

ESF Exploratory Workshop on

**Documenting convergence and
diversity - Mande and Atlantic
languages in contact**

London (United Kingdom), 5-9 September 2008

Convened by:

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Scientific report

1. Executive summary

The workshop had the main objectives of bringing together scholars on Mande and Atlantic languages from different national and disciplinary backgrounds in order to establish the scope of language contact shaping the structure of these languages, to engage them in a dialogue on the establishment of a research agenda in this field and to prepare follow-up activities. Apart from France, where due to colonial history an important national research interest in West African languages is manifest till today, research on all aspect of West African languages is scattered over European countries and carried out in different disciplines and research paradigms.

The European perspective and multidisciplinary orientation of the workshop were therefore greeted enthusiastically and it was felt by all participants that the issue of multilingualism and language contact in general but in particular in this contact area was central to their respective research interests. At the same time it was emphasized that this topic was neglected by the established research canon of their respective disciplines. There was also a unanimous response in favour of multidisciplinary research activities linking descriptive linguistic, sociolinguistic, anthropological, archeological and historical perspectives on language contact and aiming at including educational and literary research.

The 18 workshop participants came from 8 different countries and were joined by two observers, Dr. Serge Sagna from the University of Manchester and Lameen Souag, from SOAS London. The observers took notes of emerging questions, issues to be followed up during discussion sessions and thematic strands to be persued in more detail. Prof. María del Carmen Picallo Soler from the Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona represented the ESF.

The workshop will have the following outcomes: a selection of papers based on workshop presentations will be published in the Journal of Language Contact, which has agreed to produce a special issue on the theme of the workshop that will be edited by Friederike Lüpke. The issue is expected to appear in 2009. In addition, the participants agreed to prepare an application to the ESF for a Research Network Programme on West Africa as a contact area. The deadline for submission was too close to the workhop date for submission within the 2008 call, but submission in 2009 is planned.

2. Scientific content

The workshop united researchers from diverse national and disciplinary backgrounds in order to integrate anthropological, sociolinguistic, structural and historical perspectives on language contact between Mande and Atlantic languages of West Africa. The workshop explicitly aimed at increasing communication between national research schools and disciplines that have led largely independent lives in the past in order to develop an interdisciplinary research agenda investigating language contact not just in its consequences on the linguistic structure of individual languages but taking into account the sociolinguistic profiles of multilingual speech communities as well as the identities and ideologies created by and in turn motivating their linguistic practices. The workshop consisted of the following five thematic panels:

- The panel on grammatical dimensions of language contact was dedicated to those structural outcomes of language contact that concern grammatical structure. The initial talk took stock of those grammatical features that have been reported so far to be influenced by language contact. Papers on individual languages offered an in-depth account of structural consequences of contact. It was repeatedly deplored that there are not enough empirical data on the languages of the area available in order to identify contact phenomena.
- The panel on historical dimensions of language contact evaluated to what extent language contact needs to be taken into account when retracing the diachronic development of Atlantic and Mande languages. It emerged that both historical and contact linguistic models fail to account for the structure of these languages: historical-comparative methods fail to retrace their development to a common ancestor; and contact-linguistic scenarios are unable to predict their current shape.
- The panel on sociolinguistic dimensions of language contact discussed the linguistic profiles of the mainly multilingual speech communities in the area and the attitudes underlying them, looking at language contact as a mental and societal phenomenon of speakers in contact with (speakers of) different languages. It called for more comparative and multidisciplinary studies of languages in the area, following compatible theoretical frameworks and linking descriptive and sociolinguistic data. It was also stressed that an investigation of multilingual practices needs to include written language use, as it is an important point of language contact, and as written and oral practices do not always coincide.
- The panel on lexical dimensions of language contact comprised case studies on lexical influences between languages in contact. As in the other panels, it was underlined that the study of multilingualism is generally neglected in the description

and documentation of African languages and beyond, and that essentialist monolingual models prevail. At the same time it was stated that without an understanding of past and present multilingual practices and their functions, lexical comparisons of languages are of very limited value.

- The panel on methodological dimensions of language contact was concerned with the role of contact in language documentation in general, systematizing many of the points made in the preceding panels, such as the impossibility of assigning the presence of cognates to a shared ancestor language vs. to borrowing in the absence of sociolinguistic and historical data elucidating repertoires and their functions. In addition, the panel offered specific case studies on the challenges of identifying contact phenomena in languages without extensive description and documentation.

3. Assessment of the results, contribution to the future direction of the field

A short-term result of the workshop is a special issue publishing the papers from the workshop in the peer-reviewed *Journal of Language Contact* in 2009. It is expected that this publication will present the state-of-the-art of research in the domain and serve as a benchmark for future studies.

