# AILA Africa ReN Newsletter

**Applied Linguistics and Literacy in Africa and the Diaspora**

An AILA Research Network
**www.aila.info**

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## EDITOR'S COMMENT

Dear ReN members,

Welcome to the October edition of the newsletter of the Research Network on Applied Linguistics and Literacy in Africa and the Diaspora. Our newsletter has been in circulation for four and a half years now. We'd like your feedback on how we're doing, so we've set up an online survey to solicit your views on both the newsletter and the website. Your feedback is important to us. Please take five minutes to complete the survey, by November 30, 2012 at: *http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/PZ95BH9*

This issue also marks a transition on editorship, as I move on to other adventures and Dr. Juliet Tembe of the Islamic University of Uganda takes over as editor. I successfully defended my doctoral dissertation at the University of British Columbia (UBC) in July, and will be graduating in November. Juliet, also a former UBC doctoral student, brings with her a wealth of experience in language and literacy issues in Africa both as a teacher and as a researcher. I have no doubt she will be sending lots of great content your way in future newsletters.

In this issue, we bring you numerous updates from members, including a briefing on the British Association of Applied Linguists May meeting, "The Social Life of Language and Language Development in Africa." You'll also find the text of the Concluding Statement of Principles from the Concluding Statement of Principles he Juba Conference in Language-in-Education in South Sudan, an update on the research findings of the Teacher Preparation in Africa (TPA) project that is ongoing, a schedule of Global Conversations in Literacy Research's free online webinars, and a feature interview with African Academy of Languages (ACALAN).

We welcome your feedback and hope that you enjoy this issue, share it with others, and help to further expand this network.

Yours,

Lauryn Oates,
Editor

## News and Announcements From ReN Members

**Vacancies in Literacy & Multilingualism at Reading**
Be a part of our groundbreaking team. In today's global society, multilingualism is gradually becoming the norm. Language and literacy are intrinsic to our success as individuals and in society. The University of Reading is one of the strongest research-led Universities in the UK and renowned for its research in language development. As one of our six designated areas of research investment for the 21st century, we are investing in a new research Centre for Literacy & Multilingualism for which we seek academics of exceptional quality at the professorial, reader and lecturer level. The Centre takes a lifespan perspective, focusing on literacy and multilingualism from childhood to late adulthood. Building on existing strengths at the interface of applied linguistics, psychology, neuroscience, education, and speech and language therapy, the Centre aims to make a real difference to the lives of people in today's society in the areas of:

- language learning and assessment, explicit-implicit learning, English for Academic Purposes;
- literacy, language contact and processing in bilingual/multilingual adults and children;
- language impairment in bilinguals/multilinguals;
- incomplete acquisition in children/acquisition of heritage languages.

Our research teams enjoy access to language learners in EAP contexts, through our International Study and Language Centre; local schools and bilingual/multilingual communities, via our strong links and on-going research collaborations with a wide range of educational establishments and communities locally and overseas; atypical populations, in our NHS-supported speech and language therapy clinic. Our unique facilities include a research-dedicated MRI scanner, TMS, high-density EEG, eye-tracking and HPC support via the Centre for Integrative Neuroscience and Neurodynamics; a range of specialist labs across the University including language labs, baby labs, reaction-time labs, and observation rooms with state-of-the-art video and audio recording; an assessment library housing a wide range of language and literacy measures for children and adults. Our location close to London and Heathrow airport makes us ideal for international collaborations. If you can help us realise our vision, we would like to hear from you. Current Vacancies:

- Professor/Reader in Multilingual Language Acquisition and/or Literacy – Ref. CH12015
- Reader/Senior Lecturer in Multilingual Language Acquisition and/or Literacy – Ref. RD12007
- Lecturer in Multilingual Language Acquisition and/or Literacy – Ref. LE12030

To apply, please visit *reading.ac.uk/jobs* and search for the relevant reference number.

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**October Member Profile:**

**Name:** Casmir Rubagumya
**Position:** Associate Professor of Linguistics; Principal, College of Humanities and Social Sciences
**Institution:** University of Dodoma, Tanzania

Dr. Rubagumya did his doctoral studies at Lancaster University. His research interests are in the areas of language in education in multilingual societies, language and power, language and gender, and in language planning and the preservation of minority languages. Prior to moving to Dodoma, he taught at the University of Dar es Salaam for 26 years. His publications include *Language in Education in Africa (1990)* and *Teaching and Researching Language in African Classrooms (1994),* both published by Multilingual Matters. Over the last five years he was involved in the DfID-funded research programme, EdQual, as a lead researcher on language and literacy in Tanzania (*www.edqual.org*). He has been a consultant on language in education issues for several clients, including the Canadian International Development Research Centre (IDRC), the Tanzanian Ministry of Education, the Zanzibar Ministry of Education, and the World Bank.

