

# LANGUAGES IN CO-OWNERSHIP

A photograph showing multiple hands reaching towards a stack of books on a table, symbolizing shared ownership and collaboration.

This study day on **March 11 2020** discusses multilingualism from the perspective of sharing and co-owning languages, also exploring the barriers preventing the sharing of languages. Such a perspective includes:

- **Languages:** standards, attitudes to registers and accents, validation and valorisation of particular varieties, regulated and less regulated spaces, language and racism...
- **Speakers:** licensed and 'illegitimate' speakers, linguistic closure vs. openness to new speakers...
- **History:** colonial languages in postcolonial societies, metropolitan and appropriated forms of colonial languages, teaching of colonial languages, attitudes to indigenous languages, language and nationalism, decolonial visions of language-sharing
- **Mobility:** Multilingualism management in contexts of migration: support for repertoires, Finnish as a second language, multilingualism vs. bilingualism in English + ...
- **Sustainability:** strategies and visions for viable and sustainable multilingual ecologies, at schools, in universities and beyond, plain language (selkokieli)...

The study day is for everybody with an interest in learning, teaching, and sharing languages - language teachers, language support workers, students, researchers, language planners, and of course language learners and everybody with an interest in languages and education. The event combines presentations by teachers and researchers of the University of Helsinki and the Université Aix-Marseille on aspects of language learning and sharing in multilingual societies with a round-table discussion exploring the importance of nurturing cultural and linguistic diversity and hands-on workshop sessions in which participants can try out innovative language learning methods and explore language ideologies in practice. The learning situations covered include Finnish, Somali, Russian, English, French, Wolof, German, Swahili, Hindi, Urdu, Swedish, and Hebrew.

**Presentations in Athena 302, Siltavuorenpuisto 3 A, 00170 Helsinki, March 11 2020,  
9:00-12:00:**

**How can languages be shared and co-owned?**

Time	Presentation
9:00-9:30	Registration and welcome
9:30-10:00	Sabine Kraenker, Christian Rink, Olli-Philippe Lautenbacher, Joel Montserrat, Dominique Lüscher: <i>A pilot course in German, French and Finnish; our perception of the experiment in the middle of the semester as teachers, interpreters and students</i>
10:00-10:30	Lotta Aunio: <i>Swahili: National language and Lingua Franca</i>
10:30-11:00	Salla Kurhila: <i>Plurilingual practices in workplace meetings</i>
11:00-11:30	Sandrine Eschenauer: <i>Language mediation and empathy: theatre practice to improve language learning at school</i>
11:30-12:00	Liban Ali Hersi: <i>Modernization of Somali textbook materials in collaboration with teachers of Finnish as a second language</i>

**A pilot course in German, French and Finnish: our perception of the experiment in the middle of the semester as teachers, interpreters and students**

Olli-Philippe Lautenbacher, Christian Rink, Joel Montserrat, (Jaska Kammerer), Dominique Lüscher, Sabine Kraenker, University of Helsinki

The starting point of the communication is a pilot course on the representations of the second World War in German and French Literature and Cinema. This course included an interpretation of the presentations from German and French to Finnish, simultaneously and sequentially. The idea of this practice is to preserve the use of minor languages (French, German, Finnish) and to give to the students the possibility to obtain professional experience in a supportive environment. In the middle of the pilot study, it is now possible to give some feedback about this pilot course and to describe the students', teachers' and interpreters' perceptions of this experience.

**Modernization of Somali textbook materials in collaboration with teachers of Finnish as a second language**

Liban Ali Hersi, University of Helsinki

The Somali language, with its 25 million speakers worldwide, is the ninth largest language in Africa and the fifth largest language in the Afro-Asiatic language family. Somali is the official language of the Republic of Somalia, and it is spoken in Djibouti, Ethiopia and Kenya. There are approximately 20 000 Somali speakers in Finland and over fifty percent of them are minors. That indicates that there is a large number of students in the Finnish basic education with Somali as a first language.

Most of the Somali language materials out of date; the new ones are usually in very basic forms. Therefore there is a need for modern and comprehensive textbooks for different levels of language learners. For example, pupils in primary schools, university students, bilingual families and different interest groups who want to learn or to be introduced to Somali would like to have a proper textbook.

In the context of language co-ownership, we cannot ignore the importance of collaboration with teachers of Finnish as a second language. These teachers see from a very close range the needs of multilingual Somali students for language materials. For this reason, in this talk, I consider the potential of producing multilingual textbooks, with the Finnish language involved, for example in vocabulary, short grammatical explanations, important expressions etc.

