



**Call for papers
BIGSAS**

**In Collaboration with
The Research Laboratory
“Culture, Language, Education, Migration and Society”
Faculty of Letters & Human Sciences –Mohammed V University in Rabat**

**Organize an international conference on
African linguistic landscapes and language interaction in
traditional and global contexts**

**Place: Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences- University Mohammed V in
Rabat, Morocco.**

Time May, 4th-6th, 2017

Linguistic pluralism is a key element of African pluralities. Multilingualism, already present in pre-colonial times, has considerably increased due to a higher amount of language contact as part of colonialism and modernization processes. Globally, Africa is the continent with the largest linguistic diversity - one fifth of the world's languages are spoken in African countries. Highly complex linguistic landscapes are characteristic for most African countries where individual bilingualism as well as social multilingualism, often in diglossic form, are widespread.

Linguistic diversity is not purely a phenomenon of modernity or globalization but has a historical dimension. However, complexity is added through European colonial contact and the establishment of European languages for various functions in interaction with African languages. As a result, highly dynamic linguistic situations are constitutive for the overwhelming majority of African nation states which emerged after colonial independence and which are usually characterized by multiethnic, multicultural and multilingual communities. Language is without doubt one of the most important systems of signification for individual expression as well as for the formation of social identities within these communities. Feelings of belonging are also deeply rooted in linguistic allegiances. Thus, also with regard to language and communication, such communities form contact zones of continuous exchange, with modes of interaction ranging from resistance and rejection to parallelity, convergence, accommodation and acceptance, etc. In order to investigate different processes of interaction, one can focus on at least two perspectives: 1. the political and educative aspect of language planning and politics and 2. the linguistic aspect of language contact which embraces a structural and an interactional dimension.

As a consequence of the linguistic diversity, language planning and language political strategies are called for. However, with the exception of South Africa, few countries

operate with language planning strategies from above. Instead, most African countries have restricted themselves to a choice of one official language and are neglecting language planning strategies concerning African languages in order to avoid ethno-linguistic tensions and antagonisms. Some exceptions to this overall rule may be noted.

Thus, one can observe more positive attitudes towards indigenous languages in institutional contexts in some African countries, e.g. in Burkina Faso where attempts to introduce these languages at least in primary schools were made. Language planning strategies thus form an interesting potential for research projects at the interface of politics and education. Ideally, they would employ a contrastive perspective, comparing either African countries or African and Western countries with regard to language planning measures, especially by examining the various reasons guiding corpus and status planning activities.

Africa also works as a laboratory with regard to processes of language contact. Especially in urban contexts, highly dynamic linguistic situations lead to rapid developments such as pidginization, creolization and the creation of urban youth jargons. One of the issues which have been neglected so far in research on the dynamic of language contact is the multiple relations which work in parallel development: between various African languages, between African languages and ex-colonial languages as well as between rivalling ex-colonial languages like French and English (e.g. in Rwanda, Cameroon, Mauritius) or French and Arabic (e.g. Chad), creating relations between simultaneous, plural, hierarchical as well as non-hierarchical options. In contact varieties like Camfranglais, the various influences mentioned above are reflected. For French or English linguistics, a particular focus lies on the formation of contact varieties and of hardly stabilized endogenous varieties of the ex-colonial languages French and English and the thorough description of phonetic, morpho-syntactic, lexical and especially pragmatic characteristics. So far, the pragmatics of indigenous varieties has largely been neglected as have their specific interactional conventions and discursive patterns.

In the course of globalization and changing economic conditions, new influences become manifest in the increasing presence of Chinese on the African continent, adding to the already existing linguistic relations in a rhizomatic form. The simultaneous presence in various African linguistic landscapes establishes connections across ex-colonial hierarchical boundaries and is therefore an interesting recent development in the power play of languages in Africa. In addition to that, religious movements have also resulted to dynamics in the linguistic situation (e.g. Islam and the spread of Arabic; Pentecostal churches operating from Nigeria and South Africa, etc.). Last but not least, inner-African work migration contributes to increase linguistic complexity with, e.g. testifying a presence of West African languages and contact varieties in South Africa. Political migration on account of conflicts also contributes to migration and thus also to an increasing complexity of linguistic landscapes (e.g. Rwanda).

The question whether English or French have become African languages is part of a longstanding debate in postcolonial literary studies and thus invites interdisciplinary reflections. Literature as one field of the use of Africanized varieties of English and French is also an important feedback on the status and prestige of these varieties and their status in a diglossic/polyglossic situation. In the workshop language will therefore be understood in a broad sense, as discourse, and will consequently include communicative cultural phenomena.

We invite researchers from various disciplines to send paper proposals on the following or similar questions and topics:

- How do languages interact in complex linguistic settings where the power relations among languages are determined by the forces of globalization and/or migration?
- How are the various dynamics of language contact and change (e.g. pidginization, creolization, development of endonormative varieties, language shift, etc.) manifest in language interaction?
- How are recent developments in language discourse reflected in education (e.g. language planning strategies) as well as in literature, music, theatre and film?

Abstracts (ca. **200 words**) should be sent no later than **December 30th, 2017** to:
Martina.drescher@uni-bayreuth.de
yelkirat@gmail.com