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**New ReN Member Publication: Orthography in Togo**
*Roberts, David & Stephen L. Walter (2012): Writing grammar rather than tone - an orthography experiment in Togo. In Written Language & Literacy 15:2 226-253.*
Some orthographies represent tone phonemically by means of diacritics; others favor zero marking. Neither solution is entirely satisfactory. The former leads to graphic overload; the latter to a profusion of homographs; both may reduce fluency. But there is a third way[1]: to highlight the grammar rather than the tone system itself. To test this approach, we developed two experimental strategies for Kabiye: a grammar orthography and a tone orthography. Both are modifications of the standard orthography that does not mark tone. We tested these in a quantitative experiment involving literate L1 speakers that included dictation and spontaneous writing tasks. Writers of the grammar orthography perform faster and more accurately than writers of

the tone orthography, suggesting that they have an awareness of the morphological and syntactic structure of their language that may exceed their awareness of its phonology. We conclude that languages with grammatical tone might benefit from grammatical markers in the orthography.

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**Contest: Has reading changed your life?**

If it has and you can express how it changed your life in a photo or video you just might win a prize. The Global Partnership for Education, which includes a host of organisations like UNICEF, Save the Children, VSO and Plan International, is sponsoring the *Reading Changed My Life Photo and Video Contest*. Deadline: November 28, 2012. For more information: *www. ReadingChangedMyLife.org*.

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**Meeting Report: BAAL Language in Africa SiG**

*Ross Graham, Convenor – Language in Africa SIG*

The Language in Africa Special Interest Group of the British Association of Applied Linguists (BAAL) met on May 5, 2012 for their annual meeting this year called, "The Social Life of Language and Language Development in Africa," held at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London. There were 9 individual papers and a plenary talk by Jo Westbrook of the University of Sussex, with 37 people attending. The theme of the conference was purposefully wide, in order to embrace social perspectives on language as well as the education and development themes that have tended to predominate. It is worth stressing that the areas of interest identified in LiASIG's revised Constitution include African sociolinguistics (broadly defined) as well as language in education in Africa.

In a highly interactive plenary, Jo Westbrook described the 'Teacher Preparation in Africa' Project, led by the Centre for International Education, University of Sussex, which focused on the teaching of reading and mathematics in six sub-Saharan countries. Against the background of a documented increase in illiteracy rates among school-age children, this study examined initial teacher education and followed newly qualified teachers in order to study the links between teacher-training and classroom practice. The main message was that to change teachers' thinking it is first necessary to change their practice. It was found that pre-service teacher training emphasises bottom-up decoding rather than teaching reading for meaning and the 'orchestration' of reading skills. Teachers need to develop certain skills, such as how to promote greater participatory learning as well as how to use code-switching as a resource in the classroom. A number of examples of good practice were observed, mainly from experienced teachers who use a wider range of approaches to teaching reading, encourage participation and differentiate pupils. Teacher training programmes need fundamental revision so that tutors and trainee teachers understand the reading process and have a chance to reflect on their practice.

In this context, it is important to bear in mind that teachers' beliefs and practices in the classroom are constrained by official language-in-education policies. Jo Shoba described autobiographical interviews with teacher educators in Ghana, where official language policies have veered between support for MT and the present 'straight-for-English' policy in schools. Signs announce 'Speak English' or 'Vernacular forbidden', and this policy is often enforced via corporal punishment. Her study revealed conflicting attitudes among teacher-educators towards the use of MT in the classroom. Pragmatic use of codeswitching was favoured by some, but not by others, and the interviewees varied widely in terms of their personal investment in English or indigenous languages. Overall, a sense of disempowerment in relation to language policies was evident.

Developing an effective model of bilingual education and providing teachers with appropriate resources is by no means easy. Rosemary Wildsmith-Cromarty reported that although the government is supporting teaching through African languages at the university level, which is enabling their 'intellectualisation', an experiment in Natal which found that providing Multilingual Resource Books for teachers in isiZulu did not result in better scores. Mere awareness of isiZulu scientific terminology (much of it previously unfamiliar to teachers) did not bring improvements in student performance. This revealed problems in the translation of concepts at a deep level, and of the need for agreed standard forms; teachers from other regions lacked proficiency in the language, or used alternative dialects. Furthermore, teachers' lack of subject and pedagogical content knowledge in teaching maths and science were revealed, reinforcing the message that change of language of instruction from English to MTs is not in itself adequate for successful learning.

These problems were echoed in Janine Peters' study of the views of South African teachers. Her interviews with teachers revealed how classroom realities and inadequate teacher training together stand in the way of effective implementation of the official policy

of multilingualism and biliteracy in MT and English. The policy of using English as medium of instruction from Grade 3 discriminates against speakers of African languages; these languages are limited to providing basic communication skills (BICS) rather than cognitive-academic language proficiency (CALP). In rural schools, there is a lack of materials in African languages. Additionally, teachers' lack of training in bilingual teaching methods means that the educational potential of code-switching is not realised. The outcome is depressingly low levels of literacy and school achievement.

Annette Islei presented similar findings from Uganda, and a research proposal. There a major curriculum innovation for the first 3 years of Primary education has been introduced, and along with it the systematic use of local languages during the day, and English only in the English lesson. The innovation has suffered from lack of reading materials and limited teacher training. The new curriculum needs support – and one means is through developing university 'upgrading' courses for in-service teachers, using action research methods. Schools have to negotiate parents' expectations, and government requirements, as well as lack of resources, so developments in teacher training have to take a range of constraints into account. From initial lesson observations, she queried some of the design features of the new Thematic curriculum, especially the exclusive immersion technique in teaching English, and their effect on experienced teachers' methods.

