



BRITISH
ACADEMY

for the humanities and social sciences

African multilingualism: motivations, modalities, movement and meaning

The British Academy, 8 & 9 September 2015

**Convenors: Professor Friederike Lüpke, SOAS, University of
London and Professor Anne Storch, University of
Cologne**

Tuesday, 8 September 8 2015

9.15 *Registration and refreshments*

9.45 **Welcome and introduction**
Professor Friederike Lüpke and Professor Anne Storch

10.00 **Session 1: Motivations**
**Chair and introduction: Professor Jeff Good, State University of New York at
Buffalo, USA**

What are the systems of exchange and alliance, of inclusion and exclusion, of transparency and secrecy that motivate multilingualism and polylectality in Africa and its satellites? From exogamy to witchcraft, from child fostering to the need for multiplying alliances at the African Frontier, this session systematises those social practices that have conditioned the existence of multilingual societies and that continue to nurture multilingualism.

- 10.15 Multilingualism as a response to spiritual insecurity. Insights into the traditional language ideology of the Cameroonian Grassfields (at least)
Dr Pierpaolo di Carlo, State University of New York at Buffalo, USA and University of Firenze, Italy
- 10.45 Bati and their legendary multilingualism: a natural “gift” or a social burden?
Dr Emmanuel Ngue Um, University of Yaoundé & CERDOTOLA, Cameroon
- 11.15 Multilingualism at a South African University: Fact or farce?
Dr Stephanie Rudwick, University of Leipzig, Germany & KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa
- 11.45 The maintenance of rural multilingual repertoires in the Casamance, Senegal
Dr Alexander Cobbinah, Samantha Goodchild MA, Dr Abbie Hantgan and Dr Rachel Watson, SOAS, University of London, UK
- 12.15 Discussion
- 12.30 *Lunch*
- 14.00 **Session 2: Modalities**
Chair and introduction: Professor. Konrad Tuchscherer, St. John’s University, New York City, USA
- What are the modalities - spoken, written and signed codes, gesture, graphic art, music - of different multilingual configurations and of the transmission of multilingualism? Transcending different languages modes, this session investigates how spoken languages interact, and how spoken multilingualism is related to systematically reduced and often exographic literacies. We also widen the perspective to include multilingualism in signed languages, either mono-modal (exclusively in the signed modality), or cross-modal, also looking at hearing signers in village sign language communities. Finally, we discuss the distribution and purpose of multilingualism in popular music and investigate how it manifests itself in graphic art.
- 14.30 On simultaneous and sequential morphology in Adamorobe Sign Language and the influence of bimodal language contact
Dr Victoria Nyst, Leiden University Centre for Linguistics, The Netherlands
- 15.15 *Refreshments*
- 15.45 Faut bori minds: Meaning-making in multilingual zouglou songs in Côte d’Ivoire

Dr Anne Schumann, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa

16.15 Multilingual Children's Language Acquisition in West Africa: Case studies from Mali

Dr Ibrahima Cissé, University of Bamako, Mali

16.45 Discussion

17.00 *Close of first day of conference*

Wednesday, 9 September 2015

- 10.00 **Session 1: Movement**
Chair and introduction Professor Fiona Mc Laughlin, University of Florida at Gainesville, USA
- What is the impact of movement and migration on patterns of multilingualism? Are there new forms of migration that, for instance through the consequences of urbanization, create qualitatively new forms of multilingualism, or have similar factors existed throughout African history? This session takes a close look at how and when Creoles emerge in multilingual societies, how individuals' repertoires change in the context of migration and exposure to related and unrelated languages, what functions urban and youth languages take in the points of encounter constituted by cities, and finally, what impact migration has on the different code in an individual's repertoire.
- 10.15 Mobility, urbanization and the negotiation of new & old language practices among Maroons
Dr Bettine Migge, University College Dublin, Ireland
- 10.45 West African mobilities and multilingualisms: Northern aspirations, southern alternatives?
Dr Kasper Juffermans and **Bernardino Tavares**, University of Luxembourg
- 11.15 Multilingual hip hop in Uganda: Interethnic practices and linguistic innovations
Nico Nassenstein MA, University of Cologne, Germany
- 11.45 Language development under multilingual conditions: Towards an agent based simulation of contact-induced language development
Dr Klaus Beyer, Goethe University Frankfurt, Germany
- 12.15 Discussion
- 12.30 *Lunch*
- 13.30 **Session 2: Meaning**
Chair and introduction: Professor Hirut Woldemariam, University of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

What does it mean to be multilingual in the diverse settings in Africa and its satellites? How do children and adults tune into these situations? How can language management in education reflect better what it means to be a multilingual in African polities? Depending on the roles of language in a society and on an individual's linguistic biography, being a multilingual can have very different meanings. In the final session, we want to draw attention to the symbolic capital of languages in multilingual settings, such as in local language engineering and policy-making, language ideologies, and language politics. Moreover, we will explore the meanings of multilingual practices in terms of how listening to different languages, or speaking some of them, is also conceptualised as mere enjoyment, a desirable social activity and as part of a group's identity.

- 14.00 Beyond English: Multilingualism and education in Kenya and the “false promise of English”
Dr Daniel Orwenjo, The Technical University of Kenya, Nairobi
- 14.45 *Refreshments*
- 15.15 Language as pride, stigma and desire – multilingual complexities
Dr Nkululeko Mabandla and **Prof. Ana Deumert**, University of Cape Town, South Africa
- 15.45 Multicultural and Multilingual Practices in Select Cities in Nigeria: Perspectives and Trends
Dr Judith Mgbemena, Taraba State University, Wukari, Nigeria
- 16.15 Discussion
- 16.30 **Final remarks, outlook and thanks**
Professor Friederike Lüpke and **Professor Anne Storch**
- 17.00 *Close of conference*