

Panel J: Language, society and culture in Africa (chair: Axel Fleisch and Ekkehard Wolff)

The panel seeks to draw the essential connections between language studies, societal issues including development in the broadest sense, and cultural expressions. The three title components are not simply understood as summative. Rather, our focus is on current research on Africa that has taken into account the important cross-linkages between these domains. While for several decades, research on Africa was rather fragmented and distributed over several disciplinary fields, more recently there is an increasingly cohesive tendency in African language studies, anthropology, history and social sciences. With regard to African studies, three areas are focussed on:

- (1) Linguistic anthropology
- (2) Conceptual history: studies at the intersection of semantics and translation, indigenous historiography, and global history.
- (3) Sociolinguistics. Multilingualism, cross-border languages and development

Presenters in this panel will address at least two of these three notions. There are several possible participants among Ph.D. students and post-doctoral researchers from various Nordic universities. Two weeks before the panel, they contribute full papers (max. 6 000 words). During the panel, only central claims are presented concisely (10 min + 10 min for discussion, input/reactions from others). The panel organizers intend to secure funding for travel expenses for two senior academics from other Nordic countries who will give slightly longer talks, one in each area “culturally-informed language studies” and “language and development”; the topics are directly relevant to the overall theme of the conference.

- 1) Axel Fleisch (University of Helsinki, Finland): Linguistic anthropology & conceptual history'**
- 2) Lotta Aunio (University of Helsinki, Finland): Time and temporal concepts in Bantu**
- 3) Ekkehard Wolff (University of Leipzig, Germany): Current sociolinguistic studies of Africa**
- 4) Torben Andersen (Aarhus University, Denmark): Space in the grammar of Nilotic**
- 5) Don Kilian (University of Helsinki, Finland): Uduk language documentation**
- 6) Karsten Legère (Univ. of Gothenburg, Sweden): Cross-border languages**
- 7) Jibo Nura (African Climate Change Research Centre, Dutse, Jigawa State, Nigeria): Linking the African public spheres: The role of trans-border languages**

The links between transnational public spheres and African trans-border languages have not gained more currency in rethinking Africa's development. Africanity, African nationalism and its revolutionary proposals; and the triumphs and vicissitudes of border languages in history through the ages cannot be ignored in construction and deconstruction of cultural historiography and ethnic identity among various groups in Africa. Distinctively, language has been a major factor in determining the interest of universal identity rights. It brings with it greater opportunities and freedom of choice for people that come from the same nationality or even those that are territorially dispersed. The study examines the existence of a transnational

Fulani cultural heritage in Nigeria, Niger Republic and Senegal. It portrays an impact of the socio-historical and political contexts that contributes to the *glocalization* of *Pulaar* language and its spread over the efforts at constituting a globalized *Fulani* civil society beyond the shores of the continent. The study highlights the emergence of a global Fulfulde civil society, which is naturally becoming an avenue for dealing with real problems and issues affecting *Fulani* communities. It argues that despite the global attempts at reconnecting the Continent's multidimensional time space, there is the need for exploring the links and widening the trans-African public spheres with an active transnational civil society movement. The study concludes by showing the potential roles that people and their cultural heritage play in the African reconnection project.

8) Raija Kramer (Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz, Germany): From Space to Time: Kinetic Suffixes and their Temporal Meanings in Fali (Adamawa)