English-medium textbooks produced in the US, ill-adapted to African contexts, are generally ineffective in promoting literacy in Africa. Canadian researchers Marlene Asselin and Ray Doiron reported on a Canadian Organization for Development through Education (CODE) initiative in Ethiopia which has resulted in establishing reading rooms in rural communities and in the production of over 300 book titles in local languages. Through the involvement of Regional Education Bureaus, local people are trained in authoring, illustrating and editing. The books include culturally relevant stories, information books, and supplementary curriculum texts in maths, science and English. She noted that the scheme would benefit if the books were also used in teacher education, and librarians received training; however, they are a highly valued resource in the rural communities, and are used by teachers and students to support the Ethiopian primary school curriculum, which is delivered in a wide range of regional languages.

Barbara Graham also presented a positive experience in the development of reading materials in local languages. She has been involved in an initiative spearheaded by the Pokoko community

in the Tana Delta area of Kenya to provide books in their language and additional teacher training to support their use. Although the local languages should be used for the first three years of primary education, local constraints (mixed student intake, parents' attitudes, and examinations in English), and the dominant positions of Kiswahili and English, heavily limit their use. An experimental reading and writing club produced insights into the ways in which the three languages, Pokomo, Kiswahili and English, can be used to develop children's reading and writing skills in a multilingual context, and the potential for introducing these methods into pupils' regular classes.

In his talk, Eddie Williams addressed wider themes of education and development, noting that although governments make claims for the instrumental role of English in promoting unification and economic development, English at the same time increases social divides helps maintain elite groups. He pointed to the wide lack of the required English proficiency in education as a factor limiting is impact on 'human needs development', which includes issues like control of family size and custody of the environment. However, he also noted the contrasting creative semiotic appropriation of English, which is evident in linguistic landscapes, for example in signs like 'Harrods of Lumumbashi', or classroom graffiti - "I am braindevil".

The theme of linguistic landscapes was pursued by Lutz Marten, who drew attention to the increased presence of African languages in media, music, film and education in the 21st century, against the background of domination by ex-colonial languages. Variation in language ecologies shapes patterns of complementarity in the creation of public messages. African languages are used to convey the main message in multilingual advertising and commercial texts in countries like Tanzania, South Africa, or Ethiopia, with English present as 'fragments'. In contrast, in Zambia, fragments of African languages are used to give a local cultural identity and symbolic value to more global messages presented in English.

The complementary use of African languages and English or French is the theme of an experimental linguistic study presented by Elvis Yevudey. The international research project, titled 'Creoles at Birth?' is led by Margot van den Berg at the University of Nijmegen, Netherlands, in collaboration with Evershed Amuzu, University of Ghana, and Komlan Essizewa, Universite de Lome. Comparison of bilingual performance using Akan and Gbe languages and English/French sheds light on structural and functional aspects of linguistic borrowing. Interesting comparisons can be made between the

development of creoles with African substrates, such as in the Surinamese language Sranan Tongo, with superstrate inputs from English and Dutch.

Feedback on the day was very positive. There was a feeling among some that for future meetings, discussion and reflection through workshop groups would be preferable to offering a fairly dense series of presentations. Clearly, for this to happen, the organisers need to plan ahead, and it also would be helpful if abstracts are received somewhat earlier. Four points for readers of this report: we are keen to give a platform for reports of 'research in progress'; we encourage post-graduate student presentations; we are interested in submissions on sociolinguistic and sociocultural topics with an African theme; and presenters from Africa are particularly welcome. Please do spread the word around the institutions in the UK and Africa who you are connected with – and ask them to mail annetteislei@gmail.com. You may also contact Annette if you would like to join the SIG. Through our website *http:// liasig.wordpress.com* we are also developing a network with academics in Africa, and post-graduate students returning to Africa from the UK, in order to support research collaborations.

## Upcoming Conferences
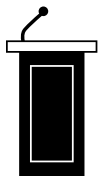
**What: 8th Pan African Reading for All Conference**
**When:** July 29 - August 2, 2013
**Where:** University of Nairobi, Kenya Science Campus
**Summary:** The conference purpose is to develop ways of translating "Education for All" into "Reading for All." The conference will provide a forum for teachers, writers, librarians, educators, researchers, publishers and local and international development workers to showcase innovative literacy strategies and techniques that have continually made a positive impact on literacy development across Africa. More importantly, sharing and documenting research findings, lasting knowledge solutions and best practices on literacy will not only be strengthened but also be critical in teasing out what is working and what is not in order to have a more coordinated and streamlined approach to literacy in Africa.
**Contact Information:** Request a proposal form from associationofreadingofkenya@gmail.com
**Organizers:** Association of Reading of Kenya (ARK), International Development Committee - Africa (IDC-A), and the International Reading Association (IRA)
**Deadline for abstracts/proposals:** December 31, 2012

**What: International Society for Language Studies Biennial Conference**
**When:** June 2012
**Where:** San Juan, Puerto Rico
**Summary:** The theme of the conference is Language and Social Justice.
**Contact Information:** http://www.isls.co/index-2.html
**Organizers:** ISLS
**Deadline for abstracts/proposals:** Passed

