



Swahili  
Colloquium  
Bayreuth



UNIVERSITÄT  
BAYREUTH



## **Kongamano la Kiswahili la 36**

**Bayreuth, tarehe 17 Mei hadi 19 Mei 2024**

Wapendwa washiriki,

Tuna furaha kukualikeni kuadhimisha pamoja nasi Kongamano la Kiswahili la thelathini na sita mjini Bayreuth! Kongamano la 2024 litaandaliwa kwa kushirikiana tena na wenzetu kutoka chuo kikuu cha Moi (Eldoret).

Tangu hapo mwaka wa 1987, ambapo kongamano la kwanza lilifanyika ili kusherehekea miaka 100 ya ufundishaji wa Kiswahili vyuoni nchini Ujerumani, Kongamano la Kiswahili limepiga hatua nyingi. Kongamano letu ni jukwaa la kipekee linalofanyika kila mwaka katika chuo kikuu cha Bayreuth. Mkutano huu unajumuisha jamaa kubwa ya kimataifa ya wasomi na watafiti wa taaluma mbalimbali ambao wanachunguza vipengele kadha wa kadha vya lugha ya Kiswahili, fasihi na tamaduni mahususi za Afrika Mashariki barani Afrika na ughaibuni. Mitazamo inayojikita katika nyanja mbalimbali pamoja na michango anuwai kutoka masomo ya kiisimu au kifasihi hadi anthropolojia na historia ndicho kipengele kinachodhihirisha upekee wa Kongamano hilo. Tutafurahi kuwakaribisha tena wote ambao huhudhuria Kongamano katika miaka iliyopita na pia tutafurahi kuwapokea washiriki wapya katika kongamano lijalo.

### **Mada kuu ya Kongamano la Kiswahili la 36**

Kongamano la 36 la Kiswahili litakuwa na mada ya "Kujikomboa na Fikra za Kikoloni: Kufikiria Upya Nafasi na Jukumu la Lugha za Kiafrika." Kupitia kitabu chake maarufu cha Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o kiitwacho "Kujikomboa na Fikra za Kikoloni," kongamano letu la mwaka huu litachukua mawazo haya kama chanzo cha hamasa, tukizingatia kumbukumbu za maandiko yake. Ni muhimu kukumbuka kwamba Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o alikamilisha kitabu hicho kwa sehemu kubwa miaka arobaini iliyopita alipokuwa hapa Bayreuth, kama anavyoeleza kwenye sehemu ya shukrani ya kitabu chake. Hivyo basi, lengo kuu la Kongamano la 36 la Kiswahili ni kujikita na kuzingatia maswali muhimu na anuwai kutoka kwenye kitabu chake cha "Kujikomboa na Fikra za Kikoloni" na kushiriki katika mazungumzo ya ana kwa ana na Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, ambaye kwa bahati nzuri atajiunga nasi hapa Bayreuth kwenye Kongamano letu la Kiswahili.

Kwa pamoja, tutajadili jinsi lugha inavyounda uelewa wa dunia na hatimaye kutumika kama chombo cha utawala (chenye nguvu) na pia ukombozi. Wazo sio tu kuchunguza na kuyachukua mawazo ya Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, bali pia kuyafanya yawe na tija katika mjadala wa sasa kuhusu kujikomboa na ukoloni na kupanga upya uzalishaji wa mawazo, maarifa ya kitaaluma, mitaala, na nyaraka. Hivyo ni vitu ambavyo vimehimiza kujumuishwa kwa maarifa mbalimbali kutoka kwenye jamii tofauti za kiepistemolojia za nchi za Kusini mwa Afrika. Lakini bado kuna changamoto katika ujumuishaji wa kurunzi za maarifa (ya kumbukumbu) ambazo hazipo kwenye kanuni za kikoloni. Kwa mtazamo wetu, jambo hili kwa kiasi kikubwa ni suala la lugha (tafsiri), ambalo limepuuzwa kwa kiasi kikubwa katika masomo ya Kiafrika.

