern African Linguistics and Applied Language Studies from 2009 – 2012. She is interested in language education and cognitive development and how learners navigate their developmental path in linguistically complex learning environments such as those in South Africa. Her research interests include the acquisition and translatability of African languages; multilingualism; first and second language pedagogy in English and isiZulu and reading processes. Her current focus includes ECD/ECE and the nature and quality of provisioning at pre-school and Grade R levels; language teaching pedagogy with translanguaging and reading to learn in SSA African contexts.

### **Marianne Aaron** (mariannearon.g@gmail.com)

Having undertaken SIL training in Applied Linguistics, Marianne Aaron has worked for many years with the Obolo language community, a minority in Rivers and Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria, on their language for literacy and education. She completed an MA in Education at the University of California at Santa Barbara with an emphasis on biliteracy, language, and culture and has built on this work as part of her ongoing PhD study at the University of Reading, Institute of Education, on the subject of 'Factors involved in the successful implementation of Mother Tongue-Based Bilingual Education in the Obolo community in Nigeria'. She also advised and trained literacy workers in minority languages for the Nigeria Bible Translation Trust, in the development of orthographies, instructional materials and programs.

**Aniefon Daniel Akpan** (daniels.mmefon@gmail.com)

Aniefon Daniel Akpan is a Ph.D student in the department of Linguistics and Nigerian Languages, University of Uyo, Nigeria. She has a BA in Linguistics (2010) and an MA in Computational language documentation (2016). Her major research interest lies in language documentation and sociolinguistics with minor interest in morpho-phonology. She has done some researches in the above-mentioned linguistic fields in languages such as Enwang, Ibibio, Itu Mbon Usò languages, all spoken in Akwa Ibom State and is currently working on the Medefaidrin language – an endangered language in Akwa Ibom State. She volunteers with the research team of Save the Deaf Endangered Language Initiative (S-DELI), where researches are carried out towards the documentation of Nigerian Sign Language and the Deaf population. She also volunteers in the Department of Linguistics and Nigerian Languages, University of Uyo during examinations.

**Emma Asonye** (easonye@unm.edu)

Emmanuel Asonye is a Postdoc Research Scholar with Linguistics Department, University of New Mexico, Founder, Save the Deaf and Endangered Languages Initiative, an NGO documenting Nigerian Sign Language and the Deaf population, and a pioneer indigenous researcher in Nigerian Sign Language linguistics, with a burden of raising a team of indigenous Sign Linguists among deaf and hearing scholars. With several works about Nigerian Sign Language and Deaf communities to his credit, including “Sign Language: Africa”, Emma Asonye seeks to document the first dictionary of indigenous Nigerian Lexical Signs. With a BA in Linguistics and Igbo Studies, MA and PhD in Linguistics and Communications. Additionally, he had a postdoc nondegree certificate in Communication Disorders at the University of New Mexico, USA. His research interest incorporates Signed Language Linguistics, Signed Language Documentation, and Communication Disorders in Africa.

**John Bamidele** (johnbam@s-deli.org)

John Bamidele is a computer scientist and a member of the research and ICT team of Save the Deaf and Endangered Language Initiative (S-DELI). He is also the Head of Project, Federal Capital Territory with the organization, heading the collection of signed language and demographic data in the State. John has worked with the Nigerian deaf community as an interpreter and spiritual leader for over ten years. He was the lead paper presenter for S-DELI at the just concluded ESLIAN (Educational Sign Language Interpreters Association of Nigeria) Conference held in Oyo, Nigeria, while his involvement with the S-DELI research team has motivated his decision to further his career as a researcher.