On the basis of linguistic evidences cognitive linguists argue that among others spatial concepts are basic to understanding and expressing abstract concepts like EMOTIONS, CAUSALITY, MENTAL ACTIVITIES, and so on. The TIME concept belongs to this concept category, which is apprehensible and linguistically arrangeable by exploiting and transferring the direct physical experience that human beings make, while moving as material entities through structured space. The paper deals with the organization of spatial concepts and their transfer to temporal concepts in the linguistic repertoire of the Fali language. Fali, spoken in northern Cameroon, belongs to the Adamawa language group wherein it forms a rather isolated branch in comparison to other languages within this group. It has a wide and complex variety of linguistic possibilities to articulate spatial concepts. One linguistic strategy of languages of the world to express location is verbal marking by affixes. These affixes may determine the directionality of an event in view of a deictic center. The Fali language uses three kinetic verbal suffixes: (a) a ventiv extension *-.* that marks the movement to the deictic center, (b) an itiv extension *-f.* that renders the movement away from the deictic center, and (c) a distal extension *-.* determining a rather unspecific movement with regard to its directional orientation. The same extensions are applied for temporal respectively aspectual organization of events expressed by the marked verb. Thus, the ventiv extension also marks a near past, the itiv extension assigns past perfect reading, and the distal extension designates temporally compact events of short duration. The Aim of this paper is to describe the different functions of these kinetic suffixes. Moreover, the development of spatial markers to tense/aspect markers is analyzed and possible semantic primitives underlying these grammatical markers are proposed.

9) Kristin Vold Lexander (University of Oslo, Norway): Computer-mediated communication: creating space for African language literacy

Computer-mediated communication (CMC) and mobile communication in particular contribute to changing economic, social and linguistic conditions in Africa. Studies of CMC in the developing world, Africa included, have focused on economic and social development issues and social aspects of mobile phone use rather than on language practices. However, text-messaging, e-mail, chatting and discussion forums turn out to be important spaces for the development of literacy practices in African languages that are otherwise excluded from many writing activities. The question is if CMC can pave the way for African language literacy practices.

Like most so-called Francophone states in Africa, Senegalese language policy has supported the use of the official language French in education and writing in general. The majority language Wolof has dominated the oral sphere together with other African languages like Fulfulde. This paper will investigate the roles played by these three languages in text-messages, instant messaging conversations and e-mails of 15 students from Dakar, collected during fieldwork in 2006 and 2007. Six languages alternate in the texts: Wolof, Fulfulde, French, English, Spanish and Arabic, switching taking place both within messages and from one message to the other. The analysis of this code-switching will concentrate on the motivations for writing in African languages and on the roles that these languages are given in the CMC. I will finally discuss how and why the future Senegalese elite create a space for African language literacy through electronic discourse.

10) Semeneh Ayalew (Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia): What is in a Term? A Historical and Linguistic Examination of Revolutionary Terminology in Ethiopia, 1974-1977

Scholars of the Ethiopian revolution accused the introduction and uncritical application of Marxism and Marxist ideology as responsible for the radicalization of relations between political groups and the creation of a polarized political culture (cf. Bahru 2002, Messay 2007). Even if it can not be denied that, the dogmatic adherence of Marxism and Marxist ideals contributed to this culture of radicalism and intolerance, it could not be solely liable for such state of relations. Thus, we argue that traditional norms and relationships might have also been responsible for lending hand to reinforce inimical relationships between different groups of revolutionaries and their followers. By subjecting certain frequently-used terms and phrases to linguistic and discourse analysis, this study will seek to trace the roots of “radicalization” in the Ethiopian society as another important dimension. For example, the term “down” as “*Down with imperialism*”, “*Down with feudalism*” is substituted by the Amharic term “**yiwdem**” when used in various revolutionary slogans. While the English equivalent signifies simply the denigration of status, the Amharic one denotes total annihilation. Studying revolutionary discourse can shed light to our understanding of the present political culture of the country. Vital in this regard is the understanding of local terms: examining their etymology, evolution (their evolved meaning), and semantics to appreciate their impact on revolutionary discourse. Our study recognizes the importance of the urban space in the creation and dissemination of revolutionary discourse during the revolution. Not only was the urban space pivotal in the generation of discourse, but it was also the space where the impact of the discourse is felt the most. This is because of the urban center’s proclivity to the media. As a result, urban dwellers, especially the young and educated became the main target of the carnages of Red Terror or White Terror.