



WOCAL9, RABAT

PANEL DESCRIPTION

The Sociolinguistics of Globalization in Africa: Fluidity, Mobility, Agency

The emergent study of the sociolinguistics of globalization (Blommaert 2010) has had a major influence on sociolinguistics, the sociology of language, and also adjacent subdisciplines such as linguistic anthropology, focusing on mobility and migration but also increasingly on sociolinguistic complexity (Blommaert 2016). Local linguistic practices, processes of stylization and differentiation, local actors' (social) media use, their linguistic agency as well as individuals' practices of "trans"/"poly"-linguaging (García & Wei 2014, Jørgensen et al. 2011, Pennycook 2016) are analyzed in relation to globalization, emerging global networks of speakers and their mobile trajectories. It includes the discussion of highly diverse (or superdiverse, see Vertovec 2006, Arnaut et. al 2016, de Fina et al. 2017) repertoires and agentive use of these repertoires that often reflect more complex ideologies than conveyed by common models of bi/multilingualism. A sociolinguistics of globalization incorporates speakers' tendencies of breaking up boundaries of languages (in favor of broad and sometimes messy patchwork repertoires, see Lüpke & Storch 2013, Blommaert & Backus 2011), their fixed forms, and a shifting focus from communicative practices bound to specific places toward a translocal and "glocal" usage of language.

African actors play a key role in these globalized encounters today: Contexts of business interactions in the world's megacities (such as Guangzhou, Hong Kong, Dubai), contexts of (sex) tourism encounters (as in Mombasa, Banjul, Cape Town) and for instance new urban identifications among youths in Kinshasa, Juba or Dakar largely constitute fleeting relationships/encounters that include a high degree of linguistic dynamicity, fluidity and to some extent also commodification of linguistic resources. Moreover, the sociolinguistics of globalization necessarily also has to include the darker side of language and migration, such as linguistic repertoires of asylum seekers, linguistic profiling and marginalization, the language of global inequalities and restricted mobility at border posts and in refugee camps.

With a range of academic conferences in the broader field of sociolinguistics and/of globalization that were organized over the last years (Hong Kong 2015, Leiden 2015, Venice 2017 to name a few), (socio)linguistics has opened up to new debates and theoretical issues. With the suggested panel we would like to address colleagues working in similar fields within the discipline of African Linguistics, in order to present and share ideas related to all of the listed topics. Potential contributions could deal with:



- Language in fleeting relationships and globalized repertoires
- New forms of contact and change, new approaches to variation in language
- Sociolinguistic complexity
- Social media and mediatization of language
- Translanguaging, polylinguaging and metrolingualism
- Reclaiming ownership in sociolinguistic settings (and “speaking back”)
- Agency of the speaker
- The global and the local, language in the city and the village
- Linguistic creativity in global encounters

The panel will be organized by Angelika Mietzner (Institute for African Studies and Egyptology, University of Cologne) and Nico Nassenstein (Institut für Ethnologie und Afrikastudien, Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz). Following the conference, a separate publication of selected contributions is planned. Please address submitted abstracts both to the conference organizers as well as to the panel organizers (a.mietzner@uni.koeln.de, nassens@uni-mainz.de).

References

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