

Editorial of JWAL Volume 50

The Editorial Board of the Journal of West African Languages (JWAL) is pleased to present volume 50. Yes, Volume 50! This means that JWAL is celebrating a jubilee volume, and we have decided to combine our usual volumes 1 and 2 into just one golden jubilee volume!

This milestone volume comprises 11 articles and a book review from 16 linguists, covering areas that include phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, pragmatics, and sociolinguistics.

The lead paper is by Fusheini Hudu of the University of Ghana, Accra, and it is titled *The Vowels of West African Languages*. Fittingly enough for an anniversary issue, the author reviews over 50 years of research on the West African language vowel systems, outlining their salient properties. The paper points to how methods have evolved in the analysis of vowels from field notes to the employment of laboratory instruments in determining features such as vowel length and vowel height. The author concludes the paper by pointing to how the vowels of West African languages have made, and will continue to make, key contributions to linguistic theory.

The second paper is titled *A Review of Vowel Elision and Assimilation in Igbo: Clarification through Acoustic, Perceptual and Theoretical Analysis*. It is written by Cecilia Amaoge Eme, Ebele Deborah Uba, and Aghaegbuna Haroldson of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Nigeria. What is the difference between vowel elision and vowel assimilation in Igbo? This review article carefully examines previous approaches to the topic and, based on a sustained study of vowel duration, take the position that “all the vowels analysed as elided in the studies are only assimilated...”. The authors further state that, contrary to earlier analyses claiming that elision and assimilation occur only in fast speech, they also occur in normal free flow speech.

Don Chukwuemeka Utulu of Delta State University, Abraka, Nigeria is the author of the third paper, also on phonetics like in the preceding articles. His study is titled *Adaptation of [ATR] in English Loanwords in Èwùlù: The Case of Anaptyctic High-Vowels*. This paper addresses some significant instances of anaptyxis in which some anaptyctic or epenthetic vowels like high front and back vowels are inserted into English loanwords produced by Èwulu speakers. The author uses this analysis in Èwulu to address issues of typology across West African languages in regards to vowel insertion in loanword adaptation.

The fourth paper is titled *Lexico-Semantic Issues in Ontological Annotations of Yorùbá Nouns* and it is written by Akindele A. Aina of Olabisi Onabanjo University, Nigeria. The paper, after a review of previous work over the past 50 years, draws attention to the difficulties involved in identifying nouns in Yoruba due to the different criteria scholars use. The author proposes what he considers to be a “simple model which dwells on semantic load of the lexicon....”.

Mayowa Emmanuel Oyinloye of the University of Jos, Nigeria is the author of the fifth paper titled *An Alignment-Based Account of Affixation in Yoruba*. The paper argues against the over-concentration of morphological, morpho-syntactic, and semantic treatment of affixes, and instead proposes morpho-prosodic well-formedness conditions of affixation. This the author does by employing tools within the optimality theoretic framework.

Ígálá Concord System is the title of our sixth paper in this anniversary volume. It is written by Salem Ochala Ejeba of the University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria. Analyzing complex agreement systems in Igala, the author argues that Igala operates different specifications of plurality for animate and inanimate noun phrases, and concludes this analysis of concord in Igala by establishing a descriptive paradigm for the language.

The seventh paper of our golden volume, Volume 50, is by Kofi Agyekum of the University of Ghana, Accra, Ghana. This paper is titled *Sociocultural Aspects of Metaphor in Akan*. The author demonstrates that speakers of the various Akan language varieties use animal behaviour, structure, and movement to represent human behaviour in metaphor. Based on this analysis the author argues that, even though animal metaphor is universal, the attributes for particular animals are language- and culture-specific.

The eighth paper is by Obed Nii Broohm of the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi, Ghana along with Abdulai Akuamah and Patrick Ntiamoah, both of St. Joseph's College of Education, Bechem, Ghana. Their paper is titled *Misspellings in the Kumasi Cityscape: An Analysis of Asante Twi-Based Signages*. While there are many signage studies in the Ghanaian linguistic circle, this paper is one of the first to look at Ghanaian language-based signages, in this case Asante Twi.

Azibaoguanasi Williams is the author of the ninth paper titled *A Survey of Socio-onomastic Features and Economic Values of Place Names of Baruten in Nigeria*. The paper seeks to identify the meanings of place names in Baruten, and the author does this by employing a “gatekeeper research procedure of historical toponomastics”.

Titled *Ethno-Pragmatic Implications of Food and Consumption-Related Proverbs in Nzema*, the 10th paper is written by Mohammed Yakub of the University of Education, Winneba. The author discusses, among others, the communicative implications of Nzema proverbs about food and the consumption of food. In so doing, the paper identifies some virtues imbued in Nzema proverbs.

The 11th and final paper of Volume 50 is by Ritassida Mamadou Djiguimde of Southern Arkansas University, USA. This paper is titled *Bargaining in Bobo-Dioulasso Clothing Stores: Structure, Rules, and Persuasion Strategies*. The paper focuses on how interlocutors in market situations in the Burkina Faso town of Bobo Dioulasso interact in a bargaining event from beginning to end. In so doing, it demonstrates the degree to which linguistic and cultural elements work conjointly during such speech situations.

In addition to