A long-term result of the workshop is the raised awareness of the necessity of international and multidisciplinary collaboration, motivating the participants to seek funding for an ESF Research Programme Network on West Africa as a contact area. Due to the existing networks of workshop participants, it is possible to cast the net of participants wider than for the exploratory workshop and to include more European countries and thematic orientations.

The planned research network will fill the vacuum left by the independent study of multilingualism and language contact in different disciplines by linking researchers of these traditionally separate fields. In return, it will offer a unique holistic perspective on a prototypical multilingual area that has been overlooked by theoreticians so far. The network will create the theoretical and methodological framework for comparative research in the domain and develop language policy recommendations whose relevance are not limited to West Africa as a geographical area but may be relevant for the underrepresented African continent as a whole. In addition to creating fora for the exchange of data and perspectives on multilingualism, the network will provide urgently needed training for younger researchers, and provide a platform for members of speech communities, educational

practitioners and national organizations in the concerned countries to inform linguistic research and benefit from its outcomes. So far, the network has three main objectives:

- To integrate separate national research schools and disciplinary traditions concerned with multilingualism and language contact in West Africa.
- To advance the theory and methodology of studies of multilingualism and language contact in West Africa, and to provide training to researchers, community members, and practitioners interested in its different aspects.
- To reach out to researchers and speech communities in West Africa in order to make results accessible to them and take their perspectives and local knowledge into account.

It is expected that by the end of the research network these objectives will correspond to the following achievements:

- The identification of those disciplines and research schools with an interest in language contact and multilingualism in West Africa.
- The development of a platform, format and methodology for interdisciplinary exchange and comparative studies on multilingualism and language contact in the West Africa and the establishment of sustainable links and collaborations in the domain between researchers, practitioners and speech communities in Europe and the South.
- A number of training and dissemination strategies in order to provide the tools for integrated studies of multilingualism and contact in its diverse facets and in order to publicise the results of research in this area to interested parties, including governments and development agencies.

To date, the following activities are planned to realize the goals of the network:

- **Creation and maintenance of a database** and website integrating language data, references, copy-right free sources, researchers' and practitioners' profiles and an exchange forum and publishing the expert group's policy briefings.
- **Research workshops on specialized topics** related to primary research on multilingualism and language contact, so far: 'Noun classes in contact', 'Islam, trade and empire formation as factors of language contact', 'Writing in West African contact situations', and 'Urbanisation, globalization and language contact in West Africa'.

- **Training workshops on specialized topics** in applied research on multilingualism and language contact, so far: 'Training for West African publishers in national languages'; 'Training for West African linguists in lexicography and data base management'.
- **Two summerschools**, one in francophone and one in Anglophone West Africa, to train a new generation of researchers
- **The formation of an expert group** to provide policy briefings on multilingualism and language contact in the Mande-Atlantic space.
- **Regular exchange visits of researchers** participating in the network and of African researchers and practitioners in participating European institutions.

The proposal for the research network is in the draft stage; it will be submitted to the ESF in 2009.

4. Final programme

Friday 5 September 2008

Afternoon	<i>Arrival</i>
18.00	<i>Welcome drinks and dinner</i>

Saturday 6 September 2008

09.30-09.45	Friederike Lüpke: Welcome
09.45-10.00	Presentation of the European Science Foundation (ESF) María del Carmen Picallo Soler (Standing Committee for the Humanities)

PANEL 1: GRAMMATICAL DIMENSIONS OF LANGUAGE CONTACT

CHAIR: MAARTEN MOUS

OBSERVER: LAMEEN SOUAG

10.00-11.00	G. Tucker Childs: Mande and Atlantic, contact and asymmetrical structural consequences
11.00-11.30	<i>Coffee break</i>
11.30-12.00	Serge Sauvageot: Le système nominal du bainouk, langue atlantique au contact du mandé
12.00-12.30	Abdourrahmane Diallo: Aspects morphosyntaxiques du contact entre le pular et le kakkabhe (mandingue-mokolé)
12.30-14.30	<i>Lunch break</i>

PANEL 2: HISTORICAL DIMENSIONS OF LANGUAGE CONTACT

CHAIR: G. TUCKER CHILDS

OBSERVER: SERGE SAGNA

- 14.30-15.30 **Konstantin Pozdniakov** and **Guillaume Ségérer**: **Peut-on faire l'histoire du contact linguistique**
- 15.30-16.00 *Coffee break*
- 16.00-16.30 **Maarten Mous**: **Can language contact situations be reconstructed?**
- 16.30-17.00 **Chaired discussion based on observer notes and summaries**