**Elfneh U. Bariso** (elfneh@gmail.com)

Elfneh U. Bariso gained a PhD in Lifelong Learning and e-learning from University of London in 2004, an MSc in African Studies at University of Edinburgh in 1993 and an MA in Teaching English at Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh, in 1992. His interdisciplinary MSc included African history and international relations. The MSc dissertation was entitled “The Roles of Soft-governance, Colonial Boundaries and Superpowers Interventions in the Political Turmoil in the Horn of Africa”. He also has a Postgraduate Diploma in Management Studies from Greenwich School of Management Studies, London 2008 and Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) from Canterbury Christ Church University in 2013. He completed a specialist diploma in Teaching and Supporting Disabled Learners in 2016. Elfneh teaches ESOL and Employability Skills, researches and publishes on linguistics and

educational issues. Elfneh is also the founder and Chair of Action for Health, Education and Development (AHEAD, <http://aheadcharity.org>) since 2004.

**Alick Kadango Bwanali** ([alick.bwanali@gmail.com](mailto:alick.bwanali@gmail.com))

Alick Kadango Bwanali is a PhD in Education student at Strathclyde University, Scotland. His study focuses on Chichewa Mathematics terminology for Malawian primary schools. He is investigating how communities including children use indigenous knowledge (funds of knowledge) in creating terminologies for Maths related concepts through games and other traditional activities. Alick holds a Bachelor of Education and an MA in Applied Linguistics from University of Malawi. He works as a Language Specialist responsible for Chichewa language at the Centre for Language Studies, Chancellor College, University of Malawi. He also teaches Linguistics and Malawian Literature in the Department of African Languages and Linguistics at Chancellor College. His research interests include terminology, lexicography, translation and language in education.

**John Clegg** ([jclegg@lineone.net](mailto:jclegg@lineone.net))

John Clegg is an independent education consultant based in London UK. He worked previously at Thames Valley University and now works with the University of Bristol. He specialises in education through the medium of English as a second language in primary and secondary schools. He works with teachers, schools, education authorities and NGOs on education in Africa, content and language integrated learning in Europe, English-medium education in the Middle East and Asia and in multicultural education in the UK. From 2008-2011 he was lead consultant to the Qatar academic language programme for English-medium teachers of maths and science. He also writes content-based language teaching materials for learners and teachers, recently for the Canton of Zurich in Switzerland and for Rwanda. He has consulted for 25 years on the development of English language teaching and English-medium education South Africa, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Ethiopia, Tanzania and Rwanda.

**Camille Jacob** ([camille.jacob@port.ac.uk](mailto:camille.jacob@port.ac.uk))

Camille Jacob is a PhD student at the University of Portsmouth. Her current work is funded by an AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Award and examines the place of English in contemporary Algeria. Her wider research interests include linguistic practices in postcolonial settings and the production of discourses about languages and identity.

**Seraphin Kamdem** ([jk58@soas.ac.uk](mailto:jk58@soas.ac.uk))

Dr Seraphin Kamdem holds a PhD from SOAS, University of London. Before SOAS, he studied at the University of Yaoundé; the University of East Anglia; and the University of North Dakota. His doctoral thesis focused on African languages and multilingual education, investigating adult literacy in a rural area of Cameroon. His research interests are in: Sociolinguistics, African languages and cultures, Ghómálá' language (Grassfields-Bantu), Bilingualism and Multilingualism, Adult literacy, Production of didactic materials, Education in Africa, Global Englishes, Media and political change in Africa. Dr Kamdem has taught various UG and PG courses at the University of Yaoundé; at the University of East London; and at SOAS, where he is currently a Senior Teaching Fellow and a convenor of the

courses *English in the Global World* and *Issues in World Englishes* in the BA English programme. He is also the convenor of the programme *Understanding Africa*.

**Elisabeth J. Kerr** (609441@soas.ac.uk)

Elisabeth graduated with a BA (Hons) in Linguistics from the University of Cambridge, with a dissertation based on fieldwork on Ekegusii, a Bantu language of Kenya. She joined Africa's Voices Foundation as a computational linguist in July 2017 having previously taken courses in computational linguistics and computer science using Python. In September 2017 she began an MA in Linguistics at SOAS, University of London, taking language courses in Swahili and Zulu alongside modules in descriptive and theoretical linguistics. In September 2018 she will begin a PhD at Leiden University in the Netherlands, investigating a Grassfields Bantu language of Cameroon as part of a wider research project on syntax and information structure across Bantu languages.