Hivyo basi kwenye kongamano la 36 la Kiswahili, tunapenda kwa dhati kukualika kujihusisha na kitabu cha "Kujikomboa na Fikra za Kikoloni" kwa lengo la kujiuliza kuhusu msamiati wetu wa jumla wa uchambuzi na methodolojia zetu. Mbali na mkabala wa kietraktivisti kuhusu ukusanyaji wa data na dikotomia (uwili) ya kategoria za kimagharibi na data kutoka kwenye lugha za Kiafrika, tunapendelea kuzingatia misugvano yenye tija, tofauti katika matumizi, tabia za mahusianisho, na historia za istilahi, kama vile "utu" ('humanness'), "heshima" ('dignity'/respect'), "dunia" ('world'), "bahari" ('ocean'), au pia "mnyama" ('animal'). Je, vipi istilahi za Kiswahili zinaweza kutumika kama kategoria za uchambuzi? Na jinsi gani tunaweza kuvuka mawanda ya dhana ya urahisi wa kufasirika (easy translatability)? Hadithi (kama kipera mojawapo cha fasihi) kwenye lugha za Kiafrika zinawezaje kutoa njia mpya za kufikiria na kutafakari kuhusu dunia? Je, kuna njia mpya gani za kufanya utafiti wa kiisimu kwa kuhusianisha maarifa ya jamii?

Vile vile, kujikita kwenye lugha ya Kiswahili haimaanishi kuwa tunataka kuangukia kwenye mtazamo wa kizalendo wa kusifu lugha ya Kiswahili tu. Bali pia, kwa kuzingatia kuwa kwenye miktadha mingi ya Kiafrika huwa kuna lugha mbalimbali, tunataka kujumuisha Kiswahili katika maswali muhimu na miktadha ambayo kwanza inazingatia aina mbalimbali za (Ki) (vi) swahili kwenye bara na ughaibuni pamoja na mshikamano wake na kuingiliana na lugha nyingine. Pili, ni vyema kutafakari kwa umakini kuhusu kuingiliana kwa uzalishaji wa maarifa ya dunia. Je, istilahi za Kiswahili, kwa mfano, fasihi 'literature' iliyoundwa kwenye miaka ya 1960, au hata pia jinsia, zimewezaje kuathiriwa na taasisi zilizoshikiria mawazo ya kikoloni, mitaala, na nyaraka za sera?

Kwa kuhitimisha, kongamano la Kiswahili la 36 pia linakaribisha michango inayozingatia mawanda/mawazo/urithi wa kikoloni wa taaluma za Kiswahili yenyewe. Ni ukweli usiopingika kuwa utafiti wa Kiswahili umeongezeka kimataifa: je, ni aina gani za taaluma za Kiswahili zilizoanzishwa nje ya nchi za Magharibi, kama vile Uchina, Japani, na Brazil? Mbali na mazungumzo na Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, kongamano la 36 la Kiswahili litajumuisha mambo kadhaa, miongoni mwao ni uzinduzi wa kitabu kilichotafsiriwa na Ken Walibora Waliaula na kuhaririwa na Annmarie Drury kinachoitwa "The Imaginative Vision of Abdilatif Abdalla's Voice of Agony". Pia, kutakuwa na meza duara kuhusu kufikiria upya fasihi linganishi ya Kiswahili iliyoandaliwa na Roberto Gaudioso na Emiliano Minerba.

## **Usajili**

Tutapokea michango kwa Kiswahili na Kiingereza. Kila wasilisho litapewa muda wa dakika thelathini; ambamo dakika ishirini ni za kuwasilisha na dakika kumi ni za majadiliano na hadhira. Tafadhalini mjiandikishe kwa baruapepe kupitia [swahili@uni-bayreuth.de](mailto:swahili@uni-bayreuth.de) na mtutumie kichwa cha makala au mapendekezo ya paneli mpaka tarehe 20 Januari 2024. Iwapo mtawasilisha kwa Kiswahili, tutumie pia muhtasari wa makala kwa Kiingereza. Tunawaomba wote kujiandikisha hata ikiwa mtashiriki bila ya kuwasilisha makala, ili tuweze kupanga vizuri.

## **Wakati/Mahali**

Kongamano litafanyika kuanzia tarehe 17 mei hadi 19 mwaka 2024, Iwalewahaus Chuo Kikuu cha Bayreuth. Tutatoa taarifa zaidi kuhusu Kongamano hapo baadaye. Pia, endapo kuna maswali yoyote usisite kuwasiliana nasi kwa barua pepe hii, [swahili@uni-bayreuth.de](mailto:swahili@uni-bayreuth.de)

Karibuni nyote!

Salamu nyingi kutoka Bayreuth na Eldoret,

Kamati ya watayarishaji wa kongamano

Clarissa Vierke, Andrew Harvey, Mark Kandagor and Serena Talento

Swahili Colloquium

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## 36<sup>th</sup> Swahili Colloquium

Bayreuth, from 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>st</sup> May 2024

Dear Colleagues,

We would like to cordially invite you to celebrate the 36<sup>th</sup> Swahili Colloquium with us in Bayreuth! The 2024 Colloquium will again take place in cooperation with our partners at Moi University (Eldoret).

