Acknowledgments

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The papers selected to appear in this volume were first presented at the 38th Annual Conference on African Linguistics held at the University of Florida in 2007. This was the second ACAL to be hosted by Florida: ACAL 27 was held eleven years earlier, organized by the late Paul Kotey and now emeritus professor Haig Der-Houssikian who played a key role in establishing a strong program in African languages and linguistics at the University of Florida. While the cast of characters has largely changed, African linguistics continues to thrive at the University of Florida with the support of the Department of African & Asian Languages and Literatures, the Program in Linguistics, and the Center for African Studies. In addition to teaching eight African languages on a regular basis, faculty members are engaged in areas of research ranging from the documentation of endangered languages in Ghana to control in Malagasy syntax, from OT approaches to Kisukuma tonology to codeswitching in Tanzanian parliamentary discourse, and from the micro-comparison of agreement in Bantu to the sociolinguistics of African cities. Hosting the 38th Annual Conference on African Linguistics was thus a stimulating experience for us, and we thank all the participants for helping to make it a success.

The twenty papers in this volume constitute the selected proceedings of the conference. They include descriptive and theoretical studies in the phonology, morphology, and syntax of a broad array of African languages, as well as studies on language endangerment and documentation. We received an exceptionally large number of submissions in the area of morphology, reflected in the preponderance of papers in that section. Taken as a whole, the diversity of these papers reflects the diverse nature of the Annual Conference on African Linguistics as well as the robustness of the field of African linguistics in general. We thank the many individuals in the field who so willingly served as referees for the submissions we received. Two readers were assigned to every paper, and their comments have made the contributions that much stronger. Keynote addresses at the conference were given by Herman Batibo and Laura Downing whose papers appear in this volume. Batibo makes a compelling case for the implementation of language documentation as a strategy for empowering minority languages in Africa, while Downing discusses the ways in which Optimality Theory has shifted our perspective on some classic problems in African language phonology.

Neither the conference nor this volume would have been possible without the financial support of the Office of Research, the Center for African Studies, the Department of African and Asian Languages and Literatures, and the Program in Linguistics at the University of Florida. A great number of dedicated people gave their time and energy towards making the conference a success. These include Akintunde Akinyemi, Charles Bwenge, James Essegbey, Rose Lugano, Kole Odutola, and Ann Wehmeyer of the Department of African and Asian Languages and Literatures; Ikeade Akinyemi, Corinna Greene, Todd Leedy, and Leonardo Villalón of the Center for African Studies; and Brent Henderson, Caroline Wiltshire, and graduate students Quinn McCoy Hansen, Jirapat Jangjamras, Weihua Zhu, and Zoe Ziliak from the Program in Linguistics. We would also like to thank the ACAL steering committee, including Akinbiyi Akinlabi, Lee Bickmore, and Laura Downing for their guidance, and former ACAL conveners Frank Arasanyin, John Mugane, and Doris Payne for their helpful suggestions and practical tips in running the conference.

Finally, it is with great sadness that we report that our third keynote speaker, Sonja Fagerberg Diallo, a pioneer in African language literacy and publishing, passed away in March of 2008. Sonja was the founder and director of a Dakar-based NGO, Associates in Research and Education for Development (ARED), whose extraordinary work is documented in a paper by John Hutchison (2006) from the 35th Annual Conference on African Linguistics. Sonja's death has left a void in the field of African language literacy, and we dedicate this volume to her memory. *Yo Alla yurmo mo yaafoo mo.*

References

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