

Researching morphosyntactic variation in Swahili

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The project ‘Grammatical variation in Swahili’ is a collaboration between the University of Essex, SOAS University of London, Kenyatta University (Kenya) and the University of Dar es Salaam (Tanzania) which explores present-day morphosyntactic variation in Swahili. The project considers the role played by language contact and multilingualism in the variation attested, and the relationship between structural variation and speaker identity. In this talk, we present some of the data collected within the project so far, focusing on a number of morphosyntactic features such as TAM marking and evaluative morphology. We also discuss methodological considerations involved in examining structural variation in highly multilingual contexts and the link between variation and speaker identity.