



Applied Linguistics and Literacy
in Africa and the Diaspora

An AILA Research Network
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Editor's Comment

Dear ReN Africa Members,

The second newsletter this year presents three exciting conferences coming up next year across the globe – on educational technologies in South Africa, Applied linguistics in London, and language policy and planning in Canada.

A special issue of *Professional and Academic English* is inviting submissions, including reports from conferences and book reviews.

New in this edition of the newsletter is the section *Competition and Prizes*, where we report on All Children Reading's invitation to students at some American universities (and Makerere, Uganda) to leverage technology to develop literacy in developing countries.

The International Literacy Association (ILA) is now generously waiving its fee for members from developing countries. And if you don't belong to an institution with a strong library, you might want to read two articles on literacy development and genre teaching that Caroline Kerfoot kindly made available for free.

Finally we would like to invite you to tell us about your research – including reflections and research in progress – in our next newsletter (deadline is February 28, 2016). All submissions are welcome, but we would particularly like to open up for reflections or findings that may not be suitable or ready for journal articles, but that might still be of interest to our readers.

With best regards,



Yours,

Juliet Tembe,
Editor





Upcoming Conferences and Events

South Africa International Conference on Educational Technologies, Pretoria, April 2016

The South Africa International Conference on Educational Technologies (SAICET) 2016 is an international refereed conference that is dedicated to the advancement of the practices in education. SAICET 2016 aims to offer a platform for academics and researchers in educational technologies from all over the world to deliberate, network and present a wide range of perspectives, scholarship, and expertise in the pursuit of excellence in education. Theme: Empowering the 21st Century Learner. <http://aa-rf.org/saicet2016/>

Deadline for submissions: December 10, 2015

Dates: April 24–26, 2016

Venue: Manhattan Hotel, Pretoria, South Africa

BAAL Language in Africa SIG, London, May 2016

The 2016 LiASIG Annual Meeting will be on May 6th at the University of East London under the title “Technology and Media: Emerging Trends in Africa and the Diaspora”. The plenary speaker will be Professor Bonny Norton. Please send abstracts of up to 250 words to Annette Islei, Convenor, annetteislei@gmail.com

Deadline for submissions: March 28, 2016

Date: May 6, 2016

Venue: University of East London, UK

Multidisciplinary Approaches in Language Policy and Planning Conference, Calgary, Sept. 2016

This international conference will be held at the University of Calgary in Alberta, Canada. We invite papers and colloquia that approach language policy from a variety of theoretical and methodological perspectives, and in a variety of contexts, from the local/institutional to national/global. We invite abstracts (300 words maximum) for submissions. Plenary Speakers include Ericka Albaugh (Bowdoin College), Leanne Hinton (The University of California at Berkeley), and David Cassels Johnson (The University of Iowa). www.werklund.ucalgary.ca/lpp

Deadline for submissions: February 29, 2016

Dates: September 1–3, 2016

Venue: University of Calgary, Canada



Call for journal articles and book chapters

Professional and Academic English

Professional and Academic English is a peer-reviewed journal of the International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language (IATEFL) English for Specific Purposes Special Interest Group (ESP SIG). We now seek *articles, conference reports* and *book reviews* for Issue 47 (publication: Spring 2016). [More information](#).

Deadline: November 23, 2015

Publications

Ibibio–English bilingual dictionary

The first Ibibio–English bilingual dictionary was launched on October 8 at the University of Uyo (UNIUYO) in Nigeria. The Ibibio people are a dominant ethnic group from the “lower cross” region of Akwa Ibom State in Southern Nigeria. The Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) noted that it was the first time an academic event in a university was presented primarily in a vernacular – Ibibio. Officials from the state government encouraged the development of textbooks and orthography in accordance with education policy to follow. An Ibibio socio-ethnic group named Mboho Mkparawa Ibibio (MMI) declared their bid to foster the Ibibio language and culture through an Ibibio language centre in Manchester, UK and New York. MMI is also running a school that teaches Ibibio language and customs and sponsors Ibibio Writers Forum – a longstanding writing group composed of veteran literary artists. For more info, contact Kathryn Philip (kathwiz2@gmail.com), academic librarian at the University of Uyo.

