The 28th Annual Conference of

African Language Teachers
Association (ALTA)

Conference

Program

African Languages Across:

Disciplines, Professions and Community

Hosted By,

Center for African Studies
Less-Commonly Taught
Languages Center
University of Pittsburgh

10 - 12 April 2025

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CONFERENCE PROGRAM

AFRICAN LANGUAGE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION (ALTA)

28$^{\text{TH}}$ ANNUAL CONFERENCE

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH

PITTSBURGH, PA

10 – 12 APRIL 2025

HOSTED BY

University of Pittsburgh | Center for African Studies | University Center for International Studies

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Co-chair Gabriel Ayoola, University of Michigan
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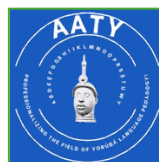
Welcome to Pittsburgh!

WE AT THE Center for African Studies (CAS) are honored to be hosting the 2025 Annual African Language Teachers Association (ALTA) Conference in collaboration with the Less Commonly Taught Languages (LCTL) Center at the University of Pittsburgh. We are thrilled to welcome you all to Pittsburgh for this very important gathering to share conversations and ideas aimed at promoting the teaching and research of African languages and cultures.

This year's conference aims to give participants an opportunity to explore the integration of various disciplines, professions, and communities to enhance African language pedagogy. In an increasingly interconnected world, the teaching and learning of African languages must evolve to meet the demands of a diverse and globalized society. It will be a great forum for us to cover a wide range of themes that allow us to engage in discussions on how to

Dr. Catherine Koverola
Director
Center for African Studies

Dr. Macrina Lelei
Associate Director
Center for African Studies

incorporate language instruction, making learning more relevant and impactful for students. We are looking forward to discussions of innovative approaches that highlight connections between African language education and other areas of study in the multiple disciplines. By integrating disciplines, professions, and communities, we aim to empower educators to create holistic, inclusive, and effective African language programs. These initiatives will prepare students to navigate and contribute to the complex realities of the modern world. We hope the presentations and conversations will allow you to leverage interdisciplinary viewpoints and collaborative initiatives to elevate African language instruction and support the professionalism of African language educators. Our goal is for you all to leave the conference inspired to be innovative and creative in enhancing the teaching of African languages, language programs, research, and best practices.

I WOULD LIKE TO EXTEND a warm and heartfelt welcome to all attendees of the 2025 African Language Teachers Association (ALTA) Conference! As a regular attendee of these annual gatherings since 2011, I am delighted to be part of yet another incredible meeting of colleagues, mentors, and fellow advocates for African languages and cultural studies. It is truly a joy to see so many passionate educators and scholars of African languages come together to share ideas, celebrate our field, and inspire the future of African language learning. This year's conference is especially meaningful to me, as my university has the honor of hosting it for the very first time. It has been a privilege! I am truly excited to be part of this historic moment at the University of Pittsburgh for our African and

Dr. Filipo Lubua
Coordinator
African Languages Program

African Diasporic Languages Program, our Less-Commonly Taught Languages (LCTL) Center, our Linguistics Department, and all other academic units and centers in our university. To me, hosting this conference reflects our university's shared commitment to global engagement, cultural understanding, and the meaningful promotion of African languages and cultures. Many thanks to the Center for African Studies and all the academic units that made this possible.

And now, back to you—our esteemed attendees 😊 Thank you for joining us here in Pittsburgh. We look forward to engaging conversations, new connections, and a 'ululatious' celebration of the languages that connect our continent to the world. **Karibuni sana Pittsburgh!**

Welcome Remarks from ALTA President

I AM EXCITED TO WELCOME YOU ALL to the 28th annual conference of the African Language Teachers Association (ALTA). I would like to begin by expressing my heartfelt gratitude to each one of you for your presence, dedication, and commitment to the advancement of African languages and cultures at home and abroad.

This year's conference is particularly exceptional, as we come together not only to celebrate our achievements but also to network and engage in stimulating discussions on the current state and future of African languages in education and society generally. Our theme this year, "African Languages Across: Disciplines, Professions, and Communities," underscores our shared responsibility in preserving, promoting, and teaching these languages. African languages can be an integral part of our disciplines, professions, and – indeed – of our communities.

We should not lose sight of the fact that, as language educators, we hold a unique position in shaping the linguistic and cultural identities of the generations to come. Our work goes beyond teaching words and grammar; we are the custodians of history, of tradition, and of identity. Through our classrooms, our research, and our advocacy, we ensure that the languages that have sustained African communities for centuries are not only preserved but also passed on with pride and purpose to future generations.

This conference serves as a platform for us to exchange ideas, reflect on our practices, and discover new approaches to the challenges we face in language teaching and research. Over the next few days, we will engage with a range of presentations and discussions that will explore the innovative strategies that are helping to revitalize African languages in classrooms, communities, online, and beyond.

I want to take a moment to acknowledge the resilience and dedication of African language teachers worldwide. Your tireless efforts are helping to bridge the gap between tradition and modernity, ensuring that African languages remain vibrant, relevant, visible, and essential in an ever-evolving world. Your work may often go unrecognized, but I assure you that its impact is immeasurable. You are the unsung heroes of language and culture, and it is because of your passion and perseverance that we continue to see a bright future for African languages.

Dr. Jonathan Choti
Michigan State University

I would also like to extend my sincere thanks to our host, the University of Pittsburgh and the surrounding community, our employers, partners, and collaborators whose unwavering support makes this conference possible. Together, we are working toward a future where African languages are not just subjects of study, but living, breathing entities that connect us to our roots and to each other. As we embark on this exciting journey of learning and collaboration, let us remember the words of the great Chinua Achebe, who once said, "Language is the blood of the soul into which thoughts run and out of which they grow." Let us continue to nurture this blood that flows through our veins and ensure that it sustains the soul of our people for generations to come.

Thank you, and I look forward to a fruitful and inspiring conference. Let us engage, let us learn, and most importantly, let us celebrate the languages that make us who we are. Welcome, and enjoy the conference!

Sincerely,

Prof. Jonathan Choti, PhD
ALTA President, 2023-25

ALTA Conference Program Summary

Day 1 | Thursday (04/10/2025)

Time	Activity	Venue	Page No.
8:45AM - 12:00PM	Check in	O'Hara Student Center	01
12:00PM - 4:00PM	Pre-conference Workshop	O'Hara Student Center	01

Day 2 | Friday (04/11/2025)

Time	Activity	Venue	Page No.
7:00AM - 8:30AM	Breakfast and Check-in	William Pitt Union	04
8:45AM - 10:00AM	Language Associations Business Meetings *(Swahili, Yoruba, Nguni, and Senegambian Languages)*	William Pitt Union	04
10:00AM - 12:00PM	Parallel Session 1 – Specific Languages *(6 Concurrent Sessions)*	William Pitt Union	05 - 10
12:00PM - 12:50PM	Lunch Break		11
1:00PM - 1:30PM	Grand Opening Session	O'Hara Student Center	12
1:40PM - 2:40PM	Keynote Address 1	O'Hara Student Center	13
2:40PM - 3:30PM	Round Table Discussion *(African Lang. Students Panel)*	O'Hara Student Center	14
3:30PM - 3:40PM	Short Break		15
3:40PM - 5:10PM	Parallel Session 2 *(6 Concurrent Sessions)*	William Pitt Union	16 - 20
5:10PM - 5:20PM	Short Break		
5:20PM - 6:50PM	Parallel Session 3 *(5 Concurrent Sessions)*	William Pitt Union	22 - 26

Day 3 | Saturday (04/12/2025)

Time	Activity	Venue	Page No.
7:00AM - 8:30AM	Breakfast & Check-in	O'Hara Student Center	
8:45AM - 9:45AM	Keynote Address 2	O'Hara Student Center	33
9:45AM - 10:00AM	Announcements and Short Break		
10:00AM-11:30AM	Parallel Session 4 *(5 Concurrent Sessions)*	William Pitt Union	35 - 38
11:30AM - 1:00PM	Parallel Session 5 *(5 Concurrent Sessions)*	William Pitt Union	40 - 44
1:00PM - 1:50PM	Lunch Break	5601 Wesley Posvar Hall	45
2:00PM - 2:50PM	Round Table Discussion *(Community Members Panel)*	5601 Wesley Posvar Hall	46
3:10PM - 4:40PM	Parallel Session 6 *(5 Concurrent Sessions)*	William Pitt Union	48 - 51
4:40PM - 6:00PM	ALTA Business Meeting *(ALTA Members)*	5601 Wesley Posvar Hall	52
7:00PM -11:00PM	African Languages Jamboree and ALTA Awards	William Pitt Union	53 - 54

GAMING, VIRTUAL REALITY, AND AI
IN LANGUAGE TEACHING

In this workshop we will explore how technology can enhance LCTL classrooms by providing students rich communicative experiences around which educators can scaffold a variety of learning activities. We will explore a selection of games, virtual reality, and artificial intelligence tools accessible to educators across the spectrum of technology experience.

Jeff Kuhn
Director, OHIO Esports
Ohio University

Dr. Jeff Kuhn serves as an Instructional Designer and director of OHIO Esports at Ohio University's Games Research and Immersive Design (GRID) Lab. With expertise in game-based learning and immersive media, he works with faculty to integrate cutting-edge technologies into classroom instruction. In addition to leading OHIO's esports initiatives, Dr. Kuhn is a sought-after speaker, frequently delivering keynote addresses and workshops on game design, educational gaming, and the importance of game literacy for educators.

Photo Credit: Wayne Rowe

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The National African Language Resource Center (NALRC)'s mission is to enhance African language instruction by providing resources, training, and networking opportunities for educators and learners.

Language Specific Business Meetings
&
Parallel Sessions 1

8:45 AM – 12:00 PM

These will be language specific sessions.
Presentations will be in the target languages

Nguni Languages
Senegambian Languages
Swahili/CHAUKIDU
Yoruba/AATY

Topic: Swahili Panel - Pedagojia ya Kiswahili
Chair: Leonard Muaka

Athari za Uswahilishaji wa Msamiati wa Kiingereza katika Kiswahili
Editha Adolph (Mwalimu Nyerere Memorial Academy)

Kiingereza na Kiswahili ni lugha zilizotagusana wa muda mrefu. Kutokana na mtagusano huo lugha hizi zimeathiriana. Makala hii inachunguza athari za uswahilishaji wa msamiati wa Kiingereza katika Kiswahili kwa kujikita katika nyanja za fonolojia, semantiki pamoja na leksia. Ukusanyaji wa data ya makala hii umejumuisha mbinu za hojaji na uchambuzi wa matini. Mbinu ya kuchambua matini ilijumuisha usomaji wa nyaraka za kitaaluma mathalani, tasinifu, kamusi, majarida, tafiti na nyaraka zinazohusiana na mada husika. Nadharia iliyoongoza makala hii ni Nadharia ya Fonolojia Zalishi iliyoasisiwa na Noam Chomsky na Morris Halle (1968). Data iliyokusanywa ilichambuliwa kwa kutumia mkabala wa maelezo na wa kitakwimu. Matokeo ya makala hii yanaonsha kuwa uswahilishaji wa msamiati wa Kiingereza katika Kiswahili una athari za kifonolojia kama vile: miundo mipya ya silabi katika Kiswahili na silabi funge katika Kiswahili. Athari za kisemantiki ni uzalishaji wa visawe vyenye mkanganyiko na baadhi ya msamiati wa Kiswahili kutotumika ama kutumika mara chache. Athari za kileksia zilizobainika ni: kuongezeka kwa msamiati katika Kiswahili.

Ubunifu Katika Masomo ya Ng'ambo: Mbinu ya CALLiT Africa Kwa Mafunzo ya Lugha Kupitia Ushirikiano wa Kijamii
Zablon Mgonja (CALLiT Africa)

Tafiti zinaonyesha kuwa miongoni mwa changamoto zinazokumba programu nyingi za masomo ya ng'ambo ni mifumo isiyobadilika ya taasisi-wenyeji wa programu hizi. Wasilisho hili linachunguza mbinu-bunifu zinazotumiwa na CALLiT Africa katika kuandaa programu za masomo ya ng'ambo zinazolenga ujifunzaji wa lugha na utamaduni wa Kiafrika kwa kutumia mifumo inayotegemea teknolojia na ushirikiano wa kijamii badala ya taasisi. CALLiT Africa hufanya kazi kwa karibu na wadau wa ndani wenye ujuzi wa kina wa lugha na tamaduni za Kiafrika ili kuwapa wanafunzi uzoefu wa moja kwa moja, uliojikita katika muktadha halisi wa kijamii. Kupitia mifano ya miradi iliyotekelezwa, wasilisho litaonesha jinsi shirika hili linavyochanganya ufundishaji wa lugha, matumizi ya teknolojia, na ushirikiano na diaspora ili kukuza ujifunzaji wa lugha na utamaduni. Mbinu hii hutoa mfano unaoweza kuigwa kwa taasisi zinazotaka kupanua fursa za masomo ya lugha za Kiafrika bila kuhitaji uwepo wa kampasi za kudumu. Washiriki wa uwasilishaji huu watajifunza mikakati mbadala ya kuratibu masomo ya nje, njia za ushirikiano na CALLiT Africa, pamoja na jinsi ya kuwaandaa wanafunzi kupata maarifa ya lugha kupitia uzoefu wa kweli katika mazingira ya Kiafrika.

"Swahili for Dummies": Suluhisho kwa wanaojifunza Kiswahili kama Lugha ya Pili au Lugha ya Kigeni.
Asmaha Heddi (The University of Kansas)
Seline Okeno (The University of Edinburgh)

Kukua na kuenea kwa lugha ya Kiswahili katika maeneo mbalimbali duniani katika zama hizi kumepelekea kuwepo kwa haja ya kuandika vitabu, kutengeneza vibonzo, na hata video mjongeo ili kuwawezesha wajifunzaji kupata marejeleo wanapojifunza lugha hii. Katika kutambua umuhimu huu, sisi kama walimu wa Kiswahili kama lugha ya kigeni au lugha ya pili, tutawasilisha kitabu chetu kipya kinachoitwa "Swahili for Dummies". Kitabu hiki kinalenga kurahisisha ujifunzaji wa lugha ya Kiswahili kwa wale wanaoanza au wanaoendelea kujifunza lugha hii. Kitabu hiki kinatumia mbinu muafaka zinazomwezesha mjifunzaji kujifunza peke yake na kuboresha umilisi wake katika lugha, au mfundishaji wa lugha ambaye anaweza kukitumia kitabu hiki kufundishia. Mbinu hizo ni kama vile; msamiati muhimu kulingana na mada husika, sarufi, mazungumzo/dayalojia, matamshi, mazoezi ya kusikiliza, na maelezo ya utamaduni. Wasilisho letu litajikita katika kudadavua sifa za kipekee za kitabu hiki kama vile, namna ya utamkaji wa kila neno lililotumika, tafsiri ya maneno hayo, na kamusi ya Kiswahili-Kiingereza na Kiingereza Kiswahili.

HAUKIDU

Courtesy Of
Chama Cha Ukuzaji wa Kiswahili Duniani
(CHAUKIDU)

Topic: Swahili Panel - Fasihi
Chair: Peter Mwangi

Sanaa ya Kitashtiti kama Jukwaa Pendwa la Kifikra Barani Afrika: Ulinganishi wa Katuni nchini Tanzania
Zawadi Limbe Daniel (Chuo Kikuu cha Dar es Salaam)

Aina mbalimbali za kazi za kitashtiti zikiwemo kazi za fasihi simulizi na andishi, komedia, vichekesho na katuni mbalimbali zimekuzwa na kuwa sehemu ya utamaduni pendwa Afrika. Hivi ndivyo ilivyo katika Afrika mashariki ambapo vipindi vya redio, Tv, Sanaa za maonesho na magazeti vimejazwa na aina hii ya mawasiliano. Makala hii ambayo itakuwa ya kinadharia na kiuchambuzi, iliyotokana na utafiti uliofanywa na mwandishi, itajaribu kuibua na kujibu maswali kadhaa kuhusu hali hii ya mambo kwa kutumia mifano ya katuni kutoka Tanzania. Kinachouulizwa katika makala hii; kazi za kitashtiti ni nini, ni hali gani inaibua kazi za kitashtiti, kwanini matumizi yake yamekuwa maarufu hususan katika kipindi cha miongo mitatu au minne nchini Tanzania? Watunzi wa katuni za kitashtiti hulenga nini na kwanini katuni hizi za kitashtiti zimesambaa na kuwa maarufu sana nchini Tanzania? Je katuni hizi ni aina tu ya sanaa 'tupu' ambayo huwafanya watu wacheke na kusahau matatizo yao au kwa hakika ni mbinu inayosawiri hali halisi ya jamii husika, kwa mtazamo uliogeuzwa na wa kuchekesha? Ili hatimaye kutoa suluhu kwa matatizo hayo? Maswali haya na mengine yatashughulikiwa katika makala hii ambayo itajaribu kuipambanua sanaa ya katuni za kitashtiti ndani ya utamaduni pendwa nchini Tanzania.

Kumbukizi ya Kesho: Utopia, Kiswahili, na Uhuru wa Afrika katika Riwaya ya Walenisi (1995).
Kevin Wamalwa (University Of Illinois Urbana-Champaign)

Makala hii inachunguza nafasi ya Kiswahili, tamaduni, na maadili ya Kiafrika kama msingi wa ukombozi wa Afrika katika riwaya ya Walenisi ya Katama Mkangi. Kupitia utopia ya Walenisi, Mkangi anaonesha jinsi lugha zetu kama Kiswahili na dhana ya utu wa Kiafrika vinavyoweza kutusaidia kufikiria upya mustakabali wa Afrika yenye umoja na haki. Kwa kutumia lugha ya kitamathali na uswahilishaji wa maneno na kaida za asili ya Kiafrika, Mkangi anakabiliana na ubeberu wa lugha ya Kiingereza, akisisitiza Kiswahili kama chombo cha ukombozi wa kitamaduni na kisiasa na kufanikisha uhuru wa kweli katika Afrika Mashariki na bara zima.

