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Shuichiro Nakao (Osaka University)

Convivial multilingualism as a modern African ethos: cases of East African non-Arab arabophone societies

This talk takes up a new approach to interpret the African multilingual realities in terms of pluralistic 'ethos', in harmony with Nyamnjoh's (2017) concepts of 'conviviality' and 'incompleteness', which have been central to the argument over the 'African potentials' in the recent African Studies in Japan (Gebre et al. 2017).

Post-colonial Eastern Africa is a unique place where some Arabic contact varieties (i.e., Juba Arabic in South Sudan, Nubi in Uganda and Kenya, Benishangul Arabic in Ethiopia) has been spoken by non-Arab Africans as (i) a daily language, despite the absence of Arab predominance in the society, and (ii) a language of the speakers' pluralistic identity, rather than a language for claiming the 'Arab' identity. This fact is significant when we remember the modern Arab nationalism that defined 'Arabs' in terms of language as well as the sociolinguistic fact that Arabic (even its 'pidginized' variety) is rarely spoken by the other non-Arabs in non-Arab world.

We will first focus on metalinguistic conceptualization of 'languages' in these non-Arab Arabic varieties in comparison with their superstrate, Sudanese Arabic, to study how African people developed 'pluralistic' expressions from 'racialistic' expressions. Second, we will investigate linguistic mixture at various levels (from phonology to lexicon and syntax) to argue how the boundaries of 'languages' conceptualized themselves are mitigated in real life. We will tentatively characterize the uniqueness of the 'African' multilingual ethos by this set of (socio)linguistic phenomena and compare with some multilingualism-related concepts developed in the Western and the other Southern worlds.

Shuichiro Nakao is currently Associate Professor for Arabic at Osaka University (Japan), which he joined in 2017. He studied Arabic at Osaka University and obtained his PhD degree at Kyoto University (Japan) with a thesis on 'A Grammar of Juba Arabic' (2017). He has researched in South Sudan, Kenya, Uganda and Ethiopia on themes such as the grammatical description, lexicography, social and linguistic histories of East African Arabic varieties (Juba Arabic, Nubi, Benishangul Arabic), Bangala (Bantu-based pidgin) and Berta (Nilo-Saharan) among others.

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Wo? Konferenzschaltung via Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4362747051?pwd=ZW85YmFKUjQ1aHZFeFIWVjF0bVdnZz09>

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