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Sambulo Ndlovu (Great Zimbabwe University/JGU Mainz)

Partial homophony and predictability in lexicalising S'ncamtho and Ndebele slang

S'ncamtho is a Ndebele-based urban youth language in Zimbabwe (Ndlovu, 2018), it is very close to the Zulu based Scamtho (Ntshangase, 1993). Like other youth varieties, it utilises lexicalisation and relexicalisation to create lexis (Halliday, 1976). Youth varieties borrow lexis from their base languages, and other languages and using various strategies they create lexis which forms a unique register from the base language's lexis (Hurst & Mesthrie, 2013). The study is guided by findings from literature that state that urban youth varieties in Africa and beyond employ various strategies to create distinct registers. It has been established that youth varieties employ strategies such as metaphor, onomastic synecdoche, affixation, dummy affixation, and trans-languaging (Mugaddam, 2015), among other strategies. However, observations in the creation of Ndebele slang and S'ncamtho indicate phonological manipulation which relies on predictability based on context and social group membership.

This talk demonstrates how partial homophony is deployed to create decoy lexis whereby, words which share partial phonemes are exchanged. This strategy conveniently generates slang, euphemism, and word play. The research identifies the structural and pragmatic components within this lexicalising strategy and how lexical borrowings from English, Ndebele and onomastics are deployed in the strategy. The strategy has not been widely researched in youth languages and its characterisation opens up a new avenue of research in youth language registers.

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Institutskolloquium Sommersemester 2021 (Leitung: Nico Nassenstein)

Wann? Dienstag, 11. May 2021, 18:00–19:15 Uhr

Wo? Konferenzschaltung via Zoom Meeting

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

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