Motifu ya Utendaji katika Ushairi wa Kiswahili wa Kiisilamu: Mifano kutoka Mashairi ya Pwani ya Kenya.
Sumaiya Yunus Mwamzandi (PhD Student, Moi University)

Mara nyingi utendaji huzungumziwa tu kwa namna unavyowasilishwa jukwaani. Ila kwa kuutazama utendaji utakuta kuwa kuna utendaji kabla ya shughuli halisi ya utendaji jukwaani. Utendaji huu niliupa jina la 'ufundi kabla ya utendaji'. Kazi hii ililenga kuchunguza motifu ya utendaji katika ushairi wa Kiswahili wa Kiisilamu wa karne ya 21 kwa kuangazia mitazamo hii miwili ya utendaji; ufundi kabla ya utendaji na utendaji wenyewe jukwaani. Kwa kufanikisha hili nitachunguza namna mashairi haya yanavyowasilishwa kuanzia kwenye utunzi hadi usambazaji wake kwa hadhira. Uchunguzi huu uliongozwa na misingi miwili; Ni akina nani wanahusika na shughuli nzima za utendaji wa mashairi ya Kiswahili ya Kiisilamu? Uhalisia wa utendaji wa mashairi ya Kiswahili ya Kiisilamu katika miktadha ya sherehe au matukio mbalimbali ya jamii ya Waswahili. Kwa hivyo karatasi hii itachambua kwa ufupi motifu ya utendaji kwa kusudio la kubaini namna mwingiliano wa tamaduni umeathiri utendaji wa mashairi haya.

Courtesy Of
Chama Cha Ukuzaji wa Kiswahili Duniani
(CHAUKIDU)

Topic: Yoruba Panel
Chair: Kazeem Kehinde

Dídá Kọ́ńsonááti Yorùbá Mọ̀: Ìyàtọ̀ Láààrín Àwọn Akẹ́kọ̀ọ́ Àkọ́kúntẹni àti Àwọn Akẹ́kọ̀ọ́ Elédè Kejì
Matthew Ajibade (Indiana University Bloomington)

Bébà yìí ṣe àgbéyẹ̀wò ìyàtọ̀ láààrín àwọn akẹ́kọ̀ọ́ àkọ́kúntẹni (heritage learners) (AA) àti àwọn akẹ́kọ̀ọ́ elédè kejì (AEK) (L2 learners) lórí fonọ́lọ́jì Yorùbá. Iṣẹ́ ìwádìí ti fi hàn pé àwọn AA máa ń ṣe dáadáa ju àwọn AEK lọ ní ṣiṣe ìyàtọ̀ láààrín kọ́ńsónáńti èdè wọn. Èyí mú kí a ṣe àyẹ̀wò bóyá àwọn akẹ́kọ̀ọ́ le sọ ìyàtọ̀ láààrín ([gb]-[g]), ([gb]-[b]), àti ([kp]-[gb]) nígbà tí wọ́n bá gbọ́ wọn. Ènìyàn ọgọ́ta ló kópa nínú iṣẹ́ ìwádìí yìí: àwọn elédè Yorùbá (native Yoruba speakers) ogún, àwọn akẹ́kọ̀ọ́ àkọ́kúntẹni (heritage learners) ogún, àti àwọn akẹ́kọ̀ọ́ elédè kejì ogún. Èsì fi hàn pé kò sí ìyàtọ̀ láààrín àwọn AA àti AEK ní ṣiṣe ìyàtọ̀ láààrín [gb]-[b], bí ó tìlẹ̀ jẹ́ pé àwọn elédè Yorùbá ṣe dáadáa jù àwọn méjèèjì lọ. Ní ti [kp-gb] èwẹ̀, àwọn AA ṣe dáadáa ju àwọn AEK lọ. Èyí fi hàn wá wípé ní kíláàsì Yorùbá, olùkọ́ gbọdọ̀ kọbi ara sí kíkọ́ àwọn àwọn ìsọrí akẹ́kọ̀ọ́ méjèèjì yìí ní ọ̀nà tí wọ́n fi lè fi ìyàtọ̀ hàn láààrín [gb] àti [b]. Ṣùgbọ́n ní ti [kp] àti [gb], a gbọdọ̀ mójú tó àwọn AEK ju àwọn AA lọ. A ó kádìí bébà yìí nílẹ̀ nípa ṣiṣe ìdánilẹ́kọ̀ọ́ ránpẹ́ lórí ọ̀nà tí a lè fi kọ́ àwọn kọ́ńsónáàti yìí.

Ìwúlò Gbígba Àlejò Elédè Yorùbá sí Kílàsì Yorùbá ní Amẹ́ríkà
Victor Alabi (Brown University)

Mo wo ìwúlò gbígba àlejò elédè Yorùbá sí kílàsì Yorùbá pàápàá ní kílàsì Yorùbá àwọn ọlọ́dún kejì àti kẹ́ta. Àwọn akẹ́kọ̀ọ́ ní ànfàní láti bèèrè oríṣìí ìbéèrè lọ́wọ́ àlejò elédè náà. Bákan náà, àwọn akẹ́kọ̀ọ́ tún ní ànfàní láti sọrọ̀ nípa onírúurú àkòrí pẹ̀lú àlejò elédè náà. Mo gba àlejò elédè Yorùbá sí kílàsì mi láti fún àwọn akẹ́kọ̀ọ́ ní ànfàní láti gbọ́ ìlo èdè láti ọ̀dọ̀ ẹlòmíràn yàtọ̀ sí olùkọ́ nìkan. Mo wo ọ̀rọ̀ pẹ̀lú àwọn àlejò elédè méjì. Ìkíní jẹ́ àgbà bíí ọmọ ogójì ọdún, ó lé. Ìkejì jẹ́ ẹ̀gbọ́n akẹ́kọ̀ọ́ kan ní kílàsì tí ó tẹ̀lé akẹ́kọ̀ọ́ náà wá sí kílàsì. Ó lé ní ogún ọdún. Ẹni àkọ́kọ́ jẹ́ ònkọ̀wé elédè Yorùbá. Ìkejì ti kàwé gboyè tí ó fẹ́ di oníṣègùn òyìnbó ní ọjọ́ iwájú. Gbogbo akẹ́kọ̀ọ́ béèrè ìbéèrè nípa oríṣìí oun tí wọ́n ní ìfẹ́ sí tí ó sì jẹ́ oun ànfàní fún wọn. Ànfàní ọ̀nà ẹ̀kọ́ yìí ni pé olùkọ́ lè kọ àwọn ọ̀rọ̀ pàtàkì kalẹ̀ tí àwọn akẹ́kọ̀ọ́ kò lò dáadáa láti fi ṣe ìdánilẹ́kọ̀ọ́ fún àwọn akẹ́kọ̀ọ́ náà ní ọjọ́ mìíràn ní kílàsì.

Pàtàkì ati Ìṣúwọ̀n ti Èdè àti Aṣà Yorùbá kó ní àárín Àwọn Akẹ́kọ̀ọ́ ati Omọ̀we
Esther Fatuyi (University of Pittsburgh)

Àpilẹ̀kọ yìí ṣe àfihàn ìtumọ̀ èdè àti àṣà Yorùbá, tí ó ń tẹnu mọ́ ipa pàtàkì tí wọ́n kó nínú ìtọ́jú àwọn ètò ìmọ̀ ibílẹ̀ àti ìgbéga ìdánimọ̀ àṣà (Abiodun, 2014; Drewal, 1992; Fanbo & Thotham, 2024). Gégé bí ọ̀kan pàtàkì lára àwọn èdè tí wọ́n ń sọ ní ilẹ̀ Adúláwọ̀, Yorùbá ní ọ̀pọ̀lọpọ̀ àṣà ẹnu, àwọn èrò ọmọ̀wé, àti àwọn ìtàn àti àlọ́ tí ó ń mú kí ìwádìí àwọn akẹ́kọ̀ọ́ pọ̀ sí i (Gbadegesin, 1991; Finnegan, 2012). Ìwádìí náà ṣe àtúnyẹ̀wò àwọn àunfààní tí ó ṣe é ṣe láti so èdè Yorùbá pọ̀ mọ́ àwọn ètò ẹ̀kọ́ tí ó ń mú ìdàgbàsókè bá èdè, ìgbéga ìdàgbàsókè ọgbọ́n, àti ṣíṣẹdá àwọn ìlànà ẹ̀kọ́ tí ó yẹ fún àṣà (Bamgbose, 1991, 2000). Pẹlupẹlu, o jiyan pe awọn ẹkọ Yorùbá yẹ ki o yé àwọn ile-ẹkọ giga nipa sisopọ àwọn eto imọ àgbègbè ati àgbáyé (Ajayi; Smith, 2000; Dutcher, 2004). Ìwé ìròyìn náà sọrọ̀ nípa àwọn ìpènìjà gégé bí ìdínkù ìlò Yorùbá nínú ẹ̀kọ́ ìlànà, àtìléyìn ilé-iṣẹ́ tí kò tó, àti àwọn ipa ìṣọkan àṣà àgbáyé (Afọláyan, 1976; Lawal, 2004). O ṣe ìrànlọ́wọ́ lati mú àwọn ogbọn atúnṣe, ìkẹko olukọ́, àwọn orisun oni-nọ́ọmba, ati àwọn iṣẹ iwadi (interdisciplinary) (Sofowora, 2010). Ṣíṣe àkọ́kọ́ èdè Yorùbá àti ìwádìí àṣà ń ran àwọn ọmọ̀wé ati olùkọ́ lọ́wọ́ láti dáàbò bo ogún tí ó ti pẹ́ jùlọ ní ilẹ̀ Adúláwọ̀, ẹ̀kọ́ àpapọ̀, àti ìdẹ̀rùbà ìparun èdè (Ojo, 2011). Ìwé ìròyìn náà ń gbèjà fún ìgbìyànjú àpapọ̀ láti gbé Yorùbá kalẹ̀ gégé bí èyà pàtàkì nínú ọ̀rọ̀ ẹ̀kọ́ àgbáyé, tí ó jẹ́rìí sí ìbámu rẹ̀ ní àgbáyé tí ó ń pọ̀ sí i..

Topic: Yoruba Panel
Chair: Adeola Agoke

Ìbánidóọ̀rẹ́ àti Kọ̀ǹpútà Tó Ń Ṣèrànwọ́ Láti Kọ́ Èdè
Oluwasegun Amoniyan (University of Pittsburgh)

Èdè Yorùbá, tí àràádọ́ta mílíọ̀nù ènìyàn ń sọ ní Ìwọ̀ Oòrùn Áfíríkà, dojú kọ ìpèníjà nínú ìpamọ́ láàrin àwọn àwùjọ àjèjì látàrí àìsí ìtọ́ni tí ó péye àti bí ó ti ń relẹ̀ láti iran dé iran. Ìwádìí yìí sàyẹ̀wò bí a ṣe lè lo àwọn ìkànnì ibánidọ́rẹ̀ẹ́ àti Ìrànwọ́-Kọ̀ǹpútà fún èdè kíkọ́ (CALL) láti mú kí èdè àti àṣà Yorùbá rọrùn fún àwọn Yorùbá tó wà ní àjèjì. Nípa sisopọ àwọn ilana CALL pẹlu àwọn iru ẹrọ oni-nọmba bii WhatsApp, YouTube, àti TikTok, ìwádìí yìí sàwárí ipa tí àwọn ẹ̀kọ́ agbègbè orí ayélujára ní lórí kíkọ́ èdè Yorùbá ati àwọn àmúyẹ aṣa. Nípa lílo ọ̀nà-àmúlùmálà, ìwádìí náà ń ṣe àkojọ nípa ìfọ̀rọ̀-wá-ni-lẹ́nu-wò tí ó ní àlàfo, àti ẹ̀kọ́ nípa èyà. Àwọn ìwádìí náà fi hàn pé àwọn ìkànnì ibánidọ́rẹ̀ẹ́ orí ayélujára máa ń mú kí kíkọ́ ọ̀rọ̀-ìmọ̀ rọrùn, kíkọ́ bí a ṣe ń pe ọ̀rọ̀, àti kíkọ́ àṣà ìbílẹ̀, síbẹ̀ àwọn tí wọ́n ń kọ́ èdè Yorùbá ń kojú àwọn ìpèníjà tí ó jẹ mọ́ àlàyé tí kò bára mu àti àìrí ètò ìdánilẹ́kọ̀ọ́ tó wà létòlétò. Àwọn ọ̀nà tí CALL ń lò, títí kan ẹ̀kọ́ pẹ̀lú àwọn ohun-èlò eré àti àwọn ètò àtúnṣe tí a fi ń ṣe àtúnṣe, ń pèsè àwọn ojútùú tó ń ṣèlérí láti mú kí ìkọ́ni èdè àti àṣà Yorùbá sunwọ̀n sí i. Ìwádìí náà dá àgbékalẹ̀ ẹ̀kọ́-ọ̀nà tí ó so kíkọ́ tí ó dá lórí CALL sínú ẹ̀kọ́ Yorùbá tí ó jẹ́ ti ìkànnì-ibánidọ́rẹ̀ẹ́ ori ayélujára, èyí tí ó ń mú àlàfo dínkù láàárin ẹ̀kọ́ èdè gbẹ́fẹ́ àti èdè àìgbẹ̀fẹ́. Ó tún ṣe àfihàn ìṣepàtàkì ti imọ̀ ìlò-ẹ̀rọ, wíwà ní àrọ́wọ́to, àti ìbáramu àṣà ní ìdánilójú ìdúróṣinṣin ti èdè Yorùbá àti àṣà ní diaspora. Èyí tó ṣe pàtàkì jùlọ ni pé, ìwádìí yìí ń ṣe àfikún sí ọ̀rọ̀ tí ó gbòòrò nípa ẹ̀kọ́ èdè ilẹ̀ Áfíríkà ní àyè orí ẹ̀rọ-ayélujára, tí ó ń fúnni ní òye nípa ipa tí ìmọ̀-ẹ̀rọ ń kó nínú kíkọ́ èdè keji àti ìpamọ́ ẹ̀dá-èdè.

Kíkọ́ àwọn Akẹ́kọ̀ọ́ Elédè Àkọ́kúntẹni ní Lílo Ìró Ohùn Yorùbá
Oluseye Adesola (Yale University)

O hàn nínú iṣẹ́ Yip 2002 wí pé àwọn èdè tó ń lo ìró ohun pọ̀ ju ìdajì lọ nínú gbogbo èdè tó wà ní àgbáyé. Èyí túmọ̀ sí pé ìró ohùn lílò wọ́pọ̀ gan an nínú àwọn èdè àgbáyé. Bí ó bá rí bẹ́ẹ̀, ìrètí wa ni pé ó yẹ kí ó rọrùn fún àwọn akẹ́kọ̀ọ́ tó ń kọ́ èdè Yorùbá gégé bí èdè àkọ́kúntẹni láti lè kọ́ àti láti lè mọ ìró ohùn Yorùbá lò dáadáa. Ṣùgbọ́n ṣá, ìrírí wa gẹ́gẹ́ bí olùkọ́ fi hàn pé ọ̀rọ̀ kò rí bẹ́ẹ̀. Bẹ́ẹ̀ sì ni, mímọ iró ohùn lò ṣe pàtàkì nínú èdè Yorùbá. Báwo ni a ó ṣe wá ṣe é tí ènìyàn mẹ́ta yóò fi dúró ní méjìméjì? Ìṣòro tó rọ̀ mọ́ kíkọ́ àwọn akẹ́kọ̀ọ́ tó ń kọ́ èdè Yorùbá ní Amẹ́ríkà nípa lílo ìró ohùn lédè Yorùbá ni a fẹ́ yẹ̀wò nínú ìjíròrò yìí. Kí ló ń fa ìṣòro tí àwọn akẹ́kọ̀ọ́ ń ní pẹ̀lú lílo ìró ohùn Yorùbá? Kí sì ni ọ̀nà àbáyọ kúrò nínú àwọn ìṣòro náà? Èrò wa ni pé bí àwọn akẹ́kọ̀ọ́ wa bá mọ iró ohùn lò dáadáa sí i, Yorùbá sísọ wọn yóò dán mọ́ ọ́n rán sí i. Ẹ̀kọ Yoruba ni Diaspora: Ṣíṣe Àjọṣepọ̀ Àwọn Ìkànnì

Topic: Senegambian Languages
Chair: Mariame Sy

Njëriñu Lééb ak Nettaliy Wolof ci Njàngale Muy Lëkkale Wàlli Njàngini Kàllaama
Mariame sy (Columbia University)

Ci fukk ak nangami at yii weesu, gëstu yu jëm ci askan yi cosaanoo di jëfëndikoo kàddu ngir bataleel seen askan seen ndono wone nañu ne njàng mu lalu ci kàddu ag njàng mu lalu ci mbind juubóowuñu, waaye dañu lëkkaloo, te di dundalante. Donte loolu am na, njàngaleem kàllaama, ba ci jamono jii, noppiwul di wone xàjjaloo boobu. Jàngalekati kàllama wolof nag, seen ñàkkum jumtuwaayi njàngale, ag ci li seen kàllaama cosaanoo di jëfëndikoo kàddu tax na ñu mën di jukki ci léebi cosaan ay xët yu bare, di ko jëffëndikoo ci seenum njàngale. Waxtaan wile nag, li nu ci jëkk jublu moo di fésal ni lééb mëna yombale njàngaleem Wolof muy boole ñeenti walli mën-mën yi. Ñareel ba moo di biral ne lééb jumtuwaay bu wér la, buy suuxat njangum làkk ci wax, dég-dégu caada, te di yombal boole ñeenti walli mën-mën yi (liir/duruus, mbind, wax, ag déglu).Tërëlinu léébi wolof, ni ñu ciy fésale jëf yeek aji-jëf yi, ag tëgginu baat yi mu mbubboo, yépp dafay ubbi bëti ndongo li ci waxini askan wi ag ni ñuy nettalee. Su nu leen sottee ci mbind itam, jàngalekat bi dafa koy dàldi mën jëffëndikoo ci njàngaleem duruus ag mbindum làkk wi.

Jumtuwaayi Njàng yu Ubbéeku ci Njàngaleem Làkki Afrik
Khady Diene (Howard University)

Ci jataay bi, dinanu waxtaanee lu jëm ci mbirum Open Educational Resources (OER) manaam nu ñuy yombale ndongo yi seen jàng ci daara yi. Dinanu leeral li nuy woowee OER (jumtuwaayi Njàng yu Ubbeeku) manam jàngale boo xam ne du am ay téérré yu ndongo yi wara jënd. Jumtuwaayi Njàng yu Ubbéeku (OER), pexe mu am solo la ci jottali njàng mu kawe mi neewji-doole ji , rax ci dolli di ndimbël ci ponkum yelleefi doomi aadama yi Mbooloom Réewi Àddina Si (Nations Unies) tëral ci wàllu njàng, mu di "bépp doomu aadaama dafa wara jot ci njàng mu kawe". Ci wàllu njàng ag njàngaleem làkki Afrik yi, OER mën na dimbële ndongo yi ci yombalal leen jumtuwaay yu ñu mën a jëffëndikoo ci seen njàng ci njëg li ag ci ni ñu koy jote. Làkk yi nga xam na am ay ndongo yu bare jafe na leen, niki Wolof, OER dina leen dooleel ngir nu mëna yokk seen lim ci ay ndongo, teg ci dolli xam-xami ndongo yi ci làkk wi ndax danuy daldi mën jot ci lépp li mën jëffëndikoo ngir mokkal seen njàng.

