

Aspects of Youth language in Khartoum

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Youths and young adults in many urban African centers tend to create their own languages, in order to set themselves apart from the older generation. In this study we show how younger people from different social backgrounds in Khartoum manipulate language to serve their own communicative functions. Three social groups, university students, Regsha drivers and street boys, have been chosen for the purpose of the study. Intensive interviews were conducted to collect data on the language these groups use in their daily communication, known publicly as Randok. Analysis shows that Randok has almost all of the features of Halliday's anti-languages: The creation of new words for old ones, overlexicalisation, orientation towards the foregrounding of social values, and secrecy. Interestingly, street boys, classified as having the lowest social status, appear to initiate youth's language in Khartoum. Their language finds its way to the Regsha drivers, university students and the Khartoum speech community at large through networks of relations between people from different social and economic backgrounds.