## **Swahili: National Language and Lingua Franca**

Lotta Aunio, University of Helsinki

The first president of Tanzania, Julius Kambarage Nyerere (1922–1999), published his development blueprint *Azimio la Arusha* (Arusha Declaration) in 1967. In this publication he outlined the *Ujamaa* policy which included, for example, the creation of one-party system and self-reliance through the transformation of economic and cultural attitudes, but also the creation of Tanzanian identity as opposed to “tribal” identity through the use of Swahili as the national language. Swahili became the sole medium of instruction in primary education and the language of the parliament alongside English. *Bakita la Kiswahili la Taifa* (National Swahili Council) was established in 1967 to “emphasize and encourage correct and standard Swahili usage”. While Nyerere’s idealistic socialist policy turned out not to work in practice and the whole country was on the brink of bankruptcy when Nyerere resigned in 1985, the spirit of Ujamaa has lived on. Nyerere is still considered the Father of the Nation and Swahili is an integral part of Tanzanian identity.

But Swahili was the *lingua franca* of Eastern Africa long before Nyerere and it continues to be spoken in almost 10 countries. In addition, Swahili is (one of) the most well-known African languages outside Africa and the first African language as an official language of the African Union. Estimations of the number of L2 speakers of Swahili range from 50 to 150 million. Even in Tanzania there are more L2 than L1 speakers of Swahili. Kiunguja, the Swahili variant of the main island of Zanzibar is the base of Standard Swahili, but in practice there is a lot of variation in Swahili as the Swahili variants of the mainland reflect the other languages spoken in the respective areas. The spread and subsequent change of Swahili is amplified by digitalization and social media as Swahili has become the language of the East African music and youth culture.

## **Plurilingual practices in workplace meetings**

Salla Kurhila, University of Helsinki

In the globalizing world, an increasing number of work communities operate in more than one language, and many professionals conduct their work through a language which is not their first or strongest language. Many of them need to improve their language skills in order to find employment that corresponds to their education and to be considered as qualified professionals. In general, sufficient language skills are of primary importance in becoming a part of Finnish labor market and society.

In this talk, I will discuss practices in one workplace – a multilingual, non-governmental organisation in Finland. About half of the employees in the organization have a Finnish and half a Russian background. The work of these professionals is highly verbal, consisting, for example, of planning and organising different events, and discussing with collaborators and stakeholders. The professionals use different languages – mostly Finnish, Russian, and English – to perform these activities. Through selected extracts, I will show a few good practices used by the organisation to harness the plurilingual potential of the employees for the benefit of the work community.

## **Language mediation and empathy: theatre practice to improve language learning at school**

Sandrine Eschenauer, Université Aix-Marseille

In this talk, I will explore the links between language mediation, empathy and the creative processes that psychologists (Lubart, 2003) relates to cognitive skills, as well as their possible implementations in the classroom. Following the example of studies carried out in particular in secondary schools and primary schools, we will see how developing mediation skills through theatrical practice seems to represent a lever for language learning. What processes are at work in a creative approach of an aesthetic nature? Why and how are these creative processes related to emotions, which are inseparable from cognition, as stated in work in affective and social neuroscience? (Damasio, 2003; Immordino-Yang and Damasio, 2007)? What is the link with empathy (Aden, 2010, 2015; Aden and Eschenauer, 2014; Eschenauer, 2018)? I will focus on the dynamic and bodily processes at the heart of language learning, which I believe should be called upon more as a complement to reflexivity: for it is our whole body that enables us to learn. Concrete examples of plurilingual classroom activities will help to illustrate the scientific argument.

**Round-table discussion on the Tiedekulma Stage Tiedekulma Stage, Yliopistonkatu 4, 00100 Helsinki, March 11 2020, 13:00-14:00:**

**Why should we care about linguistic diversity and multilingual ecologies?**

Participants:

*Sandrine Eschenauer* is associate professor at the Aix-Marseille University (LPL UMR 7309) in the field of language sciences/didactics of foreign languages. She has experience of primary and secondary school levels, as well as university. She is particularly involved in "arts and languages" educational programs. Her research focuses on the translanguaging aspects observed while using performance (in particular through theatre) to teach two foreign languages at the same time (dual language classes), within a multicultural environment. Through arts, she encourages teachers and learners to unleash their creative potential, a process that echoes the biological roots of learning as a holistic phenomenon, which is both individual and inter-reactive.

