

## PhD scholarship in sociolinguistics

The research unit LLACAN (*Langage, langues et cultures d'Afrique*, CNRS-INALCO-EPHE, Paris) invites applications for two three-year PhD positions, as part of the project **OriKunda: On the origins of Chikunda, "a language without a land"**, funded by the French *Agence Nationale de la Recherche* (ANR-22-CE54-0009-01) in the form of a Research Grant awarded to Rozenn Guérois (PI, CNRS-LLACAN).

### About the OriKunda project

The OriKunda project (04.2023-03.2027) aims to revise the unique history of the Chikunda people, from its genesis until today, through their language. Originally, the Chikunda were troops of Bantu-speaking slave soldiers from different communities who defended land concessions ("prazos") owned by Portuguese settlers along the Lower Zambezi River (central Mozambique) during the colonial era. From a common social identity came an ethnic identity involving the creation of a language, Chikunda, resulting from intra-Bantu dialect and language mixing. With the collapse of the "prazo" system in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the emancipation of slaves, the Chikunda retreated westwards to the confluence of the Zambezi and Luangwa Rivers, which today corresponds to the border area between Zambia, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe. The available sources on the Chikunda are essentially historical; notably the studies of Allen Isaacman. No linguistic material on the language is currently available, not even a grammatical sketch or a lexicon. Yet, the unusual history of the Chikunda raises fascinating questions from a linguistic point of view, with potentially major repercussions for the historical narrative of this community.

The OriKunda project aims to study the Chikunda language, both synchronically and diachronically. Three main research questions will be addressed: (1) What is the genesis of the Chikunda language? (2) What does the Chikunda cultural vocabulary tell us about Chikunda history? To which extent is Chikunda history reflected in its cultural vocabulary? (3) What is the vitality of Chikunda from its creation to the present day? Through these questions, the project falls within several subdisciplines of linguistics, including descriptive linguistics, historical linguistics, anthropological linguistics, and sociolinguistics.

### PhD 2: Sociolinguistics

#### Objectives

The doctoral researcher will explore the sociolinguistic aspects of the Chikunda language as spoken in Zambia, Zimbabwe, and Mozambique, providing a comparative analysis of each variety's internal dynamics as well as influencing factors specific to each country. Particularly, the following questions will be investigated: 1) how the language has evolved in each of the three countries where it is spoken; 2) how the language is used in daily life, its intergenerational transmission, the language policies of each country, language practices, perceptions, and attitudes; 3) how the Chikunda people's feeling of unity has evolved over time.

The PhD position will include fieldwork in Zambia, Zimbabwe, and Mozambique.

### Activities

- Conduct sociolinguistic surveys in situ (Zimbabwe, Zambia and Mozambique);
- Document and theorize language practices, their contexts, their roles, and the discourses surrounding these practices;
- Document and theorize language variation and contact, multilingualism, language policies, and transnational mobilities of Chikunda communities in Zimbabwe, Zambia, and Mozambique, and identify the issues involved;
- Use theoretical and methodological frameworks appropriate to the analysis of language practices in relation to linguistic and socio-anthropological issues.

### Selection criteria

- A Master's degree in sociology and/or (socio)linguistics and/or African studies or an equivalent degree by the start date;
- Background in sociolinguistics;
- Training in field methods and research experience in analyzing languages without a written tradition (preferably Bantu languages), their environment and their speakers, is beneficial;
- Strong analytical skills and proven self-motivation to complete independent work;
- Strong team player qualities (you will work in an international team where communication is crucial for the success of the project);
- Strong proficiency in (spoken and written) English, reasonable command of Portuguese, and the desire to gain good working knowledge of French.

### Our offer

- Full-time position, starting on October 1<sup>st</sup> 2023 for 36 months;
- Salary based on French and CNRS regulations (approx. 1700€ net salary);
- According to French labor laws, benefits include 30 days holiday per year plus Bank Holidays;
- An inspiring, international, environment with the domain's leading scientists at the LLACAN research unit (Paris area);<sup>1</sup>
- Facilities, academic and IT support, and appropriate allowances for fieldwork and conference attendance.

### Your application

To apply please follow instructions at: <https://emploi.cnrs.fr/Offres/Doctorant/UMR8135-ROZGUE-002/Default.aspx?lang=EN>

As part of your application, you will have to upload a CV and a cover letter explaining your research background and interests. For all enquiries, contact Rozenn Guérois ([rozenn.guerois@cnrs.fr](mailto:rozenn.guerois@cnrs.fr)).

Application Deadline: **25 May 2023**

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<sup>1</sup> Web Address: <https://llacan.cnrs.fr/> (in French), [https://llacan.cnrs.fr/index\\_en.php](https://llacan.cnrs.fr/index_en.php) (in English)