Courtesy Of
The Association of Senegambian Languages Instructors

Topic: Nguni Languages
Chair: Sipho Sithole

Ukushayisana Kwesiko Nemfundo Enovelini Ethi Impi Yabomdabu Isethunjini
Melusi Msomi (Univ. of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa)
Phindile Dlamini (Univ. of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa)

Leli phepha lihlaziya ukushayisana phakathi kwesiko nemfundo okwenzeka enovelini ethi Impi Yabomdabu Isethunjini ebhalwe nguButhelezi ngowezi-2015. Kule noveli kubonakala sengathi kukhona ukungaqondi ukuthi imfundo iyini nokuthi uma umuntu esefundile kufanele aziphathe kanjani. Lokho kugcina sekudala uqhekeko nokungezwani emndenini. Lokhu kungaqondwa kwendima edlalwa imfundo nesiko emndenini kugcine kudale ukuthi imindeni igcina ingasahambelani ngenxa yokusetshenziswa kwemfundo ngendlela engafanele. Kuleli phepha kuhlaziywa izinto ezidala umonakalo ekhaya uma amalunga omndeni engaliqondi isiko okumele lenziwe uma intombazane ithole izingane ekhaya yabe isiyogana yazishiya ekhaya lezo zingane. Uma leli siko lingaqondwa, lokho kungadala omkhulu umonakalo kuze kuhlukane umuzi phakathi imbala. Inhloso yaleli phepha ukuthola ukuthi ikuphi okumele kwenziwe uma imindeni inenkinga yokungaboni ngaso linye ekusetshenzisweni kwamasiko kanye nemfundo. Leli phepha lihlose ukuveza ukuthi imfundo kanye nesiko kungahlanganiswa kanjani ukubumba imindeni ngaphandle kokubukelana phansi. Kuleli phepha kusetshenziswe indlela yekhwalithethivu ukuqoqa ulwazi. Kusetshenziswe isampula ebizwa ngeprobability kanye nepurposive ukuthola ulwazi kubantu abathile ababambe iqhaza ocwaningweni. Insizakuhlaziya esetshenziswe kulolu cwaningo ibizwa ngokuthi yi-Cultural theory. Le nsizakuhlaziya iveza ukuthi isiko liyindlela yokuphila elandelwa ngabantu abaningi esizweni.

Ubunzima bokuthola abafundi lamatitshala ezindimi zesintu ezifundweni eziphezulu kweleMelika
Galen Sibanda (Michigan State University)

Ukufundiswa kwezindimi zeAfrika ngotitshala abalolwazi olufaneleyo kuyanda kancane eMelika kodwa bunengi ubunzima otitsha kanye lamaNyuvesithi ababhekana labo. Lobu bunzima bubonakala kakhulu kunani eliphansi labafundi lekuqhatshweni kwabotitsha abangawufundelanga umsebenzi wokufundisa ulimi. Umsebezi lo uhlolisisa izinto ezimbili ezingenelanayo. Okokuqala yikudingisisa uveza ukuba kungani kunzima ukuthola abafundi abanengi abafuna ukufunda izindimi zesintu. Okwesibili yikudingisisa ngokufanayo lokho

okwenza kubenzima ukuthola otitshala abalolwazi olufaneleyo kumbe olujulileyo lokufundisa lezizindimi. Lanxa abanye bevame ukugxila kulokho okungaletha abafundi ekilasini, okubasobala yikuthi esibhekane lakho kufana lokuzama ukwazi okudala phakathi kwenkukhu leqanda. Utitsha uzaqhatshwa njani kungelabafundi njalo abafundi bazathakazelela kanjani isifundo esingelatitsha? Ngaphandle kwalobubunzima zinengi izizatho ezenza abafundi labotitshala abafaneleyo bangatholakali kalula. Ebafundini umsebenzi lo ubhekisisa izinto ezifana lezindimi zezizwe abafundi abakhangelelwe ukuba bazifunde, ulwazi ngezindimi ezifundiswa eNyuvesithi yabo, imizwa yabo ngokufunda izindimi zesintu, lokunye okunjalo. Kubotitshala okumqoka yilwazi lwabo ngolimi okumele balufundise lezindlela zokufundisa, iholo, ubunengi babantu abavela elizweni lapho olukhulunywa khona ulimi, ubunzima bokuxhumana lalabo abafuna ukusebenza bekhatshana, njalonjalo. Lo ngumsebenzi osaqhubeka.

Izifinyezo Zolimi lwesiZulu, Isihloko Okungakhulunywa Ngaso Kakhulu
Khumbulani Mngadi (Univ. of Kwazulu-Natal, South Africa)

Isifundo sezilimi zase-Afrika singumbono ominxaminingi emlandweni wesayensi futhi njengoba zibonakala zanda emibhalweni ebhaliwe kanjalo nezindlela ezehlukahlukene zokubhekana nezifinyezo nazo ziyaqhamuka. Izifinyezo ezinye zezihloko ezingacwaningiwe kakhulu ezilimini zase-Afrika. Iningi, uma kungebona bonke, osolwazi bezilimi zase-Afrika balandela futhi basebenzise ulimi lwesiNgisi ukubhala izifinyezo zabo nokungaholela ekwakhiweni kwezifinyezo ezingasizi. Ngokuhambisanayo, izifinyezo zifinqa umqondomsuka ojulile noma amagama amade ukwenza ukufunda kube lula. Lolu cwaningo lugxile ezifinyezweni zolimi lwesiZulu. Leli phepha lisebenzisa iSifundo Sokulawulwa Kolimi njengendlelakubuka eyisisekelo sokuhlaziya nokuhlaziya imibhalo njengendlela yocwaningobunjalobotho njengoba imininingo izoqoqwa emibhalweni ebhalwe phansi. Ngenxa yokujula kwesihloko, lolu cwaningo luzobheka izifinyezo zesiZulu kuphela. Inhloso yalo ngukuqoqa, ukuhlola nokuqhathanisa isampula encane yezifinyezo zolimi lwesiZulu. Liphinde libuyekeze ukuthi isifinyezo ngasinye sakhiwe kanjani ngokwefonoloji (imisindo yamagama), imofoloji (ukwakhekha kwamagama) kanye nesemanthikhi (izincazelo zamagama) olimini lwesiZulu.

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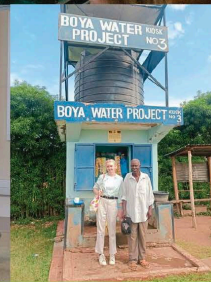Enhance knowledge, understanding, and appreciation of Africa.

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Chair and Discussant: Mahiri Mwita

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EXPERIENCES, CHALLENGES, AND LESSONS
FROM KISWAHILI

LANGUAGE is a fundamental tool of communication, indispensable across all communities, disciplines, professions, and aspects of life. This presentation explores that universality by focusing on Kiswahili language teaching and learning strategies as a case study. It will examine how cross-cultural interactions, particularly through Study Abroad Programs, provide learners and educators with immersive experiences among native Kiswahili speakers and exposure to the language's diverse regional varieties. Through tailored programs—including homestays, guest speakers, group interactions, and visits to historical and geographical sites—participants from a wide range of academic and professional backgrounds gain valuable sociolinguistic insights into how Kiswahili is used in different contexts. In addition to highlighting innovative pedagogical strategies, the presentation will share the author's research on how Kiswahili language instruction and its associated arts and literature (including music) intersect with broader community engagement on philosophical and epistemological issues such as climate change, land use, environmental conservation, and emerging epidemics. Finally, the presentation will address how these insights inform curriculum development and how technological tools—such as artificial intelligence—can enhance African language education. It will also consider the vital role of African diaspora communities in expanding and enriching Kiswahili language learning and cultural exchange.

FEMK Senkoro
Deputy Vice-Chancellor
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Dr. Senkoro is the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Professor of Kiswahili at Tumaini University Makumira, in Arusha, Tanzania. He holds a Ph.D. degree (Kiswahili) from the University of Dar es Salaam, and an M.A. (Comparative Literature) from the University of Alberta, Canada. He is a professor, consultant, and former coordinator for the Centre for Literature and African Oral Traditions in the Institute of Kiswahili Studies, University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. He is a former Associate Dean for Research and Publications, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, University of Dar es Salaam. He was a two-term member of the Executive Committee of the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA), heading its sub-committee on Governance. He has been a guest scholar at the Universities of South Africa (UNISA) and Durban-Westville, South Africa; and a Visiting Professor and/or Senior Fellow at the Universities of Wisconsin-Madison, Boston, Harvard, Princeton in the USA, and the University of Namibia. He has published more than 100 articles, 11 books, two novels, and a collection of short stories.

ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION
AFRICAN LANGUAGES STUDENTS PANEL

Language and Culture in Motion
Student Reflections on
African Language Learning

HOST

Rob Mucklo
LCTL Coordinator
University of Pittsburgh

PANELISTS
Eaden Asfaw (*Amharic Student*)
Cheyenne Toma (*Arabic Student*)
Jensine Benoit (*Haitian Creole Student*)
Felix 'Karimu' Germain *(Swahili Student)*
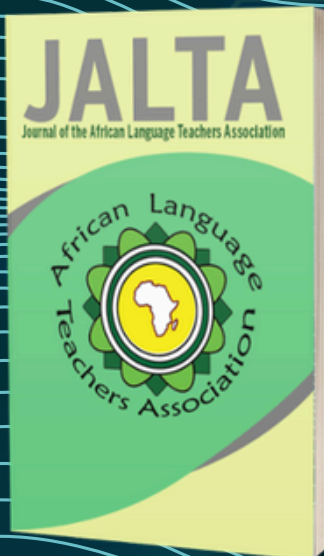**Cassandra 'Asha' Calvaresi *(Swahili Student)***
Yaa Pentuwaah Kornne *(Akan-Twi Student)*

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Topic: Indigenous Knowledge
Chair: Bayọ̀ Ọmọlọla

Relevance of Proverbs in the Acquisition of Yoruba Language
Adebimpe Adegbite (Tulane University)

In the Yoruba community, proverbs are regarded as Yoruba philosophy repository (Banjo, 1979), with wisdom, brevity, criticality, and stored experience that are believed to be a viable tool of instruction for learners of the language. This study posed two research questions in investigating the effectiveness of proverbs in teaching Yoruba language and culture: (a) Are Yoruba proverbs effective in the acquisition of Yoruba language and culture by children? and (b) Does the language attitude of Yoruba learners change with access to a structured Yoruba teaching framework using proverbs? This research is an experimental study of 51 children between ages 7-13 and in Primary four to Junior Secondary School three in Ile-Ife, Southwest Nigeria which employed ethnographic, quantitative, and qualitative methods to analyze questionnaires, recordings, interviews, conversations, and field notes. Findings indicated that the competence of learners increased after the instruction sessions. In addition, attitude of participants to the acquisition and learning of Yoruba language was greatly influenced in the positive direction. The study concluded that using Yoruba proverbs to teach Yoruba language and culture within a controlled framework improves the competence of learners and their attitude toward the acquisition and learning of the language and culture.

Teaching Indigenous Nigerian Knowledge Systems: A Panacea for Inter-generational and Preservation of Indigenous Knowledge Vocabularies
Eunice Osuagwu (University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria)

Prior to colonialism, Nigerian communities predominantly spoke indigenous languages. However, English has become the dominant language in communities, schools, and media, supplanting indigenous languages. The ever-increasing urbanization and influx of people of diverse social backgrounds into cities, where the Nigerian indigenous languages were once only spoken, has made the language of interaction within the cities to shift to English; to the extent that parents in most homestake pride to bring up their children as monolingual speakers of English, which they believe, their children need to function effectively in school and beyond (Ohiri-Aniche 2008), Consequently, English has gained widespread use, while indigenous languages are spoken by fewer people in limited contexts. The present paper therefore, is aimed at highlighting how the teaching of indigenous Nigerian knowledge systems in schools can be a panacea for inter-generational preservation, protection, sustenance and survival of the indigenous knowledge systems and the vocabularies associated with them. The paper with sample indigenous knowledge systems, discusses ways students should be taught, especially, the indigenous knowledge systems that have evolved within the relative locations of their schools.

African Youths and Children as Custodians of Herbal Medicine
Esther Lisanza (Howard University)

Since the onset of colonialism in Africa, African languages and knowledge forms have been devalued and currently, they are being replaced by colonial languages and knowledge forms. The major threat comes from the schools which do not acknowledge the place of African languages and knowledge forms in the lives of children and youths. To counteract this historical fact and practice, in my ongoing project African children are collecting and documenting the uses of herbs and plants as told by the elders in their communities. In so doing, the children will grow up knowing the value and uses of indigenous herbs and plants. Also, the project targets the youths in secondary schools and universities in Kenya. Just like the primary school children, they are documenting different herbs and their uses from the elders. My argument is that if the children and youth know the value of different herbs and plants, they will preserve them. Hence, protect the languages, the knowledges associated with them, and the environment. Therefore, in this presentation I will give a progress report of this project.

Language and Space: Trilingual Policy in Rwanda
Riley Patrick (University of Pittsburgh)
Leonora Anyango (University of Pittsburgh)

Language policies do not always align with social realities. This may lead to disparities in language use both in public and in private. This factor may also influence how a language's visibility is perceived in public spaces in its written form as opposed to what people use in private spaces. In post-genocide Rwanda, English became an official language alongside French in 1994. It later became the sole language of instruction in 2008. In less than a decade, Kigali's public spaces were filled with English writing. Billboards, signs and places like airports featured either English only or added translations of French and Kinyarwanda. This shift affected both French and Kinyarwanda. In this presentation, we shall look the prominence of English, French, and Kinyarwanda post Genocide. It will highlight how language policy shapes public and private spaces. We will learn more about how language knowledge and visibility is influences and how language perceptions are changed and/or influenced over time.

Topic: Community and Diaspora Engagement
Chair: Gabriel Ayoola

Reclaiming Identity: Yoruba Language/Culture and Its Role in Strengthening Mental Health Among Black Youth and Communities
Oluwafunke Brinda Ogunya (Howard University)

This paper explores the crucial role of Yoruba language and culture in reclaiming identity and enhancing mental health among Black youth and communities. The Yoruba heritage, rich in traditions, linguistic depth, and cultural practices, provides a framework for psychological resilience and a strong sense of identity. Amidst persistent racial discrimination and cultural dislocation, the research examines how engagement with Yoruba language and cultural practices serves as a therapeutic tool for Black populations. Using a mixed-methods approach, including qualitative interviews, focus groups, and quantitative surveys, the study focuses on Black youth and community members in urban U.S. areas, especially in the DMV area. It investigates how immersion in Yoruba language education, traditional rituals, and engagement with Yoruba art and storytelling reinforce cultural identity and improve mental health outcomes. Findings show that Yoruba cultural engagement strengthens connections to ancestral roots, promotes cultural pride, and fosters a supportive community environment, crucial for mitigating racial trauma and social marginalization.

The Role of Undergraduate Service-Learning in Promoting Community Engagement Abroad: The Case of Tulane University, New Orleans and Rongo university in Kenya
Isaac Muhando (Tulane University)

The present study uses community engagement pedagogies to understand how undergraduate students at a local university in New Orleans and their peers in Kenya collaborate through service-learning while engaging local communities abroad. Furco & Norvell (2019) describe service learning as a structured participation in community projects by learners while reflecting on their engagements to achieve specified learning objectives. While promoting students' civic awareness (Annette 2002), service learning builds essential learning skills, capabilities and a greater sense of global citizenship. My current study explores experiential learning practices between the two learner-groups to understand how they integrate their respective language course objectives with community practices in Kenya. The study involves 3 undergraduate courses at a 3000 level that consist of mandatory service-learning components. In one of the courses, students explore how Kenyanese English and Sheng can be used in promoting local businesses. I draw on students' real time cross-linguistic interactions, collaborative projects, reflections and course objectives to map out how learners, communities and participating institutions benefit from this collaborative experience.

Navigating Multilingualism: Translating Local Language Policies for Inclusive Education in Kenya
Quin Awuor (United States International University, Kenya)

Language fosters Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) within Kenya's educational framework and broader society. The 2010 Constitution of Kenya underscores the significance of indigenous languages (IL) in promoting social justice and equality, mandating their integration across various public sectors, including education. In alignment with this constitutional directive, the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC), implemented in 2017, advocates incorporating local languages in early education to enhance cultural identity and equitable access to learning opportunities. Despite these advancements, Indigenous languages continue to be marginalised, particularly within the formal education system, which undermines their capacity to support DEI initiatives effectively. This study investigates the impact of local language policies on DEI within Kenya's educational sector, specifically focusing on the challenges Dholuo translators face in adapting English policy documents under the CBC framework, drawing on interviews with 22 Quality Assurance and Standards Officers (QASO).

The Key Benefits of Inquiry-based Learning in Teaching Foreign and Second Languages
Dennis Mutisya (University of Mississippi)

The need to employ more practical ways of teaching, especially in foreign and second languages, can only be met by incorporating new and unique approaches to teaching strategies. The framework that arises is Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL), which enhances the learners' involvement in the language learning process by boosting their curiosity, problem-solving skills, and participation levels. This study aims to investigate the significant advantages of IBL for language learners, concentrating on three key dimensions: enhanced interaction, better language maintenance, and the development of valued cognitive skills. Based on constructivist and sociocultural learning theories, IBL can engage students as co-constructors of learning, where they learn language by meaningful context. This study highlights a call for IBL as a valuable model for teaching languages, including its ability to capture and sustain students' interest. The expected findings will help language teachers, researchers, and policymakers develop learning environments that are more engaging for students.

Topic: Language Pedagogy
Chair: Beatrice Ng'uono Okelo

From Instructor to Student: An Autoethnographic Review of Encountered Juxtapositions in African Language Pedagogy and Potential Steps Forward
Devin Johnson (Indiana University-Bloomington)

Offering African language courses is an honor bestowed to a few yet growing number of institutions in the United States, I have had the pleasure and privilege of studying African languages at two such institutions as part of graduate coursework while being an instructor of French language and culture courses. This paper reflects on my experience learning beginning Wolof at the African Flagship Languages Initiative (AFLI) during the summer. The employment of autoethnographic methods will guide my discussion about witnessed pedagogical measures. The shift I undertook from an instructor of a privileged Western language, French, to a student of the traditionally underserved languages of Wolof and Akan-Twi has led to an increased appreciation of the languages and cultures of West Africa and the knowledges they continue to produce. Furthermore, I consult the works of language acquisition scholars such as Loewen (2020), Bardovi-Harlig (1997), Richards & Rogers (2014), and more to encourage a shift in teaching methodological approaches from the traditional Grammar-Translation Method, used pervasively by Western colonial powers in the imposed instruction of their languages to peoples of the 'Global South', towards Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) to better suit the use and retention of African Languages for 21st-Century learners.