Books

[Abolaji S. Mustapha and Sara Mills \(Eds.\) \(2015\)](#). *Gender representation in learning materials: International perspectives*. London: Routledge.

“This collection of various representations of gender found in English Language Learning textbooks is a rich one with a new theoretical visions to the field as well as fresh explorations of textbooks from around the world. Mills and Mustapha have assembled an incredible variety of original explorations of how gender still matters and still reveals problematic societal assumptions.” Professor Allyson Ajule, Trinity Western University, Canada.

[Juffermans, Kasper \(2015\)](#). *Local Languageing, Literacy and Multilingualism in a West African Society*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

[Juffermans, Kasper, Yonas Mesfun Asfaha and Ashraf Abdelhay \(eds.\) \(2014\)](#). *African Literacies: Ideologies, Scripts, Education*. Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars.



Articles and book chapters

Sherris, A., & Burns, M. S. (2015). New border crossings for the interaction hypothesis: The effects of feedback on Gonja speakers learning English in a rural school in Ghana. *Pedagogies: An International Journal*.

Arkorful, Kingsley & Adger, Carolyn Temple (2015). Language-in-education policy and practice in Ghanaian classrooms: Lessons from School for Life's complementary education programme. In A. Yiakoumetti (Ed.), *Multilingualism and language in education: Sociolinguistic and pedagogical perspectives from Commonwealth countries*, (pp. 31–47). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Prizes and competitions

“Mobiles for Reading” competition seeks student innovators

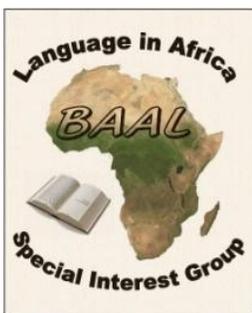
The annual Big Ideas prize launched on September 8, once again with the “Mobiles for Reading” challenge sponsored by All Children Reading. Mobiles for Reading challenges university teams to develop novel mobile technology-based solutions or adapt existing technologies in innovative ways to enhance early grade reading scores. Pre-proposal deadline is November 12.

All Children Reading will hold two webinars about the Mobiles for Reading prize. [Competition details & to apply.](#)



Reports from conferences

Language in Africa SIG Annual Meeting, May 22, 2015, Aston University, UK



The [British Association for Applied Linguistics](#) (BAAL) LiASIG meeting this year saw a rich array of papers on the opportunities and challenges associated with the development of indigenous African languages under the heading “Developing Languages in Africa: Social and educational perspectives”. Plenary speaker Lutz Marten (SOAS) set out three contexts of language development: institution driven, community driven and ‘crowd driven’. Clement Kolawole (University of Ibadan) discussed lack of development of languages in Nigeria due to poor funding and commitment, and Willy Ngaka (Makerere University, Uganda) asked for close partnership

between local government, academics, traditional/cultural institutions and NGOs to change negative attitudes.



Annette Islei (Mountains of the Moon University) with Margaret Baleeta (Bugema University) suggested that lack of research into local languages in Ugandan universities had hindered development of appropriate reading pedagogies. Similarly, Hellen Inyega (University of Nairobi) asked for combining international research with research into local contexts.

Elvis Yevudey (Aston University) and Golden Ekpe (SOAS) investigated code-switching in Ghana (Ewe), and Nigeria (Oro), finding that it could be an affirmation of multilingual identity in Oro, while mainly catering for limited linguistic competences in Ewe. Mary Edward (University of Bergen) explained that the traditional Adomorobe Sign Language of SE Ghana is now highly endangered, partly due to the use Ghanaian Sign Language in school. Beatrice Owiti (University of Huddersfield) discussed problems of interpretation in courtrooms in Kenya through subtle changes of meaning between English and Dholuo, and interpreters' weak competence.