Sunday 7 September 2008

PANEL 3: SOCIAL DIMENSIONS OF LANGUAGE CONTACT

CHAIR: SORY CAMARA

OBSERVER: SERGE SAGNA

- 10.00-11.00 **Caroline Juillard**: **Une analyse sociolinguistique du contact entre locuteurs et langues, avec focus sur joola et mandinka, Diolas et Mandingues à Ziguinchor (Senegal)**
- 11.00-11.30 *Coffee break*
- 11.30-12.00 **Friederike Lüpke**: **'We Bainouk speak the language of everybody around us' – a sociolinguistic profile of the Bainouk Gunyaamolo community**
- 12.00-12.30 **Klaus Beyer**: **Language contact, linguistic variation and social networks the case of the endangered Gur language Pana**
- 12.30-14.30 *Lunch break*
- CHAIR: TAL TAMARI**
- OBSERVER: LAMEEN SOUAG**
- 14.30-15.30 **Sory Camara**: **Propos mandenka sur les sentiers de la vie: Constances et Variations**
- 15.30-16.00 *Coffee break*
- 16.00-16.30 **Marie-Eve Huméry**: **Plurilinguisme, plurigraphie, digraphie dans le Fuuta Sénégalais**
- 16.30-17.00 **Chaired discussion based on observer notes and summaries**
- 19.00 *Conference dinner*

Monday 8 September 2008

PANEL 4: LEXICAL DIMENSIONS OF LANGUAGE CONTACT

CHAIR: GUILLAUME SEGERER

OBSERVER: LAMEEN SOUAG

- 10.00-11.00 **Fiona McLaughlin**: Conceptualizing multilingualism in the Atlantic-Mande contact zone: notes on the Wolof term *lakk-kat*
- 11.00-11.30 *Coffee break*
- 11.30-12.00 **Alexandra Vydrina** and **Valentin Vydrin**: Modification du kakabé sous l'influence linguistique peule
- 12.00-12.30 **Marie-Paule Ferry**: Mandinka loanwords in Bedik
- 12.30-14.30 *Lunch break*
- 14.30-15.00 **Tal Tamari**: Manding loanwords in the Fulfulde of Futa Jalon
- 15.30-16.00 *Coffee break*
- 16.00-16.30 **Chaired discussion based on observer notes and summaries**

PANEL 5: METHODOLOGICAL DIMENSIONS OF LANGUAGE CONTACT

CHAIR: FRIEDERIKE LÜPKE

OBSERVER: LAMEEN SOUAG

- 16.30-17.00 **Klaudia Dombrowsky-Hahn**: Contact phenomena between Senúfo and Mande languages: some methodological considerations

Tuesday 9 September 2008

PANEL 5: METHODOLOGICAL DIMENSIONS OF LANGUAGE CONTACT (CONTINUED)

CHAIR: FRIEDERIKE LÜPKE

OBSERVER: LAMEEN SOUAG

- 10.00-11.00 **Anna-Marie Diagne** and **Adjaratou Oumar Sall**: Contact des langues et documentation linguistique au Sénégal
- 11.00-11.30 *Coffee break*
- 11.30-12.00 **Chaired discussion based on observer notes and summaries**
- 12.00-13.00 **Plan for a possible research network**
- 13.00-14.30 *Lunch break*
- Afternoon *Departure*

5. Statistical information on participants

	Male	Female
Absolute number	10	8
%	56%	44%

Country of residence	Number of participants	%
Belgium	1	5.5
France	7	39
Germany	3	17
Russia	1	5.5
Senegal	1	5.5
The Netherlands	1	5.5
UK	2	11
US	2	11

Note: More nationalities than indicated in the table above were present because country of residence and origin of the participant do not always coincide.

Information on age is not included because data on the participants' age are not available.

6. Final list of participants

Dr. Klaus Beyer, Humboldt-Universität Berlin
Dr. Klaudia Dombrowsky-Hahn, Universität Bayreuth
Dr. Abdourahmane Diallo, Johann-Wolfgang-Goethe-Universität Frankfurt
Prof. G. Tucker Childs, Portland State University
Dr. Tal Tamari, Université Libre de Bruxelles
Dr. André W. Wilson, SOAS London
Dr. Anna-Marie Diagne, IFAN Dakar
Prof. Maarten Mous, Universiteit Leiden
Prof. Caroline Juillard, Université Paris 5
Dr. Konstantin Pozdniakov, CNRS-LLACAN Paris
Dr. Guillaume Ségéner, CNRS-LLACAN Paris
Dr. Marie-Paule Ferry, CNRS Paris
Dr. Marie-Eve Huméry, EHESS Paris
Prof. Serge Sauvageot, Sorbonne Paris
Prof. Fiona McLaughlin, University of Florida
Prof. Valentin Vydrine, Russian Academy of Sciences St.Petersburg
Prof. Sory Camara, Université Bordeaux 2
Dr. Friederike Lüpke, SOAS London