Open Educational Resources in African Languages: The Case Study of a Standards-Based Approach Textbook for the Teaching of Elementary Kiswahili
Peter Ojiambo (University of Kansas)
John Munyui Muchira (University of Florida)

The rapid technological investment and internet penetration globally has seen an increased interest in digital learning tools and the adoption of Open Educational Resources (OER) in the teaching of Foreign Languages (FLs) since the term was coined in July 2002 during the UNESCO meeting in Paris. While the trajectory of adoption of OER varies across disciplines, the African languages field compared to other FLs has witnessed limited development of OER materials thus hampering their effective utilization to enhance the quality, access and equity of teaching in the field. Using a social justice framework and a rapid review methodology of existing literature from educational and humanities databases as well as websites of higher education institutions, this paper will examine the history of the OER in the teaching of African languages (especially Kiswahili), its progress with regard to the development of high quality OER materials, success, challenges, and possibilities for enhancing the teaching and learning of African languages. The paper, will specifically, highlight examples of successful high quality OER in the field of African languages.

Leveraging Indigenous Music for Teaching Yorùbá Language: A Pedagogical Approach Using Nubia's Songs
Johnson Opeyemi Adegbola (University of Kansas)

The teaching of African languages and cultures, particularly the Yorùbá language, requires innovative and culturally relevant pedagogical approaches. This study will investigate the pedagogical potential of Segun Akinlolu's (known as Beautiful Nubia) songs, enriched with proverbs, as an effective tool for teaching the Yorùbá language and culture. Specifically, the study will examine how the artistic pieces in his songs can be repurposed to enhance various aspects of language instruction, including vocabulary building, pronunciation practice, comprehension exercises, translation, cultural storytelling, kinesthetic learning, and role-playing. Five songs—Ohun Ojú Ńrí, Ìkòkò Àkúfó (Lamentation for a Broken Pot), Spirit of a New Generation, Mind of Your Own, and Higher Steps (Ó Mbò Wá D'èrò) are selected for their rich use of proverbs and thematic focus on language and identity, cultural preservation, and social advocacy—core components of African language education. Blending the multiliteracies framework with Afrocentric pedagogy, the findings will reveal how the integration of proverbs within Beautiful Nubia's music fosters literacy development across diverse modes while centering African knowledge systems in education.

Teaching Language in Context: Culture as a Tool.
Nicholas Agyekum (Indiana University, Bloomington)

This study focuses on the role and impact of teaching language together with the culture of the people. One aspect of culture is language and as language is embedded in cultures it makes language and cultures inextricably intertwine. This means that; the objectives of a language lesson cannot be well achieved if it is delivered without a thorough consideration of the culture. Using the Elementary Akan class which is a Less Commonly Taught Languages (LCTL) classroom as a case study, the study draws on the best practices of incorporating the culture of the people into the language lessons. The study investigates the impact of using language as a tool to teach language in context. It is hypothesized in the study that, since the culture and language of most of the students who study Less Commonly Taught Languages (LCTL) are vastly different from the language they are studying, most of the language lessons will be novel and a thorough revelation of the culture to them will make things real. In addition, as culture is incorporated into language lessons, students can learn not only how the language is used in local contexts but attain a higher level of language proficiency.

Topic: Language pedagogy
Chair: Elaine Mshomba

Evidence-Based Approach Toward L2 Speech Assessment: The Case of Arabic as a Foreign Language
Mahmoud Ali (University of Arizona)

This presentation reports a study on the foreign-accentedness, comprehensibility, and intelligibility of L2 Arabic speech. Using listener-based, evidence-based approach, the study explored how adult learners of Arabic were rated across these three dimensions. Thirty learners participated in an oral proficiency interview (OPI), from which speech samples were extracted and assessed by ten native Arabic speakers. Listeners rated foreign-accentedness and comprehensibility on a 9-point scale and transcribed speech samples to measure intelligibility. Findings indicated that comprehensibility was rated more favorably than foreign-accentedness, although most speech samples were not highly intelligible. Significant relationships were found among the three aspects, with the strongest correlation between foreign-accentedness and comprehensibility, followed by comprehensibility and intelligibility, while the weakest relationship was between foreign-accentedness and intelligibility. Furthermore, the analysis revealed that both foreign-accentedness and comprehensibility contributed to explaining intelligibility, though comprehensibility was the stronger predictor, and a model based solely on comprehensibility best fit the data.

A Genre-based Approach for Social Justice-themed Lessons in Arabic
Myriam Abdel-Malek (University of Pittsburgh)
Heather Hendry Annegan (University of Pittsburgh)

Current literature supports centering social justice in world language education and deems it essential for developing global and intercultural competence (Glynn et al., 2014). To enact successful social justice-themed lessons, Hackman (2005) advocates that teachers include: contextual knowledge, critical analysis, activism, and reflection though equitable classroom interactions. However, when focusing on justice-themed lessons, many instructors need guidance with simultaneously supporting the development of language concepts. This presentation will show how a Genre-based Approach (GBA) applied in Arabic world language allows teachers to address the language needed to access, participate, and create various types of Arabic texts (i.e., genres) by critically seeing the connections between the language and the meaning intended in texts. In this session, the presenters share how to use texts along with a Genre-based Approach to assist Arabic teachers with addressing both social justice themes and language-oriented goals.

Motivation as a Key Factor in Learning Swahili as a Foreign Language: A Case Study of Wewe's Tale
Raphael Birya, PhD (UNC-Chapel Hill)

Motivation plays a crucial role in learning foreign languages, driving learners toward proficiency in their target language. This paper focuses on the case study of a Swahili student named Wewe and examines how various kinds of motivation can propel a language learner toward fluency in Swahili. Using the integrative motivation model, this case study analyzes the key inspirations that led Wewe to achieve a high level of proficiency. By identifying thematic frames within her story, the study explores the motivational factors that contributed to her progress. The findings offer valuable insights for instructors seeking to enhance student motivation and emphasize to learners the critical role motivation plays in foreign language acquisition.

Collective Mindfulness in African Language Program Development and Implementation
Geofred Osoro (Northeastern University)

Collective mindfulness refers to a shared state of awareness and presence among a group or organization. Collective mindfulness in education programs refers to fostering a shared awareness among educators, students, and administrators to create a responsive and adaptive learning environment. It emphasizes the importance of being attuned to the present moment, not just individually, but collectively. Practicing collective mindfulness can enhance communication, foster empathy, and improve group dynamics in workplaces, and improve productivity. In practice, collective mindfulness can lead to improved decision-making, enhanced collaboration, and better overall performance in programs and organizations. Most African language programs are started with single instructors who are tasked with program development and implementation. They are promoted to those ranks with very little formal training on how to supervise and work with others. This paper shows what is involved in organizational behavior and the need for a collective mindfulness leadership training program for African language programs. The practice of collective mindfulness will improve communication that can lead to improved collaboration, creativity, and well-being among all stakeholders. By cultivating collective mindfulness in educational programs, schools and departments can create a more adaptive, inclusive, and effective learning environments. It is hoped that a well-executed collective mindfulness environment will promote program enrolments, well-being, and retention.

Topic: Large Language Models (LLMs) and African Languages

Chair: Kiarie Wa'Njogu

Teaching Computers to Understand African Languages

Panelists
Mahiri Mwita *(Princeton University)*
Happy Buzaaba *(Princeton University)*
Filipo Lubua *(University of Pittsburgh)*
Hannah Essien *(Princeton University)*
Beatrice Mkenda *(University of Iowa)*
Francis Akutey-Baffoe *(Havard University)*

L ARGE LANGUAGE MODELS (LLMs) like ChatGPT, Gemini, Llama, have achieved impressive results in a wide range of natural language applications. However, they often struggle to recognize low-resource languages, and in particular African languages, which are not well represented in large training corpora. Additionally, the benchmarks used to evaluate LLMs are primarily in English or human-translated which may include some translationese effects, leading to mistranslation and inauthentic text generation. For example, prompting an LLM with "Ask for service in a restaurant in Twi language", one of the responses "Mepa wo kyɛw, me pɛ sɛ me yɛ aduan no ho adwuma", which translates to "Please, I want to work on the food" is not only wrong but also misleading. Presentations in this panel will not only highlight the limitations of LLMs in African languages but also explore the need to create resources that enhance the performance of LLMs and AI in African languages. This is crucial, especially in African language pedagogy and research in the diaspora.

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Topic: African Linguistics
Chair: Oluseye Adesola

Translation and the Future of African Literature
Gabriel Ayoola (University of Michigan)

The future of African literature is deeply tied to the role of translation as a vital link across diverse linguistic and cultural landscapes. This paper examines the evolving relationship between translation and African literature, focusing on its historical significance, current challenges, and future potential. Historically, translation has enabled African literary works to reach global audiences, amplifying African voices and fostering international recognition. The paper also addresses the complexities of translation within Africa, such as managing linguistic diversity, navigating power imbalances, and preserving cultural authenticity. These challenges are juxtaposed with the opportunities translation presents, including facilitating cross-cultural dialogue, fostering literary innovation, and broadening access to African literary traditions. By emphasizing the role of translators as cultural mediators, this study explores how translation can drive inclusivity and equity in the representation of African literature on the global stage. Translation is framed as a transformative force, capable of sustaining African literary traditions while encouraging dynamic, contemporary expressions. This research underscores translation's critical role in shaping a vibrant and interconnected future for African literature.

Building Words and Culture— The Position of Poetry in Language Teaching: A Case of Yoruba
Ismail Akintola (Indiana University Bloomington)

While the structural complexity and the meaning ambiguity of poetic pieces may make them seem unfit in a language learning setting, there is, however, a bright side to the notion of poetic complexity. Poetry, if handled by a creative teacher, could be an effective and engaging tool for language teaching. Samuel Coleridge's definition of poetry as "the best words in the best order" spells out the precision and intentionality of poetry in selecting words, making it an ideal tool for teaching grammar and vocabulary. Therefore, this paper explores the multifaceted ways in which poetry can be effectively utilized in language teaching, particularly as a dynamic tool for enhancing linguistic and cultural competence. The discussion begins with an examination of how poetry can facilitate the teaching of grammar in context, offering learners a more engaging and meaningful approach to mastering grammatical structures. To illustrate this, we analyze a Yoruba poem, demonstrating how it serves as a practical resource for contextualizing grammatical instruction. Furthermore, the paper looks into the cultural significance of poetry, highlighting its role in fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation of the target culture among learners.

The Agency of African languages in African Studies in both Africa and the Diaspora: The Power of Spoken Words
Ebenezer Ayesu (Heritage Christian Univ. College, Ghana)
Hannah Essien (Princeton University)

African languages have always played second fiddle to transnational and hegemonic global languages in the study of African Studies in both the Western and African countries. This trend which was borne out of colonialism has gone on for eons despite the continuous calls for their recognition in the spaces of African academia, Pan Africanist discourses and African-centred advocacy and activism. The reception of these calls by Africanist writers including Kenyan writer, Ngugi wa Thiong'o to write in the native African languages to decolonize knowledge failed to gain traction. Even when African languages are accepted, it often occurs in a niched space. However, in recent times, the acceptance of African language genres (Afrobeats/Afropop) in the global music awarding spaces of Grammys and MTV offers African languages a glimmer of hope in capturing global attention. Deploying the concept of agency, this article attempts to analyze the use of spoken words and the agential power it offers to African educators within African studies spaces in the diaspora and Africa. This is done through content analyses of the works of five African and African American authors.

Ritual Number or Coincidental Figure: "Seven" in the Religio-Cultural Theatre of Clark-Bekederemo
Omeh Obasi Ngwoke (University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria)

J. P. Clark-Bekederemo is one of Africa's first-generation writers. His robust dramatic oeuvre has enjoyed robust scholarly attention globally. His fourth play, Ozidi, dramatizes aspects of the religious and cultural lives of the Ijaw folk in Nigeria's Niger Delta, a region mainly defined by its aquatic environment and lifestyle. Enunciating this religio-cultural inclination of the tragic play are diverse ritual activities showcasing the people's interactions with their gods and ancestors of both aquatic and land habitations. At the center of the incessant ritual activities in the play lies the number "seven." Incidentally, very little or no critical attention has been paid to the significance and role of this numerical figure in the religio-cultural worldview of the Ijaw nation. Herein lies the significance of this study, which aims at investigating the significance of the number "seven" in the religio-cultural existence and imagination of the Ijaw people as well as its role in the realization of other aspects of meaning in the individual plays. The study will employ the qualitative research methodology and the New Historicist theoretical framework in the analysis of primary data.

Topic: Language Pedagogy
Chair: Susan Ngbabare

Teaching and Assessing Listening in a Foreign Language Classroom
Peter Mwangi (Northwestern University)
Kiarie Wa'Njogu (Yale University)

Honing FL learners' listening skills is critical in enhancing their linguistic and intercultural competencies in the target language (TL). In the era of technological advancement, many listening materials could be used in foreign language (FL) classrooms. However, though authentic, most of these listening tasks might not necessarily align with the learners' proficiency levels. Thus, determining the suitability of such vast speech samples can be challenging for many FL instructors. This presentation will explore using authentic listening tasks to teach and assess listening in a Swahili classroom. Three techniques of assessing listening will be used to demonstrate how such an assessment can be conducted: recall protocol, short answer questions, and summary tables. These teaching and assessment techniques can be replicated in any African language. The assessment techniques are shared courtesy of the University of Chicago's Language Center. On the other hand, the listening tasks, both voice and video recordings, used for the presentation have been developed through generous support from Yale University's Program in African Studies and the Program of African Studies (PAS) at Northwestern University.

How Grammar Songs and Games Facilitate Engagement and Learning of Swahili
Joash Gambarage (University of British Columbia)

Ludke (2009) shares research findings from psychology and neuroscience regarding the potential use of music and songs to support foreign language learning in modern language teaching. Grammar songs and language games have been reported to provide positive motivation and learning enhancements for students at different ages and stages of learning (Spicher & Sweeney, 2007; Rees, 1977). While grammar songs have been useful pedagogical tools for modern language teaching, this method has not been fully developed for non-classical languages like Swahili. In this talk, I present three grammar songs that I composed and recorded to reveal that, the songs (involving tenses, pronouns, and noun classes) not only improved learnability and engagement in learning Swahili but also kept learners motivated and did not drop out of the classes. Additionally, I share computer-assisted resources like flashcards that make a Swahili class fun. The talk highlights (i) the criteria used for composing such songs and (ii) how grammar songs are employed as effective pedagogical material for teaching complex aspects of the Swahili language (see also Gambarage 2024).

Strategies to Help Students Speak with More Confidence in the Foreign Language Classroom
Elaine Mshomba (University of Pennsylvania)

We can have a wide range of students in the foreign language classroom, especially at the first-year level. Some come in self-assured, eager to use the target language from day one. Others are apprehensive about speaking in any language in front of other students. Speaking skills can be especially difficult for shy and anxious students to acquire. Yet by the end of their first semester studying Swahili (in regular, not intensive, classes), all my students speak for five to seven minutes each (with just a few notes) and field questions about their speeches. How do they get there? And how do they continue to improve? In this presentation, I will offer strategies to promote greater confidence and improve the speaking skills of all students. Highlights include: how to use partners and small groups to foster camaraderie and establish a greater sense of community in the class; how to train students to use the target language (almost) exclusively in class (even in the first-semester classroom); the importance of visual aids; and fun activities to improve the speaking skills of intermediate and advanced learners.

Harnessing the power of social media for Learning African Languages
Dainess Maganda (University of Georgia)

As social media usage continues to be increasingly attractive and accessible, especially to younger generations, it plays a significant role in shaping modern society and culture. Although social media can be used freely to promote and enhance indigenous languages, particularly African languages, many efforts are needed to understand the role, challenges and proper ways of using them to aid learning African languages. In this paper, I present studies supporting incorporation of social media into language learning pertaining to learning foreign languages in formal education and outside of formal schools (Reinhardt, 2018). Using Vygotsky's sociocultural theory which emphasizes the importance of culture and social interaction in the development of cognitive abilities, I give a systematic analysis of testimonials from 200 African language learners identifying which, if any, social media is mostly favored for learning African languages. Ideas, and recommendations from students learning African languages in America are highlighted to suggest best practices and ways in which the use of social media might be used to enhance the learning of African languages in the digital era. Ideas and implications for using social media while preserving African cultural values through language use in social media will be presented.

Topic: Community and Diaspora Engagement
Chair: Galen Sibanda

African Contract Workers in East Germany and Their Legacy: Discussion Topics for College Courses
Viktoria Batista (University of Pittsburgh)

This presentation focuses on the use of selected materials as a starting point for class discussions on the Black German experience during and after Socialism in East Germany. Special attention is given to the lives of Black people who worked or studied in the GDR and their children, who may find themselves facing questions about their own identity and the identity of their parents. The materials were originally developed to be implemented in a culture class but can be adapted to German language courses as well. The presentation will highlight some of the major aspects of the materials and will discuss how to use them in order to facilitate class discussions that can enhance students' understanding of the Black experience during and after Socialism in the GDR and in the reunified Germany. The aim is to encourage our students to think more in depth about the legacy of the Vertragsarbeiter*Innen (contract workers) and the life of the "solidarity babies", topics that have so far received limited attention in college courses.

Cultivating Cross Cultural Competence in Teacher Education: Insights from the Reeves Scholars Program
Damaris Chot i(Michigan State University
Mustapha Issahaku (The University of Alabama)
Katie Tasch Bielecki (Michigan State University)

The Reeves Scholars Program (RSP) is a reciprocal exchange program between teacher candidates at the University of

Cape Coast, Ghana, and Michigan State University. Through a semester of virtual seminars, peer-to-peer exchanges and a travel component to both countries, the program fosters globally aware, culturally responsive teachers who engage in collaborative research and community-based learning. Scholars explore similarities and differences in education systems, addressing challenges and creating opportunities for teaching effectively across cultural contexts. By cultivating leadership and cross-cultural competence, RSP prepares future teachers to be change agents in their classrooms and communities. The program also highlights innovations in global teacher education, emphasizing collaboration, diversity and pedagogical strategies to meet modern classroom challenges while strengthening ties between Ghana and the US. This presentation will focus on best practices that can be applied to multilingual and diverse classrooms. Based on the highlights and reflections of scholars, practical strategies are being adopted in Ghanaian language classrooms.