**What: Fifth Biennial International Conference on Task-Based Language Teaching**
**When:** October 3-5, 2013
**Where:** Banff, Alberta, Canada
**Summary:** Plenary Speakers include Martin Bygate (Lancaster University), Heidi Byrnes (Georgetown University) and Patricia Duff (University of British Columbia). Invited colloquia will cover TBLT and Teacher Education, the Interface Between TBLT and Content-Based Instruction, TBLT and Culture, and Cognitive Aspects of TBLT.
Contact Information: www.tblt2013.ualberta.ca or tblt2013@ualberta.ca
**Organizers:** University of Alberta
**Deadline for abstracts/proposals:** October 31, 2012
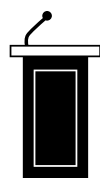
**What: Conference on Language Practices and Values in Contemporary Ghana: Identities in the Making**
**When:** November 29-30, 2012
**Where:** University of Ghana, Legon, Ghana
**Summary:** The conference forms part of a programme of activities sponsored by the British Academy under its UK-Africa Academic Partnership scheme and aims to highlight research into the complexity and dynamism of language in modern-day Ghana and in the Ghanaian diaspora. Contributions are also welcome on relevant linguistic research in other African contexts.
**Contact Information:** http://www.edgehill.ac.uk/english/ukafrica/
**Organizers:** Dr. Jo Shoba shobajo@edgehill.ac.uk, Professor Kari Dako karidako@gmail.com
**Deadline for abstracts/proposals:** Extended deadline for abstracts/proposals (colloquia, individual papers, or posters): 21 September 2012

**What: Conference on Language Rights, Inclusion and the Prevention of Ethnic Conflicts**
**When:** December 13-17, 2012
**Where:** Chiang Mai, Thailand
**Summary:** While language rights are topical in many parts of the world, they are still widely misunderstood

despite being a significant factor in many conflicts in Asia (India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Thailand, China, Xinjiang, Tibet, Hong Kong), Europe (Belgium, Switzerland, Italy, Spain, Kosovo, Macedonia, Ukraine), Africa (Cameroon, South Africa, Ethiopia, Morocco, Libya, Algeria) and the Americas (Canada, Mexico, Peru, Paraguay). In addition, worldwide language diversity itself is increasingly threatened, with more than half of the world's 6,000 to 7,000 languages expected to disappear in the next few decades

**Contact Information:** fdevarennes@gmail.com

Organizers: International Academy of Linguistic Law, UNESCO, Observatoire International des Droits Linguistiques

**Deadline for abstracts/proposals:** Passed

## FOCUS on... West Africa

**Launch of New Journal from Obafemi Awolowo University**

The Editorial Board of Ife Journal of the Humanities & Social Studies (IJOHUSS) has launched a new international journal out of Obafemi Awolowo University, in Ile-Ife, Nigeria.

The Board hereby invites articles on contemporary issues in Administration, Arts, Education, Law and Social Sciences (Interdisciplinary papers are especially welcome) for its Maiden Edition (Volume 1, No 1, 2012). Book reviews and research findings are most especially welcome. Guidelines and general information:

- Articles should not be more than 15-18 pages in A4 double-line spacing.
- Article should be original and contain previously unpublished data, interpretation or synthesis.
- Submitted articles will be peer-reviewed.
- Papers should be accompanied with an abstract of 150-200 words.
- Articles can be submitted either in soft copy through e-mail by MS Word attachment or as recordable flash drive, or on CD, or as hard copy (3 copies) by post.
- A brief biographical note should be included on a separate page
- The cover page should bear the title of the paper, the author's name and institutional affiliation.
- You may visit the Journal website and register your name at www.ijohussonline.com

For more information contact Professor Wale Adegbite adewaleadegbite@yahoo.com or Professo Olu Okotoni olu_okotoni@yahoo.co.uk

## FOCUS on... Francophone Africa

**Essai de grammaire kanyok (L32): phonologie, morphologie, syntaxe**

"Essai de grammaire kanyok (L32): phonologie, morphologie, syntaxe" (Mukash Kalel) est une description synchronique de cette langue bantu de la zone L, description menée selon le modèle fonctionnel de Luc Bouquiaux. La phonologie présente tonèmes, les phonèmes, la longueur vocalique, la structure syllabique, les combinaisons et les fréquences. La morphologie fait l'analyse des morphophonèmes et des morphotonèmes, les catégories grammaticales, les mécanismes de dérivation et de composition, les différentes structures syntagmatiques, la conjugaison. La syntaxe fait ressortir les catégories grammaticales susceptibles de fonctionner comme sujet, prédicat, complément, avec les combinaisons admises et les incompatibilités. Elle analyse aussi la phrase selon qu'elle est simple ou complexe, marginale, marquée ou non marquée. L'énoncé marqué porte sur les mécanismes tels que l'emphase, l'interrogation, l'exclamation, l'injonction, la négation, la passivisation et la modalisation. La phrase complexe analyse les relations de juxtaposition, de coordination, de subordination et de relativation. Volume: 570 pages. Police 9.