**Zaahida Nabagereka** (252730@soas.ac.uk)

Zaahida Nabagereka is a third year doctoral researcher at the School of Oriental and African Studies focusing on literature production in Uganda. Her research looks at the relationship between texts in Luganda, the largest indigenous language in the country, and texts in English. She is also Co Founder of Afrikult., a platform and collective that explores, discusses and celebrates African literatures. Based in London, and formed whilst studying at SOAS in January 2014 Afrikult. has grown from having an initially online virtual presence to delivering various physical events and workshops within different spaces internationally.

**Judith Nakayiza** (judna2001@yahoo.com)

Dr. Judith Nakayiza is a graduate of SOAS, University of London specialising in Language Policy and Language Planning. She has taught at Makerere University - Uganda and at SOAS, University of London. She has been both a commonwealth scholar and post-doctoral fellow. Her research interests include; Language policy and planning, the language situation in Africa and Uganda, urban multilingualism and the dynamics of majority vs. minority languages, Language in education planning and policy, language endangerment, shift and maintenance in multilingual settings. She has also published on topics such as language policy and planning in Uganda, language policy and language rights, the sociolinguistics of language in Africa, and the sociolinguistics of English in Uganda.

**Kindness Okoro** (k.okoro@s-deli.org)

Kindness Okoro is a professional Sign Language Interpreter, a Deaf advocate, and the Head of Project, National with Save the Deaf and Endangered Languages Initiative (S-DELI). She has been involved in a lot of community engagement advocacy outreaches with Deaf communities and families of deaf children in Abuja, Nigeria. Kindness presented her first research paper with Emmanuel Asonye titled: "Development and Inclusion through Sign Language Documentation in Nigeria" at the British Council organized conference, Dakar, 2017. As a Theatre Artist, she is focused on bringing arts into Deaf intervention and advocacy in Nigeria, using theatre as a tool for enhancing Deaf literacy.

**Richard Shapiro** (richard.shapiro@oup.com)

Richard Shapiro is a Senior Product Manager in Oxford Dictionaries, a department of Oxford University Press. Richard is 'product owner' for the Oxford Global Languages initiative, a programme run by Oxford University Press with the aim of making high-quality language information available in 100 of the world's languages, particularly focussing on languages which are otherwise under-represented in the digital sphere. OGL launched in 2015, since when dictionary websites have been set up for 16 languages, ranging from Hindi and Urdu to Setswana, Indonesian, Swahili, and Southern Quechua. Richard also coordinates a variety of other projects that relate to the creation and development of lexical content, recently developing a new platform for holding and processing corpora, and leading several projects to remodel and reengineer the core data models used in Dictionaries. Richard's background is in lexicography, having spent seven years as an editor on the Oxford English Dictionary, and a further two years editing bilingual dictionaries.

**Susan Stewart** (656131@soas.ac.uk)

Susan Stewart is Head of Multilingualism at the International School of London (ISL), where she leads a team of 12 home language teachers. She has lived and worked in Thailand, the UAE, South Africa, Belgium, Oman and Sweden. Susan has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Linguistics and French and is currently completing an MA Linguistics at SOAS, University of London. She speaks English, French, German, Afrikaans, Swedish and Arabic and is a lifelong learner of languages. Susan is active in the local community in promoting the use of home languages, delivering regular parent workshops around issues of family language policy and the use of languages within schools. Susan supports a group of community language schools on the ISL site, providing both physical space and mentorship of the programmes. Susan is the Chair of the ECIS (Educational Collaborative of International Schools) MLIE (Multilingual Learning in International Education) committee.