Teaching African Languages Towards Critical Literacies: A Freirean Analysis of Swahili Teaching in Secondary Schools in Kenya
Peter Nyakundi Mose (Rhodes University, South Africa)

Research in Kenya indicates that in spite of the preference for English in education, African languages remain critical for majority of the population. A Kenyan child growing in rural areas or in informal settlements acquires an African language and later learns English at school. Such an African language acquired and later taught in schools is Swahili. The aim of education curriculums is literacy skills-being able to read and to write. However, a broader objective of educational outcomes is critical literacy which enables students to question, to evaluate, to deconstruct, and reconstruct written, oral, and multimodal texts in order to expose issues of power, injustice, and freedom. According to Paul Freire, critical literacy teaching presupposes specific teacher beliefs, attitudes, and practices to be able to develop critical readers. This paper will present research findings on three questions regarding Swahili pedagogy in secondary schools: What are Swahili teachers' understanding of critical literacy? What are Swahili teachers' attitudes towards teaching critical literacy? How do Swahili teachers use oral, written, multimodal, digital texts to teach critical literacy skills in prose?

A Comparative Analysis of Forced Assimilation Post-Colonization vs Necessity-Driven Acculturation
Sahana Katakol (University of Pittsburgh)

With a focus on the transformation of acculturation over time, the main crux of my research revolves around a comparative study of various sources that talk about the cultural impact of historical colonization (de-facto forced assimilation) versus immigration caused by modern war (necessity-driven acculturation) to understand how a minority population's culture and language assimilation had been impacted historically and are still being similarly impacted. This was stimulated by a curiosity to understand how much we, as a society, have actively and consciously pushed to change the system and what steps have, we taken to eradicate such feelings seen historically. One potential solution that I conceptualize and propose by the end of the paper is a concept of "reciprocative education". Instead of trying to only train NGO and volunteer members to be eligible teachers of their own host culture, we need to also start thinking of ways to introduce aspects and concepts of refugee culture to societies that are especially populated with refugee populations. This is where African languages come in as a part of the refugee cultures. I will discuss the potential of including African languages as a great source of "reciprocative education" that can enhance all cultures involved, not only one.

Topic: Tech in Language Teaching
Chair: Geofred Osoro

Digital Technology and Language Learning Material Creation: An information session
Adeola Agoke (University of Wisconsin, Madison)

Existing efforts in African language pedagogy have engaged technology as a means of instructional delivery within the classroom. The university systems across many US colleges have also enhanced technology use for teaching and learning through Canvas LMS, Blackboard, and other platforms. With this structure, instructors are nudged to integrate technology into their instructions. However, African language pedagogy poses some unique situations as it is laced with nuanced demands of presenting the suprasegmental features, grammatical components, and cultural practices of the languages, including tones in Yoruba, clicks in IsiZulu and IsiXhosa, noun classes in Kiswahili, etc. This paper draws on the modality used in my newly digitized book, "Dictionary of African Yoruba, to discuss digital technology at the intersection of African agency and knowledge production. Using interpolated technological tools to organize and document linguistic and Yoruba vocabulary furnished with contextualized audiovisuals, I bring attention to African languages, their iterations in digital spaces, and the implications of disseminating African knowledge and cultures beyond the shores of continental Africa through technology. Building on the template of this project, the field of African language pedagogy can enhance innovative possibilities that will promote the spread of African languages and overall experience in African language instructions.

Gamification and Educational Games in University Language and Translation Classes
Hanna Sukhanova (University of Pittsburgh))

In recent years, gamification and the use of purposefully designed educational games have emerged as effective tools for foreign language learning, indicating increased relevance and interest. Given the positive impact of gamification on language retention and real-life application, this study aimed to develop new, effective games for language learning, specifically tailored for classroom settings. In the present study, key elements of gamification—such as competition, rules, rewards, and the logic of presentation—were identified as motivational factors for students. Additionally, the study emphasized the importance of a systematic approach to incorporating gamification in university-level language instruction. This approach includes aligning students' individual goals with course objectives, creating progressive "stages" in the learning and gamification process, and incorporating elements of competition both in class and as part of homework activities. Finally, practical applications of the proposed strategies were described, and specific games were recommended for classroom integration. The suggested games emphasize challenge and group collaboration. Examples of such educational games are discussed, including the roleplay games "Journalist and Speakers", "Most Accurate Translation", and the practical exercise "Six Thinking Hats".

Bridging the Gap in Language Learning and Teaching Using Technology
Leonard Muaka (Howard University)
Esther Lisanza (Howard University)
Tafessework Gebeyehu (Howard University)

This presentation discusses a research project launched in 2022 through a grant obtained from the Department of Education to develop essential multimedia teaching materials for three African languages: Amharic, Swahili, and Wolof. Aimed at intermediate and advanced learners, these resources address a critical shortage in instructional materials for these languages. Presenters will explore the project's goals, the process of creating these materials, insights gained, and plans for the project's future. Specifically, the presenters will seek to replicate the successes of the project in other African languages.

Multimodal Learning in CALL for Arabic
Amal El Haimeur (The University of Kansas)

Multimodal learning, which integrates sensory inputs—visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and textual—offers a transformative approach to language acquisition. In Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL), multimodal strategies provide tailored experiences that cater to diverse learning styles, enhancing engagement, active learning, and overall learning outcomes. This presentation explores the potential of multimodal learning for Arabic instruction, addressing the specific challenges of Arabic. It will include a case study showcasing pedagogical strategies for designing a multimodal Arabic online class, integrating these theoretical foundations. Drawing on Mayer's cognitive theory of multimedia learning (2002), which emphasizes dual-channel processing for improved retention and learning, the presentation outlines effective strategies for integrating visual and auditory inputs to enhance learning. Educators can promote more active learning while managing cognitive load by incorporating interactive tools such as videos, quizzes, and digital flashcards. The presentation includes a case study of a multimodal Arabic online course that integrates interactive videos, VoiceThread recordings, and handwriting exercises. This course serves as an example of how multimodal strategies can manage cognitive load while maintaining high levels of student engagement and learning effectiveness.

Topic: AI in African Languages
Chair: Oluwafunke Ogunya

Economic Impact of AI in African Languages: There is Light at the End of the Tunnel
Daniel Ngugi (Karatina University)

The incorporation of Artificial Intelligence (AI) within African languages remains significantly overlooked in global AI efforts, which hinders both digital inclusion (Adekunle & Afolayan, 2021). This study investigates the initiatives aimed at developing AI language models and natural language processing (NLP) tools for prominent African languages such as Swahili, Yoruba, and Zulu. Despite these efforts, the creation of AI models for these languages encounters substantial obstacles regarding the scarcity of available data (Masakhane, 2020). Nevertheless, projects like Masakhane and Mozilla's Common Voice are making strides by generating open datasets and translation models to address this deficiency. The enhancement of AI technologies, including speech recognition and machine translation for African languages, presents considerable societal benefits in facilitating access to digital services in business sectors, particularly in rural communities (Ngugi & Muriuki, 2022). Entrepreneurs and researchers are engaged in developing AI solutions that are designed to align with African linguistic thereby fostering socioeconomic development (Ndubuisi, 2023). The fusion of AI with African languages has the potential to catalyze socioeconomic advancement; however, realizing this potential is contingent upon the proactive involvement of educational institutions in the creation of vital datasets (Adekunle & Afolayan, 2021). This paper evaluates the preparedness of these institutions.

AI-Driven Innovation in Yoruba Language Curriculum: Enhancing Learning Outcomes through Culturally Relevant Pedagogy and AI-Generated Visuals
Comfort Adejoke Durojaiye (Indiana University, Bloomington)

This study examines how AI technologies, particularly visual tools, can enhance Yoruba language and culture education. AI improves learning quality, teaching materials, and cultural protection by addressing language loss, learner engagement, and artistic preservation. It ensures learners achieve linguistic competence while connecting deeply with Yoruba heritage, beliefs, and traditions, enhancing retention and academic performance. The study highlights using AI-generated visuals in advanced teaching methods, including websites, augmented reality, and virtual reality, to spark interest. The study examines Yoruba language and culture, focusing on how modern technological tools can enhance the teaching and learning of grammar and vocabulary while embedding these practices within the cultural context. The main challenge of AI in education lies in understanding how to use it effectively for curriculum development, personalized learning experiences, and content generation. With this influence, there is a synergy of two components: effective methods of 'up-to-date' approaches and the revival of Yoruba as relevant culture.

AI-Driven Image Generation for African Language Pedagogy
Matthew Ajibade (Indiana University Bloomington)

The integration of African languages into AI technologies is vital for advancing educational tools that can effectively support teachers and learners. This study explores the potential of AI-driven image generation for enriching the teaching of African languages. We focus on creating culturally relevant images that correspond to text prompts in African languages such as Yoruba, Swahili, Akan, Zulu, and other African languages. These AI-generated images can support language instruction, providing contextually appropriate visuals that foster cultural and linguistic connections. The study addresses challenges such as dataset scarcity and the ethical implications of cultural representation, aiming to ensure that AI models respect and accurately reflect the richness of African cultures. For teachers, these AI tools can serve as resources to create engaging educational content that reflects the students' own linguistic and cultural heritage, making the learning experience more relatable and effective. The findings demonstrate the promise of AI image generation as a pedagogical aid, empowering teachers with innovative ways to enhance lessons, improve comprehension, and foster appreciation for African languages and cultures in the classroom.

The Role of Kiswahili in Strengthening Digital Skills for Africa's Future: A Focus on East Africa
Caroline Asiimwe (East African Kiswahili Commission, Zanzibar)

This paper focuses on the potential of Kiswahili language in strengthening digital skills across East Africa. The digital age presents both challenges and opportunities for Africa, particularly in regard to the use of indigenous languages in the digital space. Drawing from theoretical frameworks of digital skilling and new regionalism, the paper explores the importance of integrating Kiswahili as an Africa language into digital systems. By focusing on the role of Kiswahili in preserving indigenous knowledge, enhancing regional integration, and decolonizing digital education, the paper discusses the transformative potential of African languages in the digital era. The integration of African languages into the digital space holds immense potential for strengthening digital skills, promoting regional integration, and decolonizing education in Africa. The paper argues that the strategic use of African languages in the digital space can help bridge the digital divide, promote inclusive economic development, and foster a sense of regional and cultural identity.

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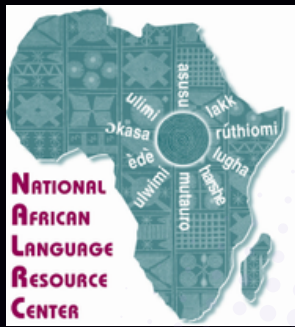*Partner with us to co-create a transformative African learning journey tailored just for your group*

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Zoliswa Mali
Director, African Lang. Program
Boston University

Dr. Zoliswa "Zoli" Mali is the Director of the African Language Program at Boston University's African Studies Center. Born in South Africa, she earned a BA from the University of Fort Hare and an MA in African Linguistics from Stellenbosch University. She also holds an MA in Linguistics and a Ph.D. in Second Language Acquisition from the University of Iowa. Dr. Mali has taught isiXhosa and isiZulu at various institutions. She has also served as president of the African Language Teachers Association (ALTA).

Topic: Language Pedagogy
Chair: Leonora Anyango

African Language Programs and the Teaching of Life Skills
Geofred Osoro (Northeastern University)

African language programs are not only tasked with improving language skills of learners, but also instilling essential life skills for daily living. Teaching life skills in language programs can be highly effective in enhancing students' overall competence and promote social wellbeing. The goal of teaching life skills is to support learners in their life goals and to help them to succeed academically. This is done by applying communicative approaches to teaching, writing, speaking, and listening. The teaching life skills is essential because it equips students with essential skills for their future, help them find work, support their educational journey, and give them confidence to grow in globalizing communities. Examples of sought after life skills are communication, teamwork, critical thinking, problem solving and creativity. Using the social constructivist theory, this paper groups life skills into different categories including social, academic, critical thinking, digital literacy, work-related, and health skills. The goal is to show how African language programs and teachers can incorporate life skills into their classrooms.

Adapting Feedback Strategies in Swahili Instruction Based on Learner Preferences
Bancy Gichovi (Ohio University & University of Pittsburgh)

The 21st-century second language classroom emphasizes learner-centered approaches, prioritizing students' preferences in the language learning process. This mixed-methods pilot study highlights the importance of integrating learners' preferences when selecting error correction strategies, particularly in Swahili language instruction. While extensive research has examined the effectiveness of corrective feedback—both implicit and explicit—across various language learning contexts, few studies focus on African languages like Swahili. Furthermore, existing literature often neglect the unique perceptions of Swahili learners regarding feedback, creating a gap in understanding how to adapt feedback strategies effectively. This study aimed to fill this gap by investigating Swahili learners' perceptions of recasts (an implicit type of feedback) and explicit correction, to better tailor these strategies to the Swahili language classroom. The key findings from the study reveal that the Swahili learners highly value oral corrective feedback, with a strong preference for explicit corrections due to their clarity in illustrating correct constructions and aiding memory retention. Explicit corrections were also generally preferred for their directness, helping learners quickly identify and correct mistakes, particularly in oral tasks. On the other hand, recasts were also favored for maintaining conversation flow and empowering learners to self-correct minor errors, aligning with a more implicit, supportive learning approach.

A Study on the Linguistic Accommodation in Swahili Varieties: A Comparative Study of Kenyan, Tanzanian, and Congolese Swahili Communities in the United States
Philimon Lutanjuka (University of Mississippi)

The East African dialect situation is marked by interactions with tribal languages, geography, history, culture, social factors, and significant individual variation. When examining these differences, it became clear that speakers from different regions adapt their behavior, employing both dialect and standard language features when speaking with their conversational partners. This research delved into the linguistic accommodation phenomenon observed among Swahili speakers who have relocated to the United States from Kenya, Tanzania, and Congo. Applying well-established sociolinguistic theories, we aimed to gain a deeper understanding of how these distinct Swahili dialects adapt and converge in a diaspora setting. Through comprehensive qualitative and quantitative analyses of linguistic behaviors and patterns of accommodation, this study yielded valuable insights into the intricate language dynamics within the Swahili-speaking community in the US. The findings of this research offered significant contributions to the understanding of linguistic diversity, identity, and interaction complexities in this diaspora context, benefiting scholars, and policymakers alike.

Infusing More African Oral Literature in African Language Pedagogy
Bayọ̀ Ọmọlọla (Morgan State University)

African written and oral literature continue to attract the attention of scholars, students, and public. As established authors retain their popular space, more African authors get published, and global critics write about different African literary works by popular and emerging authors. Correspondingly, the number of African literature teachers and critics is increasing, and so is the pedagogical approach to literary texts getting more robust. While this positive aspect continues to gain the ground in Africa and abroad, an equivalent opportunity or space does not exist for teachers of African languages abroad, for many teachers perhaps minimally use African oral literature in their language classrooms. This situation undervalues African oral literature as a teaching tool and prompts some questions. Why is African oral literature less used in teaching African languages abroad? Can the situation change? If it can, how? This presentation examines the current curriculum, learning texts, and African language teachers' experience. The purpose is to show how teachers can successfully apply an adaptative theory of African oral literature to enhance the teaching of African languages in United States.

Topic: Language Pedagogy
Chair: Lightness Isojick

Proposal for Creation of Instructional Modules for Yorùbá and Swahili Learning
Magdalyne Akiding (University of Michigan)
Daudi Akama Abuya (University of Michigan)

One of the challenges that surround the instruction of African languages in the United States is the limited availability of up-to-date and high quality instructional materials that are specifically tailored towards the needs of college students at all proficiency levels. At my university, the African language instructors are teaming up to put forward a proposal to develop course modules for all the three instructional levels taught at the university. That is, years 1, 2, and 3. This project, which is to be implemented in parts in the summers, will start with the beginner (year one) level materials for Yorùbá and Swahili. These pedagogical materials are meant to adequately address all four language skills, and therefore, will entail a substantial amount of audio and video production besides creating reading and writing content and activities. On behalf of the team, I wish to present the details of the project at the conference to not only share our idea but also to seek insight from specialists who have engaged in such projects before, as a way to better prepare to implement the project. The materials created from this project would be made available to students online.

Challenges Facing Teaching Swahili as a Foreign Language in the United States and Ways to Overcome for Beginners Level
Miriam Leonard Mwakalibule(University of Notre Dame)
Shukuru Cosmas (Jarvis Christian University)
Faraja Jacob Ngogo (University of Pittsburgh)

The teaching of Swahili as foreign language around the world has a great reputation and a long history. Research roughly shows that almost one hundred universities in the United States offer Swahili courses for beginners, intermediate and advanced level learners. On top of that, teaching and learning Swahili faces various challenges from the instructional materials, instructors, learning environment and learners, whereby this may impact the effectiveness and management of the course. Thus, this article aims to showcase the challenges of teaching and learning Swahili and ways to navigate the course effectiveness for the beginners. As beginners' level is the starting point for both learner and the instructor, hence from the preparation processes, specifically exploring the critical factors and generating informed strategies to overcome challenges. Under this abstract, Swahili language instructors will be able to cope with the methods and ideas to enhance effective teaching and learning processes. Among the methods discussed is the use of Swahili dictionary, repetition and preparation of teaching materials. Again, Swahili learners will be informed about best practice towards adjusting both linguistic and cultural challenges in learning Swahili as a foreign language.

Promoting Self-Efficacy and Social Justice in the Swahili Foreign Language Classroom through Disciplinary Literacy
Abdul Mutashobya (Michigan State University)

In the context of Swahili language education in American universities, fostering student self-efficacy and promoting social justice are key to creating inclusive and effective learning environments. This presentation highlights how the Disciplinary Literacy (DL) framework can be leveraged to enhance language proficiency while addressing broader social justice goals. Through an exploration of genre analysis as a writing strategy, literature circles for collaborative reading, and Socratic seminars for critical oral discussions, the presentation emphasizes practical approaches to empower learners at various proficiency levels. It also demonstrates the role of formative assessment in tracking student progress and fostering reflective learning. Attendees will engage with examples drawn from Swahili classrooms and leave with actionable strategies for connecting language pedagogy with equity and empowerment.

Bridging Lexical Gaps: Contextual Challenges in Teaching Swahili as a Second Language for English Speakers
Ismail Kaminambeo (Michigan State University)

Foreign language teachers often face challenges when teaching English speakers due to lexical gaps caused by cultural differences. Some words in foreign languages lack direct equivalents in English, reflecting unique cultural contexts. Through my experience as a Foreign Language Teaching Assistant (FLTA) for Swahili at Michigan State University, I noticed several such gaps. For instance, the English word "basement" has no widely used equivalent in Swahili, reflecting the fact that basements are uncommon in East African architecture. Instead, Swahili speakers use the phrase "chini ya nyumba," which means "under the house." Similarly, the word "pole" in Swahili expresses empathy, but there is no single English equivalent; speakers often use longer phrases like "Sorry to hear that." This paper explores these lexical challenges in Swahili, aiming to help educators improve students' learning experiences and language proficiency. Suggested strategies include using contextual illustrations, such as diagrams of East African homes to explain the lack of basements and incorporating role-playing activities to teach the empathetic context of "pole." These approaches can enhance cultural understanding and vocabulary acquisition for students.