Infos: Mukash Kalel, Université de Kinshasa, RD Congo mukash_kalel@yahoo.fr

## FOCUS on... East Africa and the Horn of Africa

**The Juba Conference in Language-in-Education in South Sudan: Concluding Statement of Principles**

Academics from across Sub-Saharan Africa and experts from ACALAN, UNESCO, UNICEF and SIL met in Juba in March 2012 for a British Council conference on Language-in-Education policy in South Sudan. Our research and our discussions have resulted in the following statement of general principles that we believe should be applied in South Sudan and elsewhere. These principles are aligned with the Policy Guide on the Integration of African Languages and Cultures into Education Systems, which was adopted by Ministers of Education of 18 African countries following a conference in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, from 20-22 January 2010 and subsequent exchanges. They are also aligned

with the Khartoum Declaration on the link between Culture and Education adopted by the 6th Summit of the Heads of States and Government of the African Union held in Khartoum, Sudan, from 16 to 24 January 2006; and with the Second Decade of Education for Africa (2006-2015) launched during the Second Extraordinary Meeting of the Conference of Ministers of Education of the African Union (COMEDAF) between 4 and 7 September 2006 in Maputo, Mozambique.

As professionals in the fields of language and education, we reaffirm our belief in the following principles that should be applied to language-in-education policies and practices across Africa. We commit to championing these principles within our own organisations and the wider community.

- We believe in linguistic equity: All languages must be protected, respected and developed.
- We value the multilingual nature of African society. It is a resource to be celebrated and used.
- African languages should be used in partnership with international languages such as English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, and Arabic, both through strong models of mother tongue-based multilingual education and throughout African society.
- Parents, the state, and civil society must be informed of the educational, social, cultural, economic, and political benefits of the use of African languages alongside European languages and included in discussions concerning multilingual education.
- Learners should be taught in basic (i.e. up to lower secondary level) formal and non-formal education through the language they know best. This gives them the best basis for developing academic language proficiency required in all subjects. Unfamiliar languages should be taught through second language teaching methodologies.
- Other languages (including further African languages or European languages) should only be used as a medium of instruction after learners have developed academic reading and writing competency in the language they are familiar with, and after they have gained a sufficient level of academic proficiency in the second language through studying that language as a subject. This principle applies to all languages that are not a learner's mother tongue. When the language education model chosen requires transition from one language-of-instruction to another, that transition should be gradual and not sudden.
- Effective teaching, with a socio-culturally relevant curriculum, is the most important element in quality education. African societies should use a variety of ways to develop and value good teachers.

- The teaching of reading and writing is particularly important and must be improved – increased training is needed in this area.
- Non-formal education should form part of the education system. It includes community based early childhood education, alternative basic education for out-of school children, youth and adults, and skills training for youth and adults. Effective approaches use bi/multilingual language models and are connected to the community and world of work.

Hassana Alidou, UNESCO
Tony Calderbank, British Council
Christine Glanz, UNESCO
John Knagg, British Council
Jackie Marshall, SIL
Sozinho Francisco Matsinhe. ACALAN
David Pardoe, British Council
Barbara Trudell, SIL

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**Digital Drama in Tanzania**
Digital media and intercultural interaction in Tanzania, animated with African sights, sounds, and sentiments. A vivid portrayal of everyday life in East Africa's only institute for practical art training, narrated through the life histories of students, teachers, and alumni. Cultural digitization in the historical context of a nation that has mixed tribalism, nationalism, Pan-Africanism, and cosmopolitanism in astonishingly creative ways. Cultural hybridity as a starting point for rethinking one of the classic concepts in anthropology liminality while introducing a new way of understanding statehood the state of creolization. This pioneering study in digital anthropology is based on ethnographic engagements at Taasisi ya Sanaa na Utamaduni Bagamoyo (TaSUBa) from 2002 to 2009, combining participant observation with digital, visual, and sensory research methods. Learn more in the newly published book "Digital Drama: Teaching and Learning Art and Media in Tanzania" (Uimonen 2012), and its accompanying web site, *http://www. innovativeethnographies.net/digitaldrama*. The book is one of the first in the Innovative Ethnographies series published by Routledge New York, combining printed, hyperlinked, and multimedia forms of ethnographic repres



**FOCUS on.... Southern Africa**
**Upcoming Book: Classroom Multilingualism in South Africa**
Watch for a new book coming out later this

year from Sense Publications by ReN members Rinelle Evans and Ailie Cleghorn: *Complex classroom encounters: A South African perspective*. This book stems from classroom-based research in multilingual / multicultural Foundation phase and Grade R classrooms in urban Gauteng, South Africa. It portrays the challenges and the opportunities that today's teachers face in a society that has changed more rapidly perhaps than teacher education programmes have been able to keep up with. The implications for other multilingual/cultural African school settings will be evident to readers.

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## Paper on Coloured Identity in post-Apartheid South Africa

Dr. Fileve T. Palmer, Anthropology Department, Indiana University

*Abstract*: Depending on their phenotypes, language(s) spoken, and the relationships in which they partook, individuals were strictly classified during Apartheid. In looking at language use, knowledge, and acquisition I address how isiZulu, English, and Afrikaans were used to establish group membership amongst Coloureds and to what extent beliefs about language are passed on through family interactions, institutionalized education, and multiple histories. I use literature as well as original research conducted in 2008, 2010, and 2011 to address the issues of language didactic broadly within South Africa and specifically in KwaZulu-Natal province. Although people who were at various points in the nation's history classified as Coloureds make up the bulk of my examples in this paper, I had the opportunity to interact with people from each of the four major racial classifications.

