Department of Anthropology  
Boston University

Instructor: Prof. Fallou Ngom (fngom@bu.edu)
Office: ASC, 232 Bay State Road, office # 505
Course: Seminar: Language and Culture Contacts in Africa
Course Number: AN 524 (for Graduate/Advanced Undergraduate Students)
Semester: Spring 2018
Time: MWF 10:10-11:00 AM
Room: CGS PLS 102
Office hours: Friday 11:00 am-12:00 pm & by appointment

Objectives: In this course, we will examine key concepts and approaches to the study of language and culture contact around the world, with a particular focus on sub-Saharan Africa where the vast majority of people live in linguistically, religiously, culturally, and ethnically diverse communities. Using empirical data, we will analyze various linguistic and social implications of language contact in Africa. The course provides students with a strong foundation on contact-induced changes and the relationship between these changes and ethnicity, religion, youth culture, music, and globalization. The course will conclude by introducing students to the methodological and ethical issues in language analysis in asylum cases, a new subfield of forensic linguistics. Students will learn how many Western governments increasingly resort to linguistic and socio-cultural knowledge of African asylum applicants in their attempt to differentiate genuine asylum seekers from the so-called “economic refugees.” The course will consist of lectures, class discussions, and practical exercises. At the end of the course, student will gain a firm grounding in important contemporary issues pertaining to language contact and the practice of LADO (Language Analysis for the Determination of Origin).

Prerequisite: AN 351 or consent of the instructor.

Course requirement and evaluation:

Required reading: The assigned materials should be read before the dates indicated in order to keep up with class discussions.

Attendance and class-participation (10 %): Students will be graded on their attendance and participation. For every unjustified absence, 2% will be deducted from the 10% devoted to attendance and class-participation.

In-class written exams (40%): There will be two in-class exams. The first will take place in the ninth week and the second at the end of the semester. These exams will test students’ understanding of the key concepts, methods of analysis, theories and issues as well as the linguistic and socio-cultural features of speech communities discussed in class lectures and in the assigned readings. Graduate students who are prepared to write a 20-25-page research paper, and who have developed a topic and had it approved by the instructor by the sixth week of class may substitute a paper for the end of the semester exam. However, topics must be new, i.e. not previously researched by the student.

Assignments (40%): Over the course of the semester, students will carry out 2 take-home written assignments that may involve summaries of the assigned articles/book chapters/data analysis using techniques and methods discussed in class. All assignments must be carefully written. Students should avoid grammatical mistakes and use spell-checker to avoid spelling errors. Students’ grades in each assignment will be based upon the
clarity, completeness, the arguments, and the linguistic evidence provided as well as the grammatical mistakes and spelling errors in their responses.

Oral presentations (10%): In the fourth week of class, students will be assigned a published article or book chapter on language/culture contacts in Africa based on their interests. Students will prepare a 10/15-minute presentation and a handout summarizing the key issues in the article/book chapter. The grade of the presentation will be based on 1) the quality and clarity, 2) the quality of the handout, and 3) the student's answer to questions asked during the presentation. In addition to the presentation and the handout, graduate students will submit a one-page critical review of the article/book chapter based upon their knowledge of the field/other readings and experience in the target countries.

Schedule

Week 1: Introduction: Language contact: theories and concepts (January 19-22)
- Syllabus distribution
- Introduction to the course
- Factors of language variation and change
- Causes and consequences of language contact
- Multilingualism, globalization, language contact
- Key concepts

Reading:

Week 2: Linguistic implications of language contact (January 24-29)
- Key concepts continue
- Typology of linguistic variations
- Hyper-correction and hypo-correction
- Lexicalization, lexical hybridization, and nasal unpacking
- Linguistic accommodation, prestige borrowing
- To-down changes vs. bottom up changes, sociolinguistic variables, etc.