Topic: Language and Indigenous Knowledge
Chair: Oluwasegun Amoniyan

Preservation of Luhya and Tiv Languages through the Creation of Digital Resources
Moses Fegher (Laikipia University)
Sheila Pamela Wandera-Simwa (Laikipia University)

Many African languages remain underrepresented in digital technologies, limiting their usage in educational, social, and cultural contexts. This study will focus on developing digital resources for Luhya and Tiv languages, aiming to bridge the gap in linguistic representation in digital spaces. The primary objective of this study will be to create accessible, digitized language resources and educational platforms that can significantly enhance the learning and preservation of African languages. These resources will help integrate African languages into modern communication, education, and information systems and play a crucial role in their preservation. The study will be grounded in Multimodal Literacy Theory, which underscores the importance of different modes of communication—oral, written, visual, and digital—in shaping meaning and knowledge transmission. This theory supports digitizing African languages, including written and oral forms, in various digital formats. By applying this framework, the study will ensure that the Luhya and Tiv languages can be effectively preserved across multiple platforms, enhancing their visibility and usage in digital environments. The methodology will involve collecting spoken language and creating digital archives for the Luhya and Tiv languages.

Environmental Sustainability: An Exploration of Yoruba Indigenous Knowledge Systems
Abiola Afolayan (University of Michigan, Ann Arbor)

Environmental sustainability is integral to the Yoruba worldview, as seen in the various precautions they implement to maintain a balanced ecosystem. These measures are deeply rooted in the Yoruba indigenous knowledge system, which this paper seeks to explore. Specifically, it examines the connection between cultural prohibitions and environmental sustainability. In Yoruba culture, several prohibitions exist to protect the environment. For example, the killing of certain animals is forbidden, particular trees are not to be cut, and defecation in water bodies is strictly prohibited. These practices reflect the Yoruba people's profound respect for nature and their ecosystem. Moreover, they offer valuable insights into indigenous approaches to environmental preservation and sustainable agriculture. This paper advocates for a renewed appreciation of such indigenous practices, emphasizing the need to balance traditional methods with modern sustainability strategies. It also stresses the importance of integrating this knowledge into educational curricula, fostering cultural awareness and a deeper understanding of how the Yoruba have long preserved their environment. By incorporating these indigenous practices into broader sustainability discussions, innovative solutions to current environmental challenges may emerge.

Teaching Language through Indigenous Herbal Medicine with Reference to Swahili
Catherine Ndungo (Kenyatta University)

This paper focuses on the use of indigenous Swahili herbal medicine as an avenue to study the origin and spread of the language . It critically explores the various indigenous herbal medicines used by the Swahili before and after colonial period and how they can be used as a repository to study the language. The views expressed herein have been elicited. through desk review as well as from Swahili respondents from Mombasa County in Kenya. A total of ten respondents were interviewed including five men and five women aged between 50 and 95 years. The respondents were purposively sampled through referrals by community gatekeepers. The discussion is anchored on the anti-colonial discursive framework as expounded by Dei (2002) in his paper entitled Rethinking the role of indigenous knowledge in the Academy. From the data elicited. it evident that most Swahili herbs are of foreign origin which could be tied to the theory that Kiswahili is a foreign language which has borrowed many lexical terms from foreign languages where the herbs used for medicine are said to have originated from.

Integrating Swahili Proverbs in Language Instruction: Enhancing Vocabulary and Grammar Through Cultural Context
Mohamed Mwamzandi (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill)

Proverbs are an integral part of indigenous knowledge that can enhance language instruction by providing cultural context. They are artistic expressions that convey truths, morals, and philosophies, yet their pedagogical potential remains largely untapped. This study emphasizes the use of Swahili proverbs in teaching Swahili as a second language by categorizing them into themes and topics such as gender roles, relationships, diseases, and peace and conflict. For instance, the proverbs "Kidole kimoja hakivunji chawa" (One finger cannot crush a lice) and "Sikio la kufa halisikii dawa" (Medicine cannot cure a dead ear) illustrate how proverbs can teach vocabulary, specifically body parts, while also demonstrating grammatical structures like noun class agreement and verb negation. In the first proverb, the adjective "kimoja" (one) and the verb "hakivunji" (LIT:does not break) agree with the noun "kidole" (Noun Class 7:finger). Similarly, in the second proverb, "la" ('a' of association) and "halisikii" (LIT: does not hear) agree with "sikio" (Noun Class 5:ear). In the examples, ha in hakivunji/halisikii is negation. Notably, the negated forms end with i instead of a in the affirmative forms vunja/sikia.

Topic: Pitt Honors Student Panel
Chair: Leonora Anyango

Using Translation Services to Understand Healthcare Barriers for African Refugees
Tanisha Pagadala (University of Pittsburgh)

This past summer, I worked on a research project exploring the barriers to healthcare access for refugees in Pittsburgh. Due to the population of interest, having a translator was crucial to recruiting and working with participants. In order to learn more about the barriers to healthcare, I interviewed refugees currently living in Pittsburgh. All participants in the study were from African countries and spoke Swahili, but were not fluent in English, so translation services were necessary. Having an interpreter allowed me to connect with the participants–to hear their story firsthand and better understand their perspectives. The translation services were also key to the recruitment process as translating the flyers and other materials allowed me to reach a wider population of potential participants. The presence of an interpreter was vital in facilitating this study and completing valuable research with diverse populations. I will speak about my experiences having an interpreter for my research and the benefits of knowing African languages.

Epilepsy International: The Importance of Swahili in achieving the goals of a non-profit organization
Rowan Haffner (Duke University)

At Epilepsy International, we use Kiswahili to build meaningful connections across Eastern and Southern Africa. Language bridges cultural divides, making health information accessible and relevant. By integrating Kiswahili into our workshops, training, and outreach, we ensure clarity and inclusivity. In Kenya, our afterschool programs provide epilepsy students with academic tutoring, health education, and emotional support—all in Kiswahili. Local educators and healthcare professionals explain medical concepts in familiar terms, helping students manage their condition effectively. Our culturally tailored curricula incorporate Kiswahili idioms and proverbs, fostering more profound engagement. We also use Kiswahili in community workshops and support groups to educate parents, caregivers, and local leaders, dispelling myths and strengthening trust. Distributing educational materials in Kiswahili further connects international expertise with local culture. With over 40 chapters, we see Kiswahili as a catalyst for sustainable, community-driven healthcare.

Ushering in New Generations: Language and Belonging
Angelina Tran (University of Pittsburgh)

Understanding communication's importance, not being able to speak certain languages can have drawbacks. In this presentation, I will share how integral language is through my experience as a daughter of immigrants. My parents, Vietnamese immigrants that came to America as teenagers, were bullied for not being able to speak English. But for my mom, the only person that made her feel like she belonged was her Spanish teacher who acknowledged the importance of transcending language barriers through education and understanding. With this, I realize how lucky I am to be surrounded by invaluable educators, and though I did not look like my peers growing up, speaking the same language made me feel like I belonged. It is educators of all languages, such as instructors of African languages, that can make a difference in the lives of future generations, ushering in opportunities to share our cultures, stories, and identities to make everyone feel like they belong.

South African Language Policy: Challenges and Future Prospects
Jamie Wood (University of Pittsburgh)

It is no secret that South Africa boasts one of the most inclusive and effective language policies in the world, and I wanted to explore the nuances of that policy and how it leaves its citizens with positive effects. In this panel, I will present the key themes that are a demonstration of how policy plays into individual's daily lives, how governments effect language policy and its consequences, and how it effects education within the region. Through studying case studies of the positive and negative effects of their policy to engaging in discussion with individuals working within the system, I was able to understand the goals of the education system with regards to language are in South Africa while getting an account on for how they function within the diverse parts of the country. This in turn highlighted specific needs for the country to effectively carry out their policy in regard to education and explored a few ways that could effectively happen in the futur

Panel

Topic: Language Pedagogy Research

DEEPENING RESEARCH ON AFRICAN LANGUAGE PEDAGOGY THROUGH COLLABORATIVE AND ACTION RESEARCH

HOSTS

Alwiya Omar | Kazeem K. Sanuth
(NALRC, Indiana University, Bloomington)

PANELISTS

Abubakar Bala (Miami University of Ohio)
Beatrice Mkenda (University of Iowa)
Everlyn Oluoch-Suleh (USIU, Kenya)
Maryam Ismail (The State University of Zanzibar, Tanzania)
Maryan Ali (Howard University)
Matha Nyikos (Indiana University, Bloomington)
Uwuma Ugwu (Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Nigeria)

HOW can AI tools enhance or hinder the acquisition of communication skills in African languages? What strategies can instructors use to engage students' resistance to corrective feedback? How can rich cultural heritages be integrated into lesson plans? What impact does the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) have on learners' reading skills, and how can reading abilities in Ekpeye, an under-resourced language be improved? These critical questions, explored by participants of the 2024 NALRC Pedagogy Research Workshop, form the foundation of this panel. Panelists will present their research work, highlighting the significant progress and insights developed since their initial workshop engagement. Each presenter will critically examine how the collaborative environment and action research approach have shaped their understanding and motivation for research on African language pedagogy. Through their evolving work, the panelists aim to demonstrate the dynamic nature of researching African language pedagogy, thereby offering valuable insights for educators, researchers, and practitioners committed to advancing research in African language instruction.

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Topic: Language Pedagogy
Chair: Hanna Essien

The Development of a Swahili Language Curriculum: A Vocabulary-Based Approach
Elias J. Magembe (Foreign Service Institute)

About six years ago, the Foreign Service Institute (FSI) approved the development of a home-grown Swahili language curriculum, that grew out of the need to have a language program that not only took into account the special needs of its diplomatic learners but also considered the short timeframe that learners are given in their pre-deployment language learning window. The FSI Swahili curriculum was conceptually developed using the "balanced four strands" theoretical framework and principles as put forward by Paul Nation (2013). In addition, the developers used vocabulary as the basic foundation for designing the new Swahili Basic Course Curriculum. Inherent with this approach was the recognition of vocabulary as a fundamental element to the learner's ability to process the language through meaningful input (reading and listening) and meaningful output (speaking and writing) at the desired proficiency levels. This presentation shares our experience by walking through the various stages of the curriculum development process, starting from the Design Thinking stage, Prototyping, Vocabulary Frequency List Compilation, Developing of Key Components and Activities, Audio Visual Incorporation and Linkages all the way to Piloting the curriculum in the classroom.

Cultural Objects as a Means of Enhancing Swahili Language Acquisition
Nancy J. Ngowa (Pwani University)
Deo Ngonyani (Michigan State University)

Culture is a complex, multifaceted phenomenon with diverse visible and invisible manifestations. Learning a language is learning the speakers' culture and acquiring a window into the community. One of the challenges for teachers is how to facilitate the learners' encounter with the culture of the target community. One of the ways to help students get in touch with the culture is to bring cultural objects or artifacts. In this paper we reflect on our experiences in using such objects in teaching Swahili as a second language in study abroad programs and in American classrooms. We have experience bringing to class cooking utensils, food ingredients, kanga and vitenge, carvings, bao game board, currency, and ephemera such as posters, advertisements, tickets, and menus. We illustrate with uteo (winnower) use and beliefs associated with it, grains and how to sort them, kanga cloth and indirect messages, and the bao board game. Cultural objects help the students connect between the artifacts, the context, and the invisible aspects of the culture, such as beliefs and taboos. Learners get opportunities to learn about the artifacts practically, learning to use them in concrete contexts rather than in abstractions.

Using 100% Swahili as the Target Language in a Second-Language Class
Angella Ida (Fulbright FLTA)

Using 100% Swahili as the target language in a second-language class in the USA fosters an immersive environment that enhances both linguistic proficiency and cultural competence. This approach emphasizes the exclusive use of Swahili in class, allowing students to develop authentic communication skills while gaining insight into the language's cultural context. Task-based learning activities, such as role plays, pair work, and problem-solving tasks, encourage students to use Swahili meaningfully in real-life scenarios. Routine activities like greetings and instructions conducted in Swahili create consistent exposure, while visual cues and culturally relevant materials help clarify concepts without reverting to English. Encouraging student output through guided discussions, presentations, and collaborative tasks builds confidence and fluency. Technology, including language apps and multimedia tools, complements classroom learning and supports independent practice. Cultural content, such as proverbs, songs, and traditions, enhances engagement and connects language learning to authentic contexts. Continuous assessment through Swahili-based quizzes, oral presentations, and conversational exercises tracks progresses, ensuring students remain motivated and achieve their learning goals. By creating a Swahili-rich classroom, students not only develop communication skills but also acquire critical thinking abilities and cultural awareness. This dynamic approach prepares learners for real-world interactions, fostering a deeper appreciation of Swahili language and culture in a second-language learning environment.

Exploring Digital Whiteboards in African Language Instruction
Victor Alabi (Brown University)

I explore digital whiteboards and their features in in-person, online, and hybrid instructional contexts. Digital whiteboards, like Zoom whiteboards, have various benefits yet to be explored in African language instruction. This presentation also explores other digital whiteboards and their extraordinary benefits in African language pedagogy. Participants will engage in some hands-on activity on using these digital platforms.

Topic: Community and Diaspora Engagement
Chair: Khady Diene

Integrative Strategies for Quality Assurance in African Language Pedagogy: Interdisciplinary and Community-Centered Approaches
Virginia Njau (United States International University, Kenya)

African language education in higher education must adapt to global realities by incorporating interdisciplinary and community-focused innovations to enhance quality and relevance. This study examined strategies for quality assurance in Kenyan African language teaching, emphasizing the integration of cultural, professional, and social contexts into curricula. Grounded in Constructivist Learning Theory and Transformative Learning Theory, the research highlighted how such integrations enrich learning and align with quality standards. Using a mixed-method approach, the study included surveys with African language educators, focus group discussions with students, and case studies of programs that engaged African diaspora communities. Findings revealed that interdisciplinary connections—such as integrating language instruction with health communication, digital storytelling, and historical studies—enhanced students' cultural understanding and professional skills. Additionally, community partnerships, particularly with diaspora groups, foster authentic language use and deeper engagement. The study recommended capacity-building workshops for educators, standardized interdisciplinary modules, and collaborative networks connecting African language programs with diaspora communities and other academic disciplines.

From the Classroom to the Swahili community: Language Learning with Real-World Connections
Anne Jebet (University of Virginia)

In teaching second languages, bridging the gap between classroom instruction with the real-world connections is crucial for developing practical communication skills. This presentation explores the impact of engaging language students with their local Swahili community through immersive, hands-on experiences. By incorporating interactions with native speakers, and community engaged projects, students are able to contextualize their language learning and gain a deeper understanding of both language and culture. The paper highlights successful case studies, best practices, and challenges in offering authentic language practice for students learning Swahili.

Integrating Community Engagement, Cultural Contexts, and Interdisciplinary Approaches in Assessing African Language Proficiency.
Maiga Muga (University of Illinois Urbana Champaign)

Effective assessment methods in African language education must transcend traditional metrics to reflect the dynamic interplay between language, culture, and community engagement. Drawing on theoretical frameworks such as community-based language teaching (Canagarajah, 2018; Samuels, 2018) and culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995), this presentation explores innovative assessment practices that integrate real-world cultural contexts, interdisciplinary collaboration, and community-driven learning experiences to provide a holistic evaluation of student proficiency in African languages. This study uses project-based assessments (Darling-Hammond et al., 2019), reflective journals, and community-driven assignments to immerse students in authentic cultural environments. It integrates storytelling, oral traditions, and interdisciplinary themes—such as history and digital media—to assess linguistic skills, cultural competence, and the ability to engage with diverse communities (Lee, 2019; Vavrus, 2002). It demonstrates how partnerships with local African communities and interdisciplinary stakeholders enrich the assessment process, fostering deeper connections between language learning and students' academic and professional goals (Guthrie, 2011). This aligns with the increasing recognition of culturally sustaining pedagogies that validate and incorporate students' heritage and lived experiences into the curriculum (Flifli & Houdji, 2023).

What's in a Name? Exploring Cultural Engagement and Identity in Swahili Foreign Language Learning Through Name Adoption
Rachel Maina (University of Wisconsin-Madison)

My conference paper investigates the impact of students adopting Swahili names among learners of Swahili as a foreign language. The study explores how having a Swahili name influences a student's engagement with the language and the culture it represents. Swahili names for foreign language learners are a pathway for students to enter Swahili-speaking spaces and identities, potentially increasing cultural empathy and linguistic commitment. By examining the effects of using Swahili names, this research assesses whether and how this approach affects language learning. The study will qualitatively analyze student reflections, classroom observations, and instructor feedback from students who adopt and use Swahili names. The paper will address the potential for identity transformation in language learning and consider the implications for fostering cultural engagement in foreign language pedagogy. The research will provide insights into how intentional cultural integrations can shape students' linguistic experience and influence motivation and confidence in foreign language acquisition, contributing to broader discussions on practical, culturally enriched approaches to teaching African languages in non-native contexts.

Topic: African Literature
Chair: Ismail Akintola

Militarist Ideology and the Irony of Instability in Ken Saro-Wiwa's Sozaboy and Tanure Ojaide's The Activist
Oyesola Afolabi (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill)

This paper explores the militarist ideology and its ironic role in perpetuating instability in Ken Saro-Wiwa's Sozaboy and Tanure Ojaide's The Activist. Both novels critique the consequences of military dominance in postcolonial Nigeria, revealing how the very forces meant to establish order often lead to chaos and societal disintegration. In Sozaboy, the protagonist's naive enlistment into the army exposes the brutal realities of war, while The Activist highlights the destructive effects of military influence on political and environmental justice movements. Through irony, narrative structure, and character development, Saro-Wiwa and Ojaide expose the contradictions of militarism, illustrating how it fosters corruption, exploitation, and disenfranchisement rather than stability. By analyzing the symbolic and thematic roles of the military in both novels, this paper provides insight into the authors' broader critique of power, governance, and resistance in Nigeria's postcolonial context.