For a copy of the paper, contact: Fileve Palmer, ftpalmer@umail.iu.edu

## Research Corner

### Teacher Preparation in Africa: Learning to teach early reading and mathematics

*Kwame Akyeampong, John Pryor, Jo Westbrook, Kattie Lussier, Centre for International Education, University of Sussex*

In the last ten years statistics on access to primary education in African countries have been impressive, with countries such as Tanzania and Uganda reporting net enrolment rates approaching 100%. However alongside these reports are other studies that show that once in school, many children are failing to learn (CONFEMEN 2010; SACMEQ 2010). This is particularly disturbing as far as reading and mathematics in the early grades are concerned since these are the core competences on which progress in later grades is based. Nine out of ten children tested by the Early Grade Reading

Assessment in Mali were found to be unable to read a single word after two years of school (Gove & Cvelich, 2011) and even in Kenya where the results were relatively better, few children reached a fluency benchmark required for comprehension of a text. The headline answer to the question posed by the Uwezo assessments in East Africa, 'Are Our Children Learning?', is that a majority are not learning (Uwezo 2010). The link between low pupil achievement and the skills and competence of teachers is consistently made (UNESCO 2005). Children do not succeed unless teachers know how to organize and structure classroom activities that enable them to learn. Countries invest heavily in initial teacher education but little research has been done to assess whether it is producing teachers with the knowledge and skills to address the low achievement or whether initial teacher education is only compounding the problem. Ghana, for example, spends about 6% of its education budget on teacher education with this projected to rise as demand for teachers increases to meet expanded enrolment in basic schools. Coupled with the fact that the public cost for training a teacher is about forty-five times more than a primary school place, teacher education in a country like Ghana represents a significant public investment (Lewin & Stuart 2003).

The Teacher Preparation in Africa project funded by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation researched teacher education in Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Senegal, Tanzania and Uganda. The research identified the weaknesses in initial training but also found constructive ways in which it can address the crisis of low achievement in reading and math. Using a mixture of quantitative and qualitative research in the form of a questionnaire, video observations and interviews, it investigated the way that trainee teachers (n =4699) were being taught to teach basic mathematics and reading to early grade children. Using similar methods it then researched the classroom practices of newly qualified teachers (n = 1079), defined as those teachers who had undergone training in the previous three years. In this way the research was able to make connections between the initial training that teachers are currently receiving and the way this training is used with children in early grades classrooms. The following common points across the six countries were identified:

1. Initial Teacher Education counts: it has the strongest impact on Newly Qualified Teachers practice.
2. Training to teach reading and basic mathematics is focused on content not methods
3. Training induces misplaced confidence
4. Teaching practice does not deliver the practical skills needed
5. School curricula are in advance of teacher training curricula and are not studied at colleges.

6. Teachers are not prepared for the language of learning
7. Teachers do not learn to teach reading for meaning
8. Teacher education does not link doing classroom activities to learning concepts in lower grade mathematics

To more details on the findings above, the full country reports, and the list of seven recommendations emerging from these findings, please see
*http://www.sussex.ac.uk/education/cie/projectscompleted/tpa*

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**Early Grade Literacy in African Classrooms: Lessons Learned and Future Directions**
This transnational thematic study of early-grade literacy brings together current research findings and program outcomes in the area of early-grade literacy in African nations, to highlight lessons learned and suggest possible future direction for improving early-grade achievement in reading and writing. This study represents some of the best current research on literacy in early primary grades in Africa, carried out by four non-government organizations that focus on literacy learning. It is available at: *http://mlenetwork.org/content/early-grade-literacy-african-classrooms-lessons-learned-and-future-directions*

*Tell us about your research! Send us a short profile (one paragraph) of the research you are undertaking on language or literacy education in Africa by March 1st, 2013 for inclusion in our next issue.*

## In the Field
**New Resource from Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA)**
Policy Guide on the Integration of African Languages and Cultures into Education Systems, now amended and adopted by the Ministers of Education present at the African Conference on the Integration of African Languages and Cultures into Education (Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso 20-22 January, 2010), is now available online at: *http://uil.unesco.org/fileadmin/keydocuments/Africa/en/policy_guide_sep_web_en.pdf*

## What's New in Technology
**Free Online Web Seminars**
Global Conversations in Literacy Research (GCLR) is a series of free online web seminars that feature internationally known literacy researchers who present their cutting edge thinking and research ( *http://globalconversationsinliteracy.wordpress.com/*). Our 2012-2013 speakers will engage us in thinking about digital literacies,

discourse, public pedagogies, family literacy, and bilingual literacy as they relate to literacy research, writing, and teaching. Some upcoming seminars include:

- Dr. Yvonne Freeman and Dr. David Freeman, University of Texas at Brownsville, USA
  *Academic Language for English Language Learners*; November 4, 7:00pm EST. Link: *https://sas.elluminate.com/m.jnlp?sid=221&password=M.1DD670520F4FF8626E10B04CB26F15*
- Dr. Julia Davies, University of Sheffield, UK; (Im)*Material girls living in (im)material worlds*: identity curation through time and space; January 20, 2013, 3:00pm EST. Link: *https://sas.elluminate.com/m.jnlp?sid=221&password=M.B30C317D0D86295738F1CE3870EB87*
- Dr. Patricia Edwards, Michigan State University, USA & Dr. Susan Piazza, Western Michigan University. *The Impact of Family on Literacy Development: Convergence, Controversy, and Instructional Implications;* February 17, 2013, 7:00pm EST; Link: *https://sas.elluminate.com/m.jnlp?sid=221&password=M.CAC1D55FEDABD42455D0114255DB8D*

