

The University of Hong Kong
School of Humanities
Department of Linguistics

LING2064 LANGUAGES IN AFRICA

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|---|---|
| Credits: 6 | Time: 10:00 – 13:00 |
| Venue: to be announced | |
| Instructors: Dr. Eileen Waegemaekers | Office: Rm 9.27 Run Run Shaw Tower Office hours: by appointment Email: eileenw@hku.hk Tel: +852 91631336 |

Course Description and Objectives

COURSE INTRODUCTION

- Over 2000 languages belonging to six major language families are spoken in Africa, making it the linguistically most diverse continent. This course covers the linguistic diversity of Africa in its social and cultural context to foster a multidimensional understanding of the role of language in society in general. The course includes the study of the linguistic structure and social functions of specific African languages (e.g. Swahili, Lingala, Arabic, Zulu), covers language contact and language loss, European colonial languages spoken in Africa (English, French, Portuguese, Spanish), and the use of African languages and African writing systems in the media, education, and their role in nation-building.

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- Students will have a basic understanding of languages and linguistics in Africa, including tools and analytical techniques to study language as a general phenomenon and language-related issues typical of African conditions.
- Students can demonstrate familiarity with the cultural, social, political and economic underpinnings of linguistic diversity in African countries, and on the African continent as a whole. Students will have acquired a multidimensional understanding of the role of language in African societies.
- Students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of the linguistic structure and social functions of selected African languages (e.g. Swahili, Bambara, Lingala, Arabic, Zulu) and European colonial languages spoken in Africa (e.g. English, French, Portuguese, Spanish)

Recommended readings:

Webb, Vic and Kembo-Sure (eds.). 2000. African Voices. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Heine, Bernd and Derek Nurse (eds.). 2000. African Languages: An Introduction. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Course Content Overview

| Date/Class | Topic | Readings |
|------------|--|--|
| July 15 | Overview of course topics | -- |
| July 16 | Linguistics diversity in Africa | Batibo, H. (2005). Language decline and death in Africa: Causes, Consequences and Challenges (Chapter 2, pp. 16-30) |
| July 17 | Languages and language families in Africa | Webb V. and Kembo-Sure (2000) The Languages of Africa. <i>African voices</i> (pp. 26-43) |
| July 18 | Typology of African languages | Heine and Leyew (2008) Is Africa a linguistic area? (pp. 15-35) |
| July 19 | The structure of <i>Language TBA</i> / Mini-course in <i>Language TBA</i> (guest lecturer) | TBA |
| WEEKEND | | |
| July 22 | Language contact & multilingualism | Kamwangamalu, N. M. (2000). Languages in Contact. <i>African voices</i> (pp. 88-100) |
| July 23 | Language endangerment | Batibo, H. (2005). Language decline and death in Africa: Causes, Consequences and Challenges (Chapter 5) |
| July 24 | African creoles and the languages of the African diaspora | Balogun, T. A. (2013). In defense of Nigerian pidgin. <i>Journal of Languages and Culture</i> , 4(5), 90-98. Aboh, E. O. (2015) The emergence of hybrid grammars. (pp. 16-59) |
| July 25 | Language planning & policy | Dubin, Steven C. Spearheading Debate: Culture Wars & Uneasy Truces (pp. 198-207) |
| July 26 | Course round-up and in-class test | |

Course Assessment

| Assessment Method | Weighting | Details |
|---------------------|-----------|--|
| Homework assignment | 30% | Structural analysis of one African language and comparative analysis with own native language. |
| In-class test | 30% | Written test on topics discussed in class. |
| Essay | 40% | 6-8 page essay on an issue related to linguistic diversity in African countries. |

Study Load/ Study Hours

| Activities | Number of hours |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|
| Lectures | 30 |
| Reading / Self-study | 28 |
| Assessment: Essay writing | 30 |
| Assessment: Homework assignment | 16 |
| Total: | 104 |