Bayede! Wena we Ndlovu! The Hidden Transcripts of Praising Singing as Historiography: Examining King Shaka's Praise Song as a Historical Account.
Sipho Sithole (Howard University)

The African poetic tradition is oral. Stories passed from one generation to the next detail vividly, through language and imagery, historical accounts of events in our lifetime. These narratives, carried from distant memory by those who refuse to forget, lest our story gets lost in translation, have preserved our history and shielded it from misrepresentation. Using praise songs of the greatest King that ever lived – the founder of the Zulu nation – King Shaka, the paper will interrogate how an ancient oral tradition does not confine itself to a mere listing of dates, spaces and places, but in the most beautiful display of artistic expression it captures the essence behind such historical events that shaped Shaka and his kingdom. King Shaka's reign, which lasted only twelve years, changed the course of history in the world, His meteoric rise, and that of the Zulu people, has remained an obsession of both the global north and the south. This paper will exam the power of praise singing and how those who possess the gift of the gab can shower flattering epithets to the powerful, whilst letting us inside the hidden histories that never got to be written, from which we discover ourselves and the world.

The Impacts of Prohibited Love in the Sepedi Novel Leratosello
Matemane Lekganyane (University of Pretoria, South Africa)

This study analyses the impacts of prohibited love in the traditional Bapedi culture, with specific reference to human rights violations under the leadership of both former and current kings of the Northern Sotho tribes (the Bakone, Batlokwa, Bapedi, Mapulane, Baroka, Balobedu, Bakgaga, Bahananwa and Bantwane) in the novel Leratosello. The study aims to show the impacts of prohibited love in the Sepedi novel Leratosello. While research has been conducted on the impacts of prohibited love in African novels and dramas, this issue has not been explored in the novel Leratosello. The objective is to describe the disparity between the human rights stipulated in the South African constitution and the Sepedi/Sesotho sa Leboa culture. The question is whether there is discrepancy between the human rights as expressed in the South African constitution and those in traditional Northern Sotho culture The qualitative research method will be used as the focus will be on a literary text, namely Leratosello.

Investigating the Influence of Swahili Language on EA Artistic Expressions (Music and Popular Genres in EA)
Anna Mwalagho (Howard University)

Swahili language is spoken by over 50 million people across the African region and in the diaspora. One driving force for the spread and growth of Swahili is the integration of Swahili language in the field of entertainment. In East Africa, the entertainment sector has seen a great crossover of Swahili music from one country to the next. The "new" musical genres like Bongo flava, and Afrobeat, have become very popular and bridged the gap in all the Eastern African countries. Many of these songs use Kiswahili as the theme in their songs, and these songs have massive following because of the Language. In this paper I will investigate the influence of Swahili language in artistic expressions by interviewing many of the audiences, followers of musicians who sing in Swahili and the musicians, and conclude with a creative analysis of interrelation of Swahili and artistic expressions.

Topic: Tech in Language Teaching
Chair: Paul Ntinda

Progress Update on the Igbo Children's Dictionary Project: Bridging Language Preservation and Cultural Literacy
Ugonna (Indiana University Bloomington)

This presentation provides an update on the Igbo Children's Dictionary project, an effort aimed at leveraging technology to revitalize the Igbo language and promote cultural literacy among children. The dictionary, designed for children aged 6–10 and beginner-level language learners, integrates cultural materials such as folktales and proverbs to enhance engagement and preserve traditional values. The project combines traditional storytelling with modern tools such as FLEx, SayMore, MidJourney and others. These technologies enable a nuanced representation of Igbo grammar and cultural context, providing users with interactive and engaging content. Key highlights include the creation of 95 initial dictionary entries, supported by cultural narratives like proverbs and folktales, the use of examples and illustrations to contextualize meanings and grammatical features, and plans to expand the dictionary to include 1,500–2,000 entries, 50 proverbs and 50 folktales, making it accessible in print, app and online formats. This presentation underscores the importance of using technology to bridge the gaps in language preservation and education for African languages. The project also demonstrates its scalability as a replicable framework for other under-represented languages.

'Wewe Mdada, Mwambie huyo Mkaka': How Swahili Teachers can Rescue the Language Abuse by Producing Social Media Content
Twalha Abbass (Indiana University Bloomington)

When I taught Elementary and Intermediate Swahili at Indiana University, I always faced issues when I needed to incorporate external creative materials. I refer to Swahili songs, audio-visual stories, and written texts here. The songs I found on social media platforms such as YouTube and TikTok did not represent desirable models for my classroom outcomes. For instance, most singers would incorporate English words to communicate Swahili concepts. This indicates that while technological development has helped spread cultures and languages, the users of those technologies from East Africa have yet to take advantage of Swahili. Therefore, this paper investigates the framework that can help us create more Swahili resources using social media. Further, as a writer myself, I view social media platforms as a way of publishing more of our works in African languages to make them accessible all over the world. Studies have proven how effectively a student learns a foreign language when they interact with authentic materials, and this paper argues that we, teachers, can be the primary creators of those content materials.

Indigenous Digital Storytelling and Effective Strategies to Foster Students' Writing Skills in Arabic
Asmaa Benbaba (University of Kansas)

Teaching materials have an essential role in the learning process of Arabic language and culture; selecting the proper text helps improve student learning and matches with the target skill. In an increasingly interconnected world, selection of the best practices of teaching of Arabic, a rich African language, must meet the demands of the new millennia students and must prepare them to find a place within such a diverse and globalized society. Digital Story Telling has a strong presence in todays' life through different forms: examples are daily TikTok stories, Snapchat stories, and other mediums. The purpose of this paper is to share some of the best practices and strategies of teaching writing to an Intermediate Arabic class using Digital Story Telling. Studies have shown that stories naturally attract students' attention, motivate them to listen, learn and engage; Stories help students understand contents of indigenous culture and connect students with real life.

Bridging Language, Culture, and Technology: A Holistic Approach to African Language Learning
Tinuade Tope-Ogunrinde (Michigan State University)

This paper investigates the changes that are relevant to African language learning and teaching. It recognizes and analyzes the various and effective strategies of language teaching applied to enhance proficiency and cultural awareness among learners. Combining recent research findings, the study highlights the positive effects of these strategies on student's motivation to learning, participation, and retention of African languages. Central to this study is the development of all-encompassing curricula, that incorporate African languages into various academic disciplines and professions. This paper advocates for culturally relevant resources and methodologies, ones that facilitate language instruction and promote a complete understanding of African languages and their significance locally and globally, among various academic and professional fields. A significant part of this study is the role of technology in advancing African language education. Technology showcases relevant digital tools, applications, and platforms that facilitate interactive learning experiences, aid accessibility, and foster collaborative environments. Technology complements traditional teaching methods, offers innovations and avenues for preserving and revitalizing African languages, particularly in underrepresented communities. Finally, this paper calls for a holistic approach to African language education, approaches that appreciate and acknowledge the mutually exclusive nature of language, culture, and identity.

Topic: Swahili Panel - Tafsiri na Pedagojia
Chair: Bancy Gichovi

Matumizi ya Akiliunde katika Kutafsiri Matini za Kiutamaduni kutoka Kiswahili Kwenda Kiingereza: Changamoto na Suluhisho
Hadija Jilala Hassan (The Open University of Tanzania)

Makala haya yanahusu matumizi ya Akiliunde katika kutafsiri matini za kiutamaduni kutoka Kiswahili kwenda Kiingereza. Tunatambua kuwa maendeleo na mapinduzi makubwa ya sayansi na teknolojia yameibua mbinu mpya za kurahisha kazi zinazofanywa na binadamu. Miongoni mwa mbinu hizo ni Akiliunde ambayo inatumika kama nyenzo ya kutafsiri matini za lugha mbalimbali duniani. Watu wanategemea na kutumia Akiliunde kutafsiri maana na ujumbe wa matini za aina mbalimbali. Swali tunalojiuliza ni je Akiliunde inaweza kutafsiri matini za kiutamaduni kwa ufanisi? Je, ni changamoto zipi zinazotokana na matumizi ya akiliunde katika kutafsiri matini za kiutamaduni? Makala yamelenga kuchunguza matumizi ya Akiliunde katika kutafsiri matini za kiutamaduni kutoka Kiswahili kwenda Kiingereza. Katika kufikia lengo hilo, makala yanabainisha matini za kiutamaduni, changamoto za kutumia akiliunde kutafsiri matini za kiutamaduni na kupendekeza suluhisho. Data zitakusanywa kwa kutumia mbinu ya usomaji makini na usaili. Nadharia ya Skopos itatumika kuchambua na kujadili data za makala. Hivyo, makala haya yanajadili kuwa, matumizi ya Akiliunde yanaweza kurahisisha kazi ya tafsiri lakini ina changamoto katika kufikia ufanisi wa mawasiliano ya kiutamaduni. Hii ni kwa sababu kila lugha ina utamaduni wake mahususi ambao umefungamana na mazingira na muktadha wa lugha hiyo.

Lugha za Kiafrika katika Nyanja, Kazi, na Jamii Mbalimbali: Mchango wa Magazeti ya Mtandaoni katika Kueneza Kiswahili Kitumikacho kila Siku Nchini Tanzania
Marko Mwipopo (University of Michigan)

Kusudi la utafiti huu ni kujua kiasi ambacho Vyombo vya Habari vinachangia kueneza Kiswahili. Nimejikita katika kuangalia namna magazeti hutimiza azma hii. Nimekusanya misemo itokayo kwenye nakala laini magazetini kila siku. Misemo hii inaangazia maisha ya jamii, mathalani utamaduni na michezo, teknolojia, elimu, siasa, kilimo, biashara, mazingira, afya, na nyinginezo. Katika utafiti huu, ninakusanya magazeti mtandaoni na kuhifadhi ambayo tu yanajitokeza na misemo ya Kiswahili. Hii ni misemo nadra ambayo mingi si rahisi kuipata kwenye kamusi za Kiswahili kwenye nakala ngumu au nakala tepe. Ufafanuzi wa maana na matumizi ya misemo unatokana kwa sehemu kubwa na uzoefu wa mtafiti kama mwalimu na mtumiaji wa lugha ya hii. Pia tafsiri imetokana na mahojiano baina ya mtafiti na wataalamu wengine 10, pamoja na watumiaji wa kawaida wa Kiswahili kutoka nchini Tanzania. Marejeleo yanatokana na vyanzo mbalimbali maktabani. Haya ni yale yaliyochapishwa kwa lugha za Kiswahili na za Kiingereza, ilimradi tu yamezungumzia vipengele vya mada hii ya utafiti.

Kulinganisha sarufi za L1 na L2: Kufundisha kitenzi "Ku-wa"
Jonathan Choti (Michigan State University)

Tatizo moja ambalo walimu na wanafunzi wa lugha za kigeni hukumbana nalo ni tofauti zilizoko kati ya sarufi ya lugha ya wanafunzi na ile inayofundishwa. Hata hivyo, sarufi hizi zina mifanano pia. Kwa hiyo, inabidi mwalimu na wanafunzi wa lugha ya kigeni waelewe tofauti na mifanano iliyoko katika sarufi hizi. Utafiti huu ulichunguza tofauti na mifanano ya kisarufi iliyoko kati ya Kiswahili na Kiingereza kwa kuzingatia kitenzi "ku-wa". Lengo la utafiti lilikuwa kubainisha tofauti na mifanano ya sarufi hizi ili kuwasaidia wanafunzi kujifunza Kiswahili kwa kutumia mbinu ya ulinganishaji maumbo. Kazi hii ilionyesha kwamba lugha zote mbili zina maumbo mbalimbali ya "ku-wa" na yabadilika kulingana na njeo (tense), hali (aspect), nafasi (person), mkazo (emphasis), na kadhalika. Katika (1), Kiingereza "to BE" kina maumbo manane tofauti ihali Kiswahili (2) kina maumbo matano. Mifano katika (1-2) inaonyesha mabadiliko ya kitenzi "ku-wa" kulingana na njeo, nafasi, na mkazo. Aidha, katika lugha zote mbili, kitenzi "ku-wa" kinatokea baada ya kiima katika sentensi..

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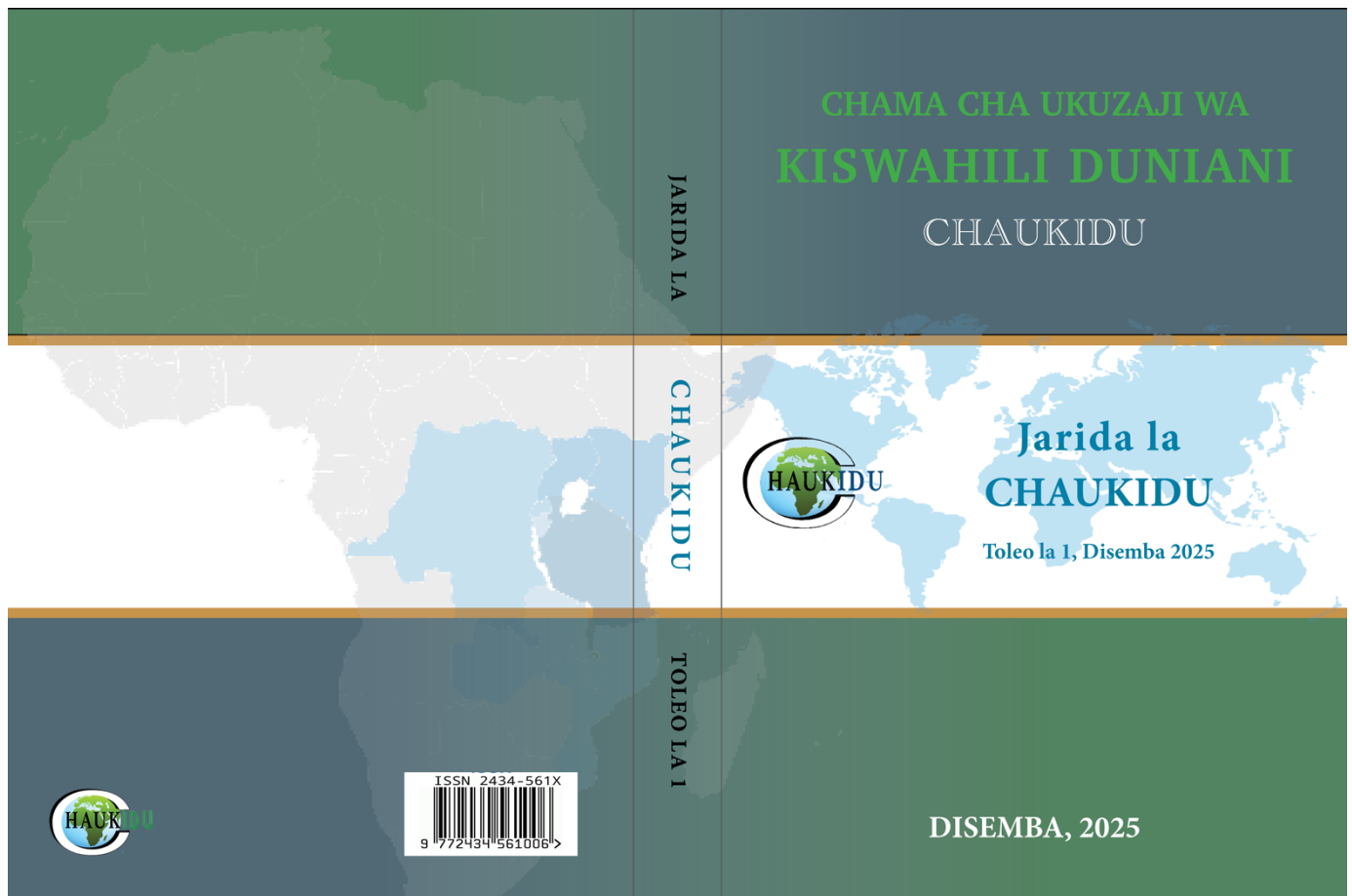
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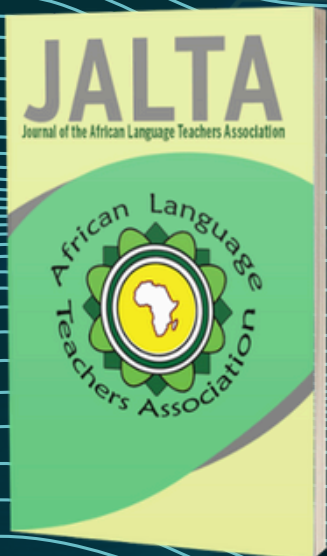*University of
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Topic: Language Pedagogy
Chair: Asmaha Heddi

Hujambo! A Standards-Based Approach to Introductory Kiswahili: A Curriculum Design Model for Less Commonly Taught Languages
John Munyui Muchira (University of Florida)
Peter Ojiambo (University of Kansas)

This paper presents the design and implementation of a thematic-based foreign language curriculum for an elementary Kiswahili language programme. Employing a backward curriculum approach, Hujambo! A Standards-Based Approach to Introductory Kiswahili provides a step-by-step discussion of this curriculum funded by the U.S. Department of Education for Elementary Kiswahili that chronicles the adventures of two American students studying abroad in Tanzania for an academic year. This design approach provides meaningful insight into their encounters with a new culture and how it (re)shapes their view of the larger world. The curriculum utilizes 7 thematic unit indicators for both Volume 1 and 2 with clear learning goals while creating meaningful, cognitively engaging, measurable as well as culturally and contemporary relevant content. Units begin with dialogues or monologues that model the language, cultural explorations, and targeted grammatical constructions before moving on to carefully scaffolded activities that encourage interaction. Activities are designed using backward design and carefully integrate the 5Cs of the World-Readiness Standards to provide students with opportunities to engage in interpretive, interpersonal and presentational communication and intercultural competence.

Boosting the Teaching of African Languages with Open Educational Resources (OER's)
Jonathan Choti (Michigan State University)

The scarcity of instructional materials poses a great challenge to the teaching of African languages abroad. The rise of open educational resources (OER's) offers a fantastic opportunity for mitigating this problem. This talk is a report of a project in which the author explored the benefits of OER's and reviewed four Swahili OER's. The goal of this talk is to make a case for the development of OER's for African languages. Many universities in the USA have initiated programs aimed at inspiring faculty to create OER's since OER's have multiple advantages. They offer affordable and accessible teaching materials available to the public freely. Besides, these materials can be reused, revised, remixed, retained, and redistributed according to the needs of the user. The materials allow instructors to align context of language use with relevant vocabulary, phrases, and grammatical structures. Thus, such materials support the communicative approach to second language teaching. OER's have transformed pedagogy; they enable instructors to incorporate audiovisual and authentic materials in written texts.

Two African Languages, Two Teachers, Same Target: Time to Share Useful Teaching Ideas
Bayọ Ọmọlọla(Morgan State University)

The pedagogy of teaching African languages in North America targets mainly students who want to acquire any of them as their second language and/or educational requirement. Such students are diverse, so are their African language teachers. Their class can pose some challenges. Therefore, teaching experience plays a role in helping teachers to succeed. In addition, environmental adaptation and other factors including additional language requirement, influence, job market needs, and politics, among others, play crucial roles in North America. This background makes the teaching of African languages essential in the competitive environment. How different should students be taught a foreign language? To provide an answer, this presentation covers the perspectives of a Swahili teacher and a Yoruba teacher, both with language-teaching experience in African and American classrooms. Anchoring on the idea that teaching pedagogy emerges and improves as teachers aim at a common goal -students success, the two presenters, therefore, will share helpful practices they have gained through their experience and adaptative approach.

