

**Open Seminar**

# LITERACY DEVELOPMENT IN A MULTILINGUAL SOCIETY

- EXPERIENCES FROM NIGERIA -

**【Date】** November 16 (Monday) 17:00-19:00

**【Venue】** Meeting Room #1 (GSID 8<sup>th</sup> floor)

**【Lecturer】**

**Oyenike Adeosun, Ph.D.**

Language, Literacy & Literature Education,  
Faculty of Education,  
University of Lagos, Nigeria

**【Content】**

Literacy is a major concern of the world. Its scope is traditionally defined as ‘the ability to read and use written information and write appropriately in a range of contexts’ (UNESCO, 1998). Multilingualism is a norm Africa, while illiteracy is a major barrier to development, especially in sub-Saharan Africa in which Nigeria is located. Nigeria functions within a complex myriad of languages, a fact Truddel (1995) perceived to be an advantage in the sense that ‘multilingualism contributes to the reinforcement of one’s own, local identity in order to permit healthy engagement with the rest of the world, and that is its primary advantage relative to globalization’. Other researches have shown that intensive exposure to two or more different languages helps build the cognitive basis for creativity. How has Nigeria been able to develop the processes for functional literacy within a complex language scenario? Is multilingualism really an advantage in this context? What kind of literacy is being developed, considering that globalization and the knowledge society have expanded the scope of literacy from ‘functional’ to ‘enlightenment’ where literacy nowadays function as ‘an instrument of total transformation of the individual’ (UNESCO, 2006). The seminar gives an insight into Nigeria’s language policy and how it has impacted on literacy development.