## Publications, Resources and Tools
**Fellowships for Scholars from Ghana, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, and Uganda**
Next Generation Social Sciences in Africa is a fellowship program for Africans from Ghana, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, and Uganda, supporting the next generation of African academics working on peace, security and development issues. The program, launched in June 2011, responds to a shortage of well-trained faculty now reaching crisis proportions in African higher education. The program offers fellowships to nurture the intellectual development and increase retention of early-career faculty. The program assists fellows to develop research opportunities and skills, obtain doctoral degrees, and participate in robust research communities. Toward this end, the project features a thematic focus in order to renew basic research agendas addressing peace, security, and development topics as well as strengthen interdisciplinary social science research capacity on these issues. Funded by Carnegie Corporation of New York, this project complements foundation initiatives to develop and strengthen the next generation of African scholars. The program features three distinct competitive fellowship opportunities for early-career social science faculty who hold positions in accredited colleges and universities in Ghana, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, and Uganda:
**Doctoral dissertation proposal fellowship:** Supporting short-term research costs of up to US$3,000 to develop a doctoral dissertation proposal.
**Doctoral dissertation research fellowship:** Supporting 9-12

months of dissertation research costs of up to US$15,000 on a topic related to peace, security, and development.

**Doctoral dissertation completion fellowship:** Supporting a one-year leave from teaching responsibilities with a stipend of up to US$15,000 to permit the completion of a dissertation that advances research on peace, security, and development topics.

The program encourages innovative research on peace, security, and development topics. This theme is intended to be interpreted broadly and creatively. We envision supporting a diverse set of projects grappling with a range of processes using evidence-based research. Some, we hope, will examine large-scale phenomena and others small-scale social processes so that some applicants, for example, might propose projects exploring global flows of refugees across country borders and continents while others might look at street theater in refugee camps. Similarly, some fellows might test the proposition that global financial markets contribute to peace and stability while others might examine the role of local market culture in unstable regions. Above all projects should advance important fields of study and social science knowledge.

We strongly encourage applicants to explain how their work aligns with the program's thematic priorities and demonstrate their capacity to contribute to a network advancing innovative research on peace, security and development. Applicants therefore should submit a project proposal that has been written specifically for this fellowship competition, rather than simply submit the approved research proposal that they developed for their university. The project proposal for this competition offers applicants an opportunity to further hone their approach to their dissertation topic.

This program also offers two workshops each year to help fellows master research methodologies, engage key literature in their fields, and produce scholarly publications. The Next Generation African Social Sciences program will support approximately 45 fellows each year across all three fellowship opportunities. All applications must be submitted using the *online application portal*. The next application deadline is December 1, 2012. For inquiries or technical questions pertaining to the online application portal, please contact SSRC staff from the Next Generation Social Sciences in Africa Program: nextgenafrica@ssrc.org and visit *http://www.ssrc. org/programs/nextgenafrica/*

## October Feature Interview
### A Conversation with ACALAN
For this month's feature interview, we interviewed Souleymane Sangaré, Acting Executive Secretary of the African Academy of Languages (ACALAN).

*1. Briefly tell our readers about ACALAN.*

ACALAN is a specialized institution of the African Union Commission. Its mandate is to develop and promote African languages so that they are used in all domains of life in Africa, in partnership with languages inherited from colonisation, as a way of fostering Africa's integration and development. It works with all member states of the African Union.

Its core values are: Respect for the cultural values of Africa, especially African languages, on behalf of the African Union; Integration of the African continent for an endogenous development; Linguistic and cultural diversity as a factor of Africa's integration and the promotion of African values, and; The encouragement of mutuality and solidarity amongst Africans.

*2. What strategies is ACALAN promoting to teach people to read and write, given the slow progress of literacy in many African contexts?*
ACALAN has not yet developed any specific strategy for teaching and reading, though it is running two projects related to this question. The first has to do with Reading Clubs, which are aimed at instilling the culture of reading in African children with the view of enhancing their performance at school. This project is implemented in partnership with various stakeholders, including focal points in the member states. The second deals with the training of Teacher Trainers in First Language Methodology.

*3. Can you tell us about the vehicular cross-border languages and their role within the African Union?*
ACALAN organized regional conferences that permitted us to identify 41 cross-border languages which play an important role in the integration and development of the continent.

*4. What is the relationship between the vehicular cross border language commissions, national language structures, and the regional centers of cultures?*
The Vehicular Cross-Border Language Commissions (VCBLCs) and the National Language Structures, or focal points in the Member States are the working structures of ACALAN. The VCBLCs work at the regional level while the National Language Structures promote languages at the national level. The VCBLCs include representatives of the National Language Structures and also work in collaboration with Language and Cultural Centers which are also among ACALAN's strategic partners.

