

Foreword

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As a result of linguistic globalization and its manifestation in modern technocratic trends, about one-third of the world's indigenous languages are endangered and in two to three generations many will be driven into extinction. Over thirty percent of the 1,800 or more languages native to Africa are spoken by fewer than 100,000 people and, in many instances, the majority speakers of these minority languages are over 60 years old. Globalization and demographics together, then, will soon cause many of the continent's languages to suffer functional encroachment and eventual endangerment. For this reason, the 36th Annual Conference on African Linguistics (ACAL), hosted by Georgia Southern University in the Spring of 2005, adopted as its theme: "Shifting the Center of Africanism: Language, Economic Regionalism and Globalization." This theme, reflecting Africa's struggle with its past as well as its gradual political maturation in a globalized world, produced a remarkable outpouring of high-quality research and sophisticated sociolinguistic analyses, clearly manifest in the caliber of the papers presented at the conference.

In keeping with the conference theme, two plenary sessions on general linguistic issues related to globalization were complemented by three featured panels that focused on major African languages: IsiZulu, Kiswahili and Yoruba. At least two of these special sessions were featured each day of the conference. Dr. Zaline Makini Roy-Campbell's keynote paper, "The State of African Languages and the Global Language Politics: Empowering African Languages in the Era of Globalization," was delivered on the first day, while Dr. Paul Zeleza's paper, "The Inventions of African Identities and Languages: The Discursive and Developmental Implications," was presented on the closing day.

As expected, many excellent papers dealing with various research endeavors on African linguistics were submitted for publication, consideration, and inclusion in these proceedings. Regrettably, the assessment of the referees, space limitations, and the need for balanced accommodation of disciplinary areas allowed us to include only the twenty-five papers in this volume. It was often very difficult for the editors to have to turn down papers that demonstrated excellent scholarly work on the basis of space restrictions alone; but those are the decisions editors sometimes have to make. These proceedings could easily have been twice as long.

This volume is divided into five parts: Part One is devoted to the plenary and featured papers; Part Two collects papers on phonology; Part Three consists of papers on syntax; Part Four includes papers on Morpho-Semantics; and Part Five is for papers on Language in Context. To maintain organizational logic, we have tried to classify papers not only by content but also by theoretical and/or methodological approach.

The publication of this volume would not have come to fruition without the assistance of colleagues and referees who worked diligently to lend their constructive support to the cumbersome process of evaluation and selection of papers appropriate for this volume. We thank them all in their anonymity.

Working on this volume has indeed been a challenge. Apart from the persistent extension of deadlines and often sustained communication gaps, it was frequently difficult to ensure that all papers conformed to the rather strict guidelines imposed on final manuscripts by the publisher. Many papers had to be edited and converted to PDF format multiple times before they were ready for submission; some authors with limited access to technology and authoring software simply found it impossible to comply with publication requirements, leaving these matters in the editors' hands completely. We look forward to the opportunity to discuss some of these pitfalls with ACAL and the editors of future proceedings, in the hopes that the process can be streamlined in the coming years.

ACAL 36 was opened by two members of Georgia Southern's faculty, Dr. Larry Burton, the Chair of the Writing and Linguistics Department, and Dr. Saba Jallow, the Director of Africana Studies. They both welcomed the participants on behalf of the President of the host institution, Dr. Bruce Grube. The Dean of College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, Dr. Jane Hudak addressed the

participants at an on-campus reception on the first day of the conference. For all their goodwill and contributions, we are more than grateful.

The conference was supported by individual contributions of financial, human, and material resources from many units across the university, including the Office of the President, the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, the Department of Writing and Linguistics, the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, the Department of Foreign Languages, the Center for Africana Studies, the Center for International Studies, the University Writing Center, and the Continuing Education Department. Our special gratitude and thanks go to the President and the Provost for their noteworthy financial contributions.

Finally, we wish to thank colleagues inside and outside Georgia Southern for their tireless support: Dr. Akinbiyi Akinlabi, the ACAL “godfather,” for his willingness to consult at a moment’s notice; Dr. Eyamba Bokamba for his wisdom and excellent input on keynote presentations; Dr. Lee Bickmore, the “guru-in-charge” of the business meeting, and Dr. David Odden for his help with advertising and promoting the program. Special recognition also goes to our colleagues in Writing and Linguistics Department: Drs. Catherine Chaput, Thomas Klein and Ms. Mildred Pate who served in the conference planning committee with us; we appreciate all your input. To conference organizers, Deborah Champion and Jeremy Foreman, go our ultimate appreciations for the remarkable expertise rendered, thank you.

Dedication

To all the Great Leaders before us
and those yet to come. To those visionaries
at the gate of Africa's struggle and evolution

and to

the audacity of Pan-Africanism on the predicates
of globalization

Selected Proceedings of the 36th Annual Conference on African Linguistics: Shifting the Center of Africanism in Language Politics and Economic Globalization

edited by Olaoba F. Arasanyin
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