Readings:
- No class on January 29, 2018 (Professor Ngom’s lecture at Duke University)

Week 3: Socio-cultural implications of language contact (January 31-February 5)
- Language and culture contact in African urban spaces
- Language contact in Dakar, Senegal and Nairobi, Kenya
- The social status of French, English, and Arabic in Senegal
- Hybrid varieties and identities in Senegal and Kenya

Readings:

Week 4: Socio-cultural implications of language contact (February 7-12)
• Sociolinguistic implications of Sheng in Kenya
• The Swahilization” of English in Kenya
• Linguistic orientalism, linguistic incarceration,
• Linguistic in-betweenness,
Readings:
• Oral presentation topics: to be assigned

Monday, February 19: President’s Day (no class)
February 20: Substitute Monday Schedule

Week 5: Language ideology and language contact in South Africa (February 14-20)
• Discussion and review of key issues
• Language contact and mixing in South Africa
• English-Afrikaans contact in South Africa
Reading:
• Distribute Assignment 1: Due on March 2, 2018 by 5 pm by email (covers week 1-6).

Week 6: Language ideology continues (February 21-26)
• Official vs. national language(s)
• The Senegalese education system and language ideology
• The emergence of a new language ideology in urban Senegal
• Language ideology in political discourse
• The Senegalese linguistic market place
• Wolofization and linguistic resistance
Reading:

Week 7: Language and religion in sub-Saharan Africa (February 29-March 2)
• Sociolinguistic significance of script choices
Readings:
• Review for in-class exam 1 (date: March 14, 2018)
• Assignment 1 due on March 2, 2018 by email (fngom@bu.edu) by 5pm at the latest.
• No class on March 2: Professor Ngom travels to University of Florida for a lecture.
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Week 8: Spring recess (March 3-11, 2018)
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Week 9: Language and religion in sub-Saharan Africa continues (March 12-16)
• In-class exam: March 14, 2018
• Language of traditional medicine
• Yoruba command language and cosmogony
• Influence of Yoruba in African Christianity
Readings:
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Week 10: Introduction to Forensic Linguistics and LADO (March 19-23)
• Law on language
• The genesis of LADO
• Historicizing linguistic variation as forensic evidence
Readings:
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Week 11: Forensic linguistics and LADO continues (March 26-30)
• LADO: concepts and methods
• Differentiating genuine vs. bogus/economic asylum claims
• Assessing applicants’ linguistic and cultural knowledge
• Analysis, case studies and discussions
Reading:
• Distribute Assignment 2: Due on April 13, 2018 by 5 pm via email (covers week 7-12)
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Week 12: LADO continues (April 2-6)
• Language variations and change as evidence of national origin
• Ethical and methodological issues
• Analysis, case studies and discussions

Week 13: Language analysis in asylum cases continues (April 9-13)
• Applicants with simple socialization history
• Applicants with complex/multiple socialization history
• Gender and language analysis in asylum cases
• Age and language analysis in asylum cases
• Sociolinguistic profiles of rural vs. urban applicants, etc.
• Analysis, case studies and discussions
• Assignment 2: Due on April 13, 2017 by 5pm by email (fngom@bu.edu)
• Professor Ngom travels to UC-Boulder for an invited lecture (April 11-13: TBC)

Patriots' Day: April 16, 2017 (no class)

Wednesday, April 18: Monday Schedule

Week 14: Oral Presentations (April 20-25)
• Oral presentations

Week 15: Review and wrap up (April 27-May 2: last day of class)
• Review for in-class exam II (final) and last suggestions for those writing papers
• Course evaluation

Study period May 3-6, 2017
Final exam and papers due: Date: TBA

Academic Conduct: All Boston University students are expected to maintain high standards of academic honesty and integrity. It is the responsibility of every student to be aware of the Academic Conduct Code’s content and to abide by its provisions. The University's code of conduct is available at http://www.bu.edu/academics/resources/academic-conduct-code/.

Accommodation for disability: In order to make appropriate arrangements so that the course can be fully accessible, students who have a disability should contact me as soon as possible. If you have questions about requesting academic accommodations, please contact the Office of Disability Services (www.bu.edu/disability).