*5. What progress has been made towards advocating for the designation of national structures as focal points of ACALAN in the member states?*
ACALAN has been contacting the Member States to have them appoint focal points through National Language Structures where they exist, and create them where they do not. So far, 17 member States have designated focal points

(see: *http://www.acalan.org/eng/about_acalan/nls.php*)

6. *How much progress has been made in adoption of the charter for the African Cultural Renaissance by the African Union member states?*
ACALAN has been working with the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Southern Africa Development Communities (SADC), Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and East African Community (EAC) to urge the member States of the African Union to ratify the Charter. Some countries, including Mali, Nigeria, Senegal and South Africa have signed and ratified the Charter.

7. *Please tell us of some of the most significant achievements made since the inception of ACALAN in relation to the organization's founding objectives.*
ACALAN's objectives emerged from its vision, mission and values: To empower African languages in general and vehicular Cross-Border languages in particular, in partnership with the languages inherited from colonization; to promote convivial and functional multilingualism at every level, especially in the education sector; to ensure the development and promotion of African languages as factors of African integration and development, and of respect for values and mutual understanding and peace. Specific objectives include to ensure a normative and codified role in the instrumentation and instrumentalization of African languages; to assist African countries in formulating and implementing language policies, especially through the creation and development of national structures for the promotion of African languages; and in the implementation of the African Cultural Renaissance Charter and the Language Plan of Action for Africa. We also seek to support the ministers of education and of culture in rebuilding Africa's systems of education, and to work with the regional and sub-regional institutions concerned with culture, education and language, such as CELHTO, CERDOTOLA, and EACROTANA, IPED, CIEFFA, AACI, CICIBA, the KARANTA, etc. In terms of our achievements, amongst others, ACALAN has achieved the following:

• The successful organization of five Regional Conferences in West, Central, Southern, Eastern and Northern Africa followed by a Synthesis Conference to determine the linguistic situation of Africa;
• The co-organization of major events to celebrate the Year of African Languages (2006-2007);
• The appointment of eight Academicians as Members of the Assembly of Academicians;
• The establishment of the MAAYA Network, an initiative of ACALAN during the Tunis Phase of the World Summit on Information Society;
• The celebration of the International Year of Languages (2008) and especially the organization, MAAYA and other partners, of the Bamako International Forum on Multilingualism (BIFM), a first step towards a World Summit on Multilingualism;
• The implementation of the Pan-African Master's and PhD Program in African Languages and Applied Linguistics (PANMAPAL), which has started in three universities (Addis-Ababa, Cape Town and Yaoundé 1).
• The establishment of ten out of the first twelve Vehicular Cross-Border Language Commissions, namely Fulfulde, Hausa and Mandenkan in West Africa, Chichewa/Cinyaja and Setswana in Southern Africa, Kiswahili, Malagasy and Somali in East Africa, and Lingala and Beti Fang in Central Africa.
• The successful organization of planning workshops for the ten Vehicular Cross-Border Language Commissions that have already been established in West, Southern, Eastern and Central Africa.
• Organisation of a harmonization workshop of orthographies and writing systems, in collaboration with UNESCO-BREDA (Dakar), for the Cinyanja/Chichewa, Fulfulde, Hausa, Mandenkan and Setswana Vehicular Cross-Border Language Commissions.
• The publication of annual bulletins of ACALAN's programme of activities.
• Publication of ACALAN's journal-KUWALA on quarterly basis.
• Contacting the Ministers of Culture and or Education of the Member States of the African Union to designate National Language Structures in their respective countries as Focal Points of ACALAN. Member states are already responding to this call.

Our upcoming plans include the establishment of the rest of the first batch of Vehicular Cross-border Language commissions: Modern Arabic and Berber. Kikongo language in the Central African Region will be launched too in response to the demand from the countries where it is spoken. We also are working towards the establishment of the National Language Structures in Member States where there are none, the establishment of ACALAN's remaining organs; and the finalization of the staffing of the Executive Secretariat of ACALAN, among the implementation of other ACALAN Core Projects.

8. Many African states are still grappling with the best ways to promote the teaching of their indigenous languages. How does ACALAN view the place of African languages in cyberspace in this regard? Is this yet another challenge facing African languages, or does it represent opportunity?
ACALAN promotes multilingualism in general and particularly

their introduction into the education system. ACALAN therefore attaches an importance to the promotion of African languages in cyberspace. ACALAN initiated a project on "African languages and Cyberspace" which also contribute to EFA goals. This project is a follow-up to the workshop on African Languages and Cyberspace held in Bamako in 2006 and to the conference on the second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) in Tunis, under the auspices of African Union Commission. The aim of the project is to identify and disseminate work on African languages in cyberspace, identify common ground and create synergies, while standardizing procedures on the work on ICT and African languages. This project aims at equipping African languages with appropriate terminology that will allow them to respond to the demands imposed by ICTs, the cornerstone of a knowledge-based society. The following activities are underway: conducting a workshop of practitioners and experts on ICT and African languages to assess availability, i.e. how much of the 12 VCBLs are available on the cyberspace (in others words, a quantitative and qualitative assessment of the presence of African languages online); establishing a thematic database and development of various software on writing systems and translation pertaining to African languages; dissemination of classified information; and systematically updating the database and the in-service training of the Web Master.

9. Where can our members learn more about ACALAN's work?
   For further details on ACALAN's activities and projects, please refer to: *www.acalan.org*