*Heini Lehtonen* I am a sociolinguist currently working as a senior lecturer of university pedagogy in the Centre for University Teaching and Learning (HYPE) at the University of Helsinki. During my Ph.D. (2015) I conducted linguistic ethnography in multilingual schools in East Helsinki, focusing on the ways in which adolescents position themselves with regard to linguistic and ethnic diversities in the schools. In my post doc project (Itä-Helsingin uudet Suomen kielet, 2016 - 2019) I continued to work with the linguistic diversity of East Helsinki: together with other linguists, community artists, and a journalist, we organized sociolinguistically informed community art sessions with the aim of making diversity visible, enhancing linguistic awareness, and developing translanguaging pedagogies. In our current research project PEDAMO (together with Åsa Mickwitz, Dragana Cvitanovic and Auli Toom) we focus on linguistic and pedagogical support in bilingual bachelor programs (TvEx) at the University of Helsinki. My research interests include language ideologies, linguistic diversity and translanguaging pedagogies at universities.

*Friederike Lüpke*: I am an Africanist linguist specialising in the study of Mande and Atlantic languages, and Professor of African Studies at the University of Helsinki. Beyond grammar, I am interested in language as a social practice, and how different language ecologies are formed by and produce different language ideologies. My 2013 book *Repertoires and choices in African languages* (with Anne Storch) looks at African communicative settings, the interaction of speaking and writing, and the history of research on African language and its influence on language ideologies. My current research on the sociohistorical and linguistic aspects of small-scale multilingualism in village- and polity-based settings in Southern Senegal led to action research on repertoire-based literacies. Together with a local team of transcribers, researchers and members of the association LILIEMA ("Language-independent literacies for inclusive education in multilingual areas") I am developing a repertoire-based literacy programme for highly multilingual settings. Multilingualism is not only a focal area of my research. What makes sustainable multilingual ecologies and how they can be nurtured in families, small-scale settings and international higher education environments is a question that underpins my teaching and interaction at the university and beyond.

*Elizabeth Peterson*: I am a sociolinguist who specializes in topics of language contact and language attitudes. In recent years, my work has turned toward the phenomenon of English as a source language for borrowing into the languages of Europe, especially into Finnish. With this work, I am especially interested in the incorporation of English-sourced discourse-pragmatic particles into Finnish. My most recent work in this area has been an investigation of English swear-word borrowings in Finnish (with Johanna Vaattovaara). In addition, I am interested in attitudes and indexicalities relating to English-sourced borrowings, and, in a broader sense, toward the use of English in general. I recently wrote a book called *Making Sense of "Bad English": An introduction to language attitudes and ideologies* in which I discuss some of the views and discriminatory practices related to the use of English in different kinds of settings. I am on the steering committee for two different research groups: the Global Anglicisms Database research network and Discourse-Pragmatic Variation and Change research network. I am active in pursuing research-oriented assessments of the role of English and attitudes about English in the Nordic countries.

*Laura Siragusa*: I am a linguistic anthropologist, whose research interests comprise questions related to the revival of heritage languages, language ecology, verbal art and its relations to non-human animals and other beings, domestication, and health. Since 2008, I have been working with Veps -- a Finno-Ugric minority in northwestern Russia. While my initial interest regarded the promotion of Vepsian heritage language, I later

augmented my focus to verbal art and healing practices and relations between human and other-than-human beings as expressed in communicative practices. In particular, I am interested in how environments are constructed and construed through linguistic and paralinguistic practices. At the moment, I am working on three main projects: 1. Links between (indigenous) ways of speaking and environmental change. In 2019, I was awarded a KONE grant to conduct this research among rural Vepsian settlements. This work is grounded on indigenous methodologies and is thus coordinated with a Vepsian indigenous scholar; 2. Language responsibility in relation to a place. For this, I have co-edited a volume for Fennica Series Anthropologica (submitted); 3. Indigenous conceptualization of sustainability. This work has fruitfully provided a special issue for COSUST, which will be published in April 2020.

**Interactive workshop sessions in the Think Lounge at Tiedekulma, Yliopistonkatu 4, 00100 Helsinki, March 11 2020, 14:00-17:00:**

**Sharing in practice (participants sign up for one of three groups per slot)**

Time slot	Activity		
14:00-14:45	Language taster Somali (Liban Ali Hersi)	Language taster Wolof (Miriam Weidl)	Foreign language learning with performative theatre - best practice (Sandrine Eschenauer)
14:50-15:35	The LILIEMA repertoire-based literacy programme: taster and language tree activity (Miriam Weidl)	The LILIEMA repertoire-based literacy programme: taster and language tree activity (Friederike Lüpke)	Nationalism and the perception of language: Nationalism and the perception of languages - examples from Hebrew and Hindi/Urdu (Riikka Tuori & Mikko Viitamäki)
15:35-16:00	Break		
16:00-16:45	Language taster Swahili (Teresa Temu)	Language taster Wolof (Miriam Weidl)	Foreign language learning with performative theatre - best practice (Sandrine Eschenauer)
16:45-17:00	Closing remarks and event evaluation		