The Swahili Colloquium has come a long way since its inception in 1987, when it was held to celebrate 100 years of academic Swahili teaching in Germany. It is now a well-established forum hosted annually at Bayreuth University, which brings together a large international community of scholars and researchers from different disciplines, who work on various aspects of the language and the respective culture(s) in Eastern Africa and the diaspora. The multidisciplinary approach and the wide range of contributions from linguistics and literary studies to anthropology and history particularly account for the appeal of the colloquium. We are always looking forward to welcoming both old and new participants to the Swahili Colloquium.

### 36<sup>th</sup> Swahili Colloquium

The 36<sup>th</sup> Swahili Colloquium will have the topic **“Decolonizing the Mind. Rethinking the role of African languages“**. We take as a starting point the anniversary of Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o’s conceptualization of his famous book “Decolonizing the Mind“, which he worked on to a considerable part in Bayreuth forty years ago in 1984 (as he also writes in the acknowledgements). The central concern of the 36<sup>th</sup> Swahili Colloquium is to focus on main questions from „Decolonizing the Mind“ and to engage in a conversation with Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o who will join us in person for the Swahili Colloquium.

Together we will discuss foremost how language creates and shapes the very understanding of world and is hence a powerful tool of both domination but also liberation. The idea is not merely to take stock of Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o’s thinking, but to render it productive in current debate about decolonizing and decentering academic knowledge production, curriculums and archives which have insisted on the inclusion of a variety of knowledges from diverse epistemological communities from the Global South. Still, particularly the inclusion of alternative

archives of knowledge besides the colonial canon remains a challenge. From our perspective, this is to a large extent a question of language (and translation), which has largely been neglected in African Studies.

For the 36th Swahili Colloquium, we want to invite you to engage with “Decolonizing the Mind“ with the aim to question our seemingly universal vocabulary of analysis as well as our methodologies. Going beyond the extractivist approach of fieldwork and the typical dichotomy of Western categories and ‘data’ coming from African languages, we want to consider the productive frictions, differences in use, associations practice and histories of terms, like e.g. *utu* ,humanness ‘, *heshima* ,dignity’/,respect’, *dunia* ,world’, *bahari* ,ocean’ or also *mnyama* ,animal’. How can Swahili terms be rendered productive as categories of analysis? How do we go beyond the notion of an easy translatability? How can also fiction in African languages in various languages offer new ways of thinking the world? Are there new ways of doing linguistic research involving community knowledge?

Focusing on Swahili does not mean that we want to fall into an isolate view or a nativist praise of African languages only. Rather, we want to include Swahili in critical inquiries which, firstly, take the diversity of Swahili varieties on the continent and the diaspora into account as well as its entanglement with other languages, since most African contexts are multilingual. Secondly, it also necessitates a careful reflection upon the entanglement of global knowledge production. How have Swahili terms, like for instance, *fasihi* ,literature ‘coined in the 1960s, or, gender’ *jinsia* been shaped by colonially entrenched institutions, curriculums and policy papers?

Finally, the 36th Swahili Colloquium also invites for contributions which consider the colonial legacies of Swahili Studies itself. The study of Swahili has been increasingly globalized: How are versions of Swahili Studies constructed outside of the West, as for instance in China Korea, Japan, Brazil?

Apart from conversations with Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o, the 36<sup>th</sup> Swahili Colloquium will include i.a. the launching of the book “The Imaginative Vision of Abdilatif Abdalla’s Voice of Agony. Poems Translated by Ken Walibora Waliula/Edited by Annmarie Drury”. It will feature a panel on rethinking comparative African literature organized by Roberto Gaudioso and Emiliano Minerba.

### **Registration**

We would like to ask you to give your paper either in Swahili or English. Each contribution will be granted 20 minutes (including ten minutes of discussion). Please register via email (to [swahili@uni-bayreuth.de](mailto:swahili@uni-bayreuth.de)) and send us a provisional title of your presentation or a panel proposal until 20<sup>th</sup> January 2024. If your presentation is going to be in Swahili, we kindly ask you for a short English summary. Please also register if you merely intend to participate without giving a paper.

### **Location/time**

The conference will take place from 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> May 2024 at Iwalewahaus, University of Bayreuth. In case, you have any questions, please, do not hesitate to contact us via [swahili@uni-bayreuth.de](mailto:swahili@uni-bayreuth.de)

Yours sincerely,

The organizational team

Clarissa Vierke, Andrew Harvey, Mark Kandagor and Serena Talento

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