**Akila Tabbi** (akila-tabbi@hotmail.com)

Akila is a full-time PhD student at Canterbury Christ Church University. She is currently doing a PhD in Education. She is looking at leisure reading among Algerian graduates. She is particularly interested in their reading habits, their reasons for engaging in leisure reading and the challenges they face as readers within the Algerian context. She is also a holder of a master's degree in language sciences in Algeria.

**Irene Tucker** (Irene\_Tucker@sil.org)

Irene Tucker is a cartographer with the SIL International Cartography Services team and has been involved in mapping the locations of the language groups across the world since 1992. She is married to Stephen and has two adult sons. Irene is a geographer by interest and education (BA Hons, Reading University) but has specialised in cartography since taking a Postgraduate Diploma in Cartography at Swansea University. After that she worked for 9 years in the Ministry of Defence Mapping and Charting Establishment as a Map Research Officer. In 1991 she joined Wycliffe Bible Translators and moved to Nairobi, Kenya where she lived for 6 years. At first the focus of her work was mapping the locations of the language groups of Africa but has carried out map work on most regions of the world. Her current focus is mapping the locations of European language communities.

**Gladys W. H. Tyen** (whgt2@cam.ac.uk)

Gladys earned her BA (Hons) Linguistics degree at the University of Cambridge, specialising in computational linguistics, and thereafter continued to study natural language processing at the Computer Laboratory at Cambridge. She spent her last two summers working as a computational linguist at Africa's Voices Foundation to perform sentiment analysis on Sheng, a low-resource mixed language spoken in East Africa. Her work at Africa's Voices involved developing machine learning scripts, creating language resources for Sheng and Swahili, and building a website for crowdsourcing. She is now pursuing a master's degree in Advanced Computer Science and plans to continue her research as a PhD student.

**Simon Voget** (655886@soas.ac.uk)

Simon Voget is an MA Linguistics student at SOAS, University of London. He grew up in Cape Town, South Africa, and received a Bachelor of Arts (French Language Literature and Law) and a Bachelor of Laws from the University of Cape Town, before moving to the Republic of Korea for three years of employment as an English teacher in a public high school. His academic interests include second-language acquisition, language policy and planning (in education and access to justice), legal pluralism, linguistic diversity, sociolinguistics, African linguistics, Korean linguistics, linguistic politeness, and honorifics research. His MA dissertation research will look at the linguistic ideologies of Korean speakers towards addressee-honorifics (and non-honorific language in particular), through an analysis of speakers' metapragmatic discourses around these linguistic forms.

**Nnamdi Ume** (nadisbitmaps@gmail.com)

Nnamdi Ume is an Information and Communication Technology (ICT) professional, and a volunteering team member with Save the Deaf and Endangered Languages Initiative (S-DELI), an NGO documenting Nigerian Sign Language and the Deaf population. Nnamdi had his B.Sc. in Computer Science at the Federal University of Technology, Owerri in 2000. He is working with the team that is collecting and computing linguistics and Deaf demographic data in Imo State Nigeria. Nnamdi is making his debut research presentation with the BAAL SiG meeting and hopes to contribute his time and resources to the successful documentation of Nigerian Sign Language for Deaf education.

**Jo Westbrook** (jlw24@sussex.ac.uk)

Jo is a Senior Lecturer in Education based in the Centre for International Education in Department of Education, School of Education and Social Work. Having worked as a secondary teacher of English in London for many years, and Uganda for two, Jo has subsequently worked on projects on education and international development in Ethiopia, Ghana, Pakistan, Tanzania and Uganda as well as researching reading and comprehension in secondary schools in England.

Her research interests centre on pedagogy, teacher education, early reading in multilingual contexts, inclusive pedagogies and non-formal/alternative pedagogies and education systems. Jo has experience of leading on mixed methods research projects in collaboration with country partners, systematic and rigorous literature reviewing and quasi-experimental methods.

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