**Language taster Somali**

Liban Ali Hersi, University of Helsinki

The Somali language has 25 million speakers worldwide. This language of the Afro-Asiatic family is the ninth largest language in Africa. Somali is the official language of the Republic of Somalia, and is also spoken in Djibouti, Ethiopia and Kenya and by Diaspora speakers across the globe. There are approximately 20,000 Somali speakers in Finland; over fifty percent of them are minors. Somali is one of the languages taught at the University of Helsinki. In this session, you can make your first experience in learning Somali, through an interactive taster lesson.

**Language taster Swahili**

Teresa Temu, University of Helsinki

Swahili, the most widely known and spoken African language, belongs to the Bantu language family. It is used as an identity language mainly in Tanzania, Uganda and Kenya. As a lingua franca, it has spread to the African Great Lakes region and other parts of eastern and south-eastern Africa, for instance to Burundi, Mozambique, Oman, Somalia the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Africa. Swahili is regularly taught at the University of Helsinki. In this taster lesson, you can go beyond the Swahili words you surely know - *tembu*, *daktari*, *simba* and *jambo*, to give some examples - and learn greetings and some easy sentences.

## **Language taster Wolof**

Miriam Weidl, University of Helsinki

Wolof, an Atlantic language of the Niger-Congo phylum, is the biggest and most widely spoken language of Senegal and the Gambia, but can also be found in Guinea Bissau, Mali and Mauretania. Wolof is used cross-culturally and functions as a language of wider communication. In Senegal, it is spoken by more than 90% of the population, even though only about 40% of these speakers identify as Wolof. Constantly spreading, the language has a wide reach not only in West Africa, but all over the world. Wolof is taught for the first time at the University of Helsinki in the spring semester. In this taster, you can learn your first words and expressions in Wolof.

## **Nationalism and the perception of language – examples from Hebrew and Hindi-Urdu**

Riikka Tuori & Mikko Viitamäki, University of Helsinki

In this workshop, we explore how nationalism affects the perception of language and how this perception forms a potential obstacle to the co-ownership of a language. Hard-line nationalism supposes that each nation has one language and the language of a person is determined by their birth. Native speakers speak the languages within the borders of a nation state. They are also inherently the ultimate authorities in the usage of their mother tongue. In the international context, merging the limits of a language with the borders of a nation state has led to dividing languages with a centuries-long shared history into separate units.

In nation states, the ownership of a language is determined in several contexts: in legislation (Who has the right to use what language?), language policy and education (What is taught in what language?), language-learning materials (Who owns the correct standard of a language? How are they portrayed in the language-learning materials?) and culture (What belongs to the literary canon of a language?).

These are the themes we explore in the light of examples derived from the history and present of Hebrew and Hindi-Urdu.

## **The LILIEMA repertoire-based literacy programme: taster and language tree activity**

Friederike Lüpke/Miriam Weidl, University of Helsinki

Multilingual speakers have diverse and multilingual literacy needs. Language-based orthographies turn multilingual writing into a burden, since learners need to master different language-specific sets of conventions. Particularly in low-resource educational contexts, it is important to build on informal literacies that are adapted to multilingual contexts. We offer an interactive introduction to a method, inspired by West African grassroots practices. This programme is called LILIEMA (“Language-independent literacies for inclusive education in multilingual areas”) and has been developed in collaboration with the Senegalese LILIEMA association. Using the official alphabet of languages of Senegal, it offers multilingual literacy skills by teaching the sound-letter associations of this alphabet for all the languages present in the repertoires of learners in a classroom. This learning method is suitable for all multilingual areas where there are no strong language-specific standard cultures, for instance in language support classes for multilingual immigrant children and families who only have literacy skills in the colonial, official, languages of their home countries. LILIEMA does not only create adaptive and inclusive literacy skills. Through raising awareness of linguistic and cultural diversity present in the classroom, it valorises and celebrates multilingualism as a shared wealth. In this taster, we use the LILIEMA method with the repertoires of participants of the study day in order to create multilingual language trees that allow exploring how close and different languages can be in different vocabulary domains.

**This event is jointly organized by the University of Helsinki, the Institut Français de Finlande and the Goethe Institut Finnland. Attendance is free of charge, but registration is required.**

**Register here for the different activities: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/study-day-languages-in-co-ownership-tickets-94575013411?aff=ebdssbdestsearch>**