

The concept of style/register shifting in multilingual African contexts

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In recent years the investigation of communicative styles has been intensified also with respect to African settings (see e.g. Kube 2005, Reuster-Jahn & Kießling 2006, Farenkia 2008). In this context, the present paper addresses the issue from two different angles. Firstly, the sociolinguistic concept of style/register as such will be (re)considered. Secondly, it will be argued that style/register shifting may take two opposite directions. It may lead to the creation of peer group identity/cohesion or it may be used to establish hierarchical power relations. For illustration, examples will be drawn from different multilingual African speech communities.