Finally, on a very positive note, Andrew Caines and Paula Buttery (University of Cambridge) and Fridah Katushemererwe (Makerere University) are building Natural Language Processing tools for Ugandan Runyakitara, aiming to integrate these into CALL applications and provide a test case for revitalization of endangered languages through education and technology.

Annette Islei, Convenor

Presentations

The three presentations gave different perspectives on language and education: Charlyn Dyers (U Western Cape) criticised reductive language labelling and its effect on multilingual education projects, e.g. Cape Town 'Kaaps'. From Nigeria, Taiwo Ilori's (Anglia Ruskin U) study of Lagos secondary students showed that English was seen as the only source of empowerment, and Rebecca Ishaku demonstrated the influence of teaching English orthography on its pronunciation in Tera.

Ross Graham, Outgoing Convenor

In the field

Adult Literacy and Change

Ian Cheffy and Joel Trudell, both of SIL Africa, are carrying out a research project into the changes that have come about in the lives of people and their communities through mother tongue reading and writing. They have already visited language communities in Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Ghana and Kenya and interviewed a number of people who learned to read and write in their mother tongue some years ago as young people or adults. Many of these were not able to read and write before acquiring literacy in their own language while some were literate in an official language. Having identified a number of changes associated with mother tongue literacy, Joel and Ian intend to continue their research in the same communities by exploring the factors that led to the identified changes coming about. If you would like more information, please contact Ian Cheffy: ian_cheffy@sil.org.



Introducing two new resources from SIL Africa for enhancing the effectiveness of language arts instruction in minority language communities:

Community-based literature development. With the prevalence of international language-medium classrooms, African communities risk the loss of the values and local knowledge that matter most to them. SIL Africa's *Community-Based Literature Development* (CBLD) program provides a range of easy-reading titles in the local language, tailored to the knowledge and learning priorities of the communities, and effectively building reading skills and habits among young readers. Attractively illustrated and printed, and authored by community parents, teachers and students, these books have proven immensely popular with children and teachers alike. The relevance of the topics for the community makes them ideal teaching resources as well.

Bridging reading skills from L1 to English. Multilingual education isn't just about learning to read in the first language; it's also about transferring reading skills from that language to a second language. Failure to transfer these skills can hinder learning outcomes in later grades. A new SIL Africa resource provides step-by-step assistance to L1 readers as they bridge their reading skills into English. This curriculum focuses on the biggest challenges that African L1 readers face, including English vocabulary building, and addressing the differences in writing systems and spelling conventions between their language and English. The result: stronger and more confident readers, in both their own language and in English.

For more information contact Barbara Trudell at barbara_trudell@sil.org

Miscellaneous

Free membership in the International Literacy Association

The International Literacy Association (ILA) has a new membership policy for people in the developing world. ILA is doing everything possible to building up African membership and influence, so ILA is giving African ("Developing Economy") members FREE membership. This means that you can be a full member of the organization and have free access to all the online research and reading materials on its website, and you can read *Literacy Today* online for free. As a member you still receive conference discounts and discounts on ILA books. [More information.](#)

Two free articles from *Language and Education*

Caroline Kerfoot coedited a special issue for the journal *Language and Education* entitled "Language in epistemic access: Mobilising multilingualism and literacy development in South Africa". She has generously offered to share her two articles with those who do not have access this journal. Please note that the number of downloads is limited.

[Kerfoot, C., & Simon-Vandenberg, A.-M. \(2015\).](#) Language in epistemic access: mobilising multilingualism and literacy development for more equitable education in South Africa.





Kerfoot, C., & Van Heerden, M. (2015). Testing the waters: exploring the teaching of genres in a Cape Flats Primary School in South Africa.

Tell us about your research!

Send us a short profile (one paragraph) of the research you are undertaking on language or literacy education in Africa by February 28, 2016, for inclusion in our next issue.