Language Positioning African Languages as 'Foreign' or 'Critical' Languages: A Case Study of Language Programs in The Midwestern Universities
Paul Ntinda (Indiana University Bloomington)

This study explores the positioning of African languages—specifically Swahili, Yoruba, Bamanakan, and Hausa—as 'foreign' or 'critical' language categories at Midwestern universities in the U.S. Despite their cultural and geopolitical significance, these languages are often marginalized compared to European and Asian languages. The research examines how this designation affects their promotion and implementation, aiming to enhance cultural diversity and multilingualism. Using Language Ideology Theory and Bourdieu's Theory of Cultural Capital, the study analyzes motivations, challenges, and opportunities for African language programs through qualitative interviews with program coordinators and instructors. Key findings indicate that while practical considerations drive the adoption of these programs, financial constraints and the dominance of English present significant challenges. The research emphasizes the need for supportive policies, strategic funding, and early exposure to African languages to foster interest and competence. It advocates for policy reforms and curriculum integration to enhance the presence of African languages in the U.S.

Topic: African Languages and Coloniality
Chair: Abdul Nanji

Conflict Between Decolonization and Cultural Essentialism: A Critical Analysis of Swahili Pedagogy in China
Ding Ruilin (University College London)

The teaching of Kiswahili in China commenced in 1960, and over the past 64 years, nevertheless, the comprehension of Swahili culture and traditions among those proficient Kiswahili speakers remains insufficient. This study elucidates the underlying causes of this discrepancy through a critical discourse analysis of prominent Swahili textbooks and interviews with teachers and students. The study revealed that the decolonizing tendencies evident in the textbooks may inadvertently result in the simplification or misinterpretation of Swahili culture. In particular, two significant issues are evident in the mainstream textbooks. Firstly, they tend to define the "standard Kiswahili" as a static and homogenized image, limited to the contemporary Tanzania. This new kind of "imperial gaze" ignores the historical evolution and geographical diversity of Swahili culture. Secondly, the textbook places undue emphasis on anti-colonial independence narratives in Tanzania and other African countries, thereby inadvertently overlooking the more fundamental question of "Who is Swahili?" Given these considerations, this study proposes a dialectical approach to Kiswahili teaching that strives to achieve a balance between decolonization and cultural authenticity.

Exploring Precolonial Concepts through the Historical African Languages Database
Daren Ray (Brigham Young University)
Jim Law (Brigham Young University)

This presentation introduces the Historical African Languages Database (HALD). The aim of HALD is to make the rich repositories of African vocabularies from scattered dictionaries more accessible for students and teachers to explore. Currently under development, the pilot database will include twelve multilingual dictionaries for eight African languages. Most of these dictionaries represent the first compilations of language documentation for the African languages on which they focus. Since they were compiled before European languages proliferated in most African countries, they offer unparalleled opportunities for exploring precolonial concepts that were shared among African languages. The paper will include three parts. First, it will summarize studies of African language dictionaries in historical and lexicographic literature. Second, it will detail the process for developing the database, including the selection criteria for the pilot dictionaries, the Optical Character Recognition methods used to convert PDF documents into structured JSON data, and how the database's design facilitates easy comparison across many dictionaries. Third, the presentation will demonstrate how language students can use the database to explore connections among related and unrelated African languages.

Unveiling the Untold Wisdom in Iraqw Traditional Stories for Global Education and Children Literature
Lightness Isojick (Blackrhino Academy International School & Open University of Tanzania)

In this paper I will explore the valuable lessons embedded in tribal traditional stories for using on fork tale found in Iraqw tribal traditional stories. I will highlight how these narratives offer essential lessons that the formal education system may have overlooks. I will examine Iraqw Myth Iraqw stories that provide a richer understanding of local geography, origins, and natural formations, like lake mountains and rivers, I will look into fables that entertain trough popular tricksters like hare while imparting important moral values Moreover, this study will explore Iraqw stories that emphasizes contemporary issues, such as poaching, which are resonant with global environmental concerns. By integrating these traditional stories into school curriculums, children can connect with their cultural heritage and recognize their roles as both local and global citizens. As many tribal languages, like Iraqw, are primarily preserved within family settings, this study underscores the importance of incorporating these narratives into formal education to bridge the gap caused by changing family structures.

Ubuntu Translanguaging: Redefining African Languages as Bridges Across Disciplines and Divide
Leketi Makalela (University of the Witwatersrand)

This paper explores the Ubuntu translanguaging framework as a transformative approach to African language education across diverse disciplines, professions, and community contexts. Ubuntu translanguaging, rooted in African communal philosophies, foregrounds interconnectedness, mutual respect, and collective knowledge-building. The framework leverages indigenous African languages alongside other linguistic repertoires to support a pedagogical shift that values all linguistic identities and promotes academic success and cultural inclusivity. Through an analysis of multilingual classrooms, professional environments, and community engagement projects, this study highlights Ubuntu translanguaging's role in advancing epistemic justice and fostering holistic literacy. By using African languages as conduits for knowledge exchange across disciplines, this framework transcends traditional monolingual approaches, enriching learning experiences and enabling contextually relevant communication. The findings emphasize the significance of Ubuntu translanguaging in breaking down language hierarchies, particularly in postcolonial educational systems, and underscore its potential for bridging linguistic and cultural divides. This work invites further dialogue on African language teaching strategies.

Topic: Tech in Language Teaching
Chair: Anne Jebet

Beyond the Conventional Classroom: Opportunities and Challenges in Online Language Teaching
Amlaku Eshetie (UC Berkeley)

The teaching of languages differs significantly from the teaching of other non-language courses, such as History or Biology, where factual information is primarily presented. In language teaching, the emphasis is more on the language skills the students acquire than the information that is used to present the language contents or linguistic elements with. Language learners are expected not to memorize the concepts they learn in class but to actively practice the skills and utilize the tools they acquired. Language teaching needs to be highly interactive; it demands the active presence of learners, and the design of interactive, meaningful learning materials that can support a positive rapport between the students, the instructor and the learning experience. So, does online language teaching fulfill these essential qualities of language instruction? How do students react or respond to it? How can the instructor make up for the absence of physical presence and live interaction? This presentation will address these and related questions based on the experiences obtained in the period of five semesters. It will highlight some of the main benefits and challenges of going fully online for your language courses.

The Integration of Social Media in African Language Learning
Richard Nyamahanga (Indiana University Bloomington)

The increase of social media platforms has created new opportunities for innovative approaches to language learning. This presentation examines the potential for social media to be systematically incorporated into African language instruction to enhance learners' engagement, accessibility, and language proficiency. Through an analysis of platforms, such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube, the study explores their role in fostering language learning by promoting authentic communication, providing access to multimedia resources, and facilitating collaborative learning environments. Focusing on a case study of Swahili language instruction, this presentation demonstrates how social media has been employed in both formal and informal teaching contexts to supplement traditional language curricula. The discussion highlights pedagogical strategies aimed at enhancing language retention, developing conversational competencies, and offering immersive experiences that extend beyond the physical classroom. Furthermore, the presentation addresses critical challenge related to the integration of social media into language learning. This presentation aims to provide language educators with practical approaches to diversifying their teaching methodologies.

Reviving Yoruba Numeracy: All Hands-on Tech
Tana Ajiki (University of Wisconsin-Madison)

This paper, an excerpt from a master's thesis titled "Topics in Yoruba Numerals," explores the multifacetedness of the Yoruba Numeral System (YNS). The study was informed by the low numeracy skills observed in native Yoruba society and among digital educators. The study analyses the multilevel grammatical-arithmetic operations involved in deriving higher numerals and how the grammar aspects interface, providing insight into the "how" and "why" of the complexities for which the YNS is infamous. Furthermore, the paper presents an exposé on the sociolinguistic applications and significance of Yoruba numerals in Yoruba cultural practices, such as child naming tradition, proverbs, taboos, àrokò (encrypted messaging), and spirituality. It shows that numbers in Yoruba are not restricted to counting. They have intrinsic cultural relevance encoded into other spheres of Yoruba life. Therefore, the study will be used to propose a pragmatic approach to numeral pedagogy for first and second learners and show how technology (machine translation) can significantly improve Yoruba numeracy. It would provide valuable insights for language educators, researchers, and Yoruba language speakers.

Yoruba Language in the Digital Age: Effective Online Teaching Strategies
Mabel Adegeye (Fayetteville State University)

The Yoruba language, spoken by over 30 million people worldwide, is vital to West African culture and identity. As the world becomes increasingly digital, teaching Yoruba online has become essential for its preservation and global dissemination. This presentation explores effective online teaching strategies for the Yoruba language, highlighting unique challenges and opportunities. This presentation showcases successful methods for teaching Yoruba online, such as interactive multimedia resources, virtual language exchange programs, and culturally relevant materials. We'll discuss how technology-enhanced instruction can facilitate language acquisition, cultural understanding, and community building. Drawing on experiences as a Yoruba language coach, this presentation demonstrates how digital platforms can be leveraged to promote Yoruba language education globally. Key topics include overcoming technological barriers, fostering learner interaction, and assessing language proficiency in online environments. This presentation aims to inspire and empower language educators, policymakers, and stakeholders to harness the potential of digital technology for Yoruba language preservation and promotion.

Topic: Swahili Panel – Pedagojia ya Kiswahili
Chair: Magdalyne Akiding

Vitabu Teule vya Kiswahili kama Chombo cha Uhamasishaji wa Kisiasa: Uchunguzi wa Harakati za Kizazi cha GenZ Nchini Kenya
Catherine Ndungo (Kenyatta University)
Daniel Ngugi (Karatina University)

Mnamo mwaka wa 2024, vijana wenye umri kati ya miaka 11 hadi 27, maarufu kama GenZ, waliuteka ulimwengu kipekee wakitoa madai ya mageuzi ya kijamii, kiuchumi na kisiasa duniani kote. Kenya haikukosekana katika hali. Katika harakati za kizazi hiki nchini Kenya, vitabu teule vya fasihi ya Kiswahili vilitajwa kama nyenzo mojawapo ya uhamasishaji. Makala hii inakusudia kuchunguza nafasi ya vitabu teule vya fasihi ya Kiswahili katika kuchochea mwamko huo. Vitabu vilivyotajwa mara kwa mara katika muktadha huu ni mkusanyiko wa hadithi fupi Tumbo Lisiloshiba ulioharibiwa na Chokocho na Kayanda (2018), tamthilia Mstahiki Meya ya Arege (2009), Kifo Kisimani ya Kithaka wa Mberia (2001), na Kigogo ya Kea (2016). Data ya makala hii itatokana na uchanganuzi wa maudhui, matumizi ya lugha, na uchoraji wa wahusika katika kazi hizi teule. Uchambuzi utaongozwa na Nadharia ya Mwitikio wa Msomaji (Reader Response Theory) kama ilivyofafanuliwa na Fish (1980), Tompkins (1980), na Iser (1974). Lengo kuu litakuwa kuchunguza jinsi vitendo vilivyoakisiwa katika kazi hizi vilivyowezesha kizazi cha kisasa kuwa na mwamko mkubwa wa kisiasa, mwamko uliosababisha maandamano nchini Kenya, kwa mujibu wa nadharia inayozingatia athari ya maandishi kwa msomaji.

Nafasi ya Wachapishaji wa Vitabu katika Kukuza na Kueneza Kiswahili Duniani: Uchunguzi katika Kampuni ya Uchapishaji ya Nyambari Nyangwine
Alphonsina Silayo Ambrosi (Mzumbe University)

Makala hii ililenga kuchunguza nafasi ya wachapishaji wa vitabu katika kukuza na kueneza Kiswahili duniani huku uchunguzi ukifanyika katika Kampuni ya Uchapishaji ya Nyambari Nyangwine. Hali hii ilichochewa na ukweli kwamba kampuni za uchapishaji wa vitabu zinazalisha vitabu vya waandishi tofauti tofauti na kuvisambaza. Ilikuwa ni nadra sana kuchapisha vitabu vya Kiswahili na kuvitafutia soko isipokuwa vile vya waandishi mashuhuri kama Shaaban Robert. Kwa kuzingatia kasi ya ueneaji wa Kiswahili na mahitaji kumekuwa na wimbi kubwa la uchapishaji wa vitabu vipya vya Kiswahili. Je, kuchapisha vitabu vya Kiswahili ndio nafasi pekee walioyonayo katika kukuza na kueneza Kiswahili? Hivyo, lengo la makala hii ni kuchunguza nafasi ya wachapishaji wa vitabu vya Kiswahili katika kukuza na kueneza kiswahili duniani huku Kampuni ya Uchapishaji ya Nyambari Nyangwine ikimakinikiwa. Data za utafiti huu zilipatikana kwa njia ya dodoso na usomaji wa nyaraka. Matokeo yanaonesha kuwa wachapishaji wa vitabu wana mchango mkubwa katika kukuza na kueneza Kiswahili duniani.

Mbinu na Mikakati Bora ya Kuwatathmini Wanafunzi katika Darasa la Kiswahili kama Lugha ya Kigeni
Beatrice Ng'uono Okelo (Indiana University)

Tathmini ni kipengele muhimu katika ufundishaji na ufundishwaji wa somo lolote lile, likiwemo somo la lugha ya Kiswahili. Mbinu, vigezo na mikakati mbalimbali imetumiwa kutathmini uwezo na umilisi wa wanafunzi katika madarasa ya lugha za kigeni, likiwemo darasa la Kiswahili kama lugha ya kigeni. Kwa mujibu wa Cohen (1994), mbinu za kuwatathmini wanafunzi huainishwa kulingana na dhima yao kuu. Aidha, Cohen anashikilia kwamba kila mbinu itumiwayo kuwatahini wanafunzi huwa na sababu na umuhimu mahsusi. Isitoshe, Omaggio (2001) anasisitiza kwamba mbinu hizi za kutathmini ujuzi wa lugha wa wanafunzi kwa kiasi kikubwa huathiri kiwango cha ufanisi wa darasa la lugha. Kwa mintarafu hii, ni jukumu la mwalimu wa lugha kuhakikisha kwamba mbinu anazozitumia kuwatathmini wanafunzi wake ni mwafaka katika utekelezaji wa dhima kuu ya tathmini yenyewe na vilevile kutilia maanani umuhimu wa tathmini katika uboreshwaji wa darasa la lugha. Wasilisho hili litaangazia mbinu na mikakati bora ya kuwatathmini wanafunzi katika darasa la Kiswahili kama lugha ya kigeni.

Bongopoly katika Madarasa ya Kiswahili: Kufundisha Kupitia Michezo na Mikakati ya Muunganisho Bora wa Maudhui
Carolyne Ulomy (University of Mississippi)

Kujifunza kupitia michezo huongeza ushiriki na motisha ya ujifunzaji wa lugha kwa kukuza ushiriki kikamilifu. Michezo ya ubao, kama vile Bongopoly (mchezo wa lugha ya Kiswahili wa biashara na mali), hutoa zana shirikishi za mazoezi ya msamiati, miundo ya sentensi na fikra makini. Mada hii inachunguza ujumuishaji wa Bongopoly katika ufundishaji wa Kiswahili, ikiangazia dhima ya kukuza umilisi wa lugha kupitia shughuli zilizopo mchezoni kama kusoma maelekezo & sheria, hisabati & kuhesabu katika muktadha wa lugha na mawasiliano baina ya wachezaji. Zaidi ya kujifunza lugha, Bongopoly inatoa maarifa ya kitamaduni na kihistoria katika jamii ya Waswahili na kuboresha tajriba ya elimu. Utafiti unasisitiza faida mbili za ujifunzaji kupitia michezo: ukuzaji wa lugha na ushirikiano wa kitamaduni, na unapendekeza mikakati ya ujumuishaji wa mtaala

Library Information Panel
Chair: Zablon Mgonja

African Languages at the Library of Congress
Awareness, Access, Amplification

Presenter: Melanie Zeck (The Library of Congress)

T HE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS (Washington, DC) is the world's largest library, with over 175 million items. Major African languages feature prominently in the Library's textual, sonic, and archival holdings. Local languages are represented, as well—especially in dictionaries, field recordings, and vertical files. These resources provide invaluable documentation of language usage over time and can be mined for reference, research, and pedagogical purposes. In this presentation, I will first provide an overview to the Library's resources in African languages, paying particular attention to those taught in the United States. Then, I will offer strategies by which patrons can search for, access, and use these resources, highlighting tools that facilitate the discovery of materials in languages other than English. Finally, I will introduce the library's recent Kiswahili-language initiative and position it as a viable template for future efforts in other African languages. In this initiative, information literacy tools— including a research guide, an instructional video, and scripted teaching modules—were developed and rendered in Kiswahili to raise awareness of and promote access to relevant resources. Each of these tools was designed to support users at all stages of the language mastery process and to enhance their Library research experience, onsite and online.

African Languages
at the Library of Congress

ALTA BUSINESS MEETING
4:40 PM – 6:00 PM

AFRICAN LANGUAGES JAMBOREE
AND
ALTA AWARD CEREMONY

Venue: William Pitt Union Ballroom

7:00 PM – 11:00 PM

Prepare your Tummy
and
Dance Shoes ☺

2025 ALTA Awards

**Lifetime Service & Outstanding
Leadership Award**

Dr. Alwiya Omar
*Director, National African
Language Resource Center
Indiana University-Bloomington*

**Distinguished
Service Award**

Dr. FEMK Senkoro
*Deputy Vice Chancellor,
Admin. Tumaini University
Makumira Arusha, Tanzania*

**Distinguished
ALTA Member Award**

Dr. Kiarie Wa'Njogu
*Director, African
Language Program
Yale University*

**Outstanding
Leadership Award**

Dr. Mariame Sy
*Director, African
Language Program
Columbia University*

ALTA 2025, University of Pittsburgh

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Join Us to Shape the Future of African Languages

THE AFRICAN LANGUAGE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION (ALTA) is a professional organization dedicated to promoting the teaching of, and research in, African languages and cultures. The 2025 ALTA Conference will bring together educators, researchers, students, and stakeholders to share insights and best practices in African language teaching. Centered on the theme of integration across disciplines, professions, and communities, the conference will explore how African language education can evolve to meet the needs of a globalized society. Discussions will highlight innovative, interdisciplinary approaches and emphasize community engagement, especially from the African diaspora, to create inclusive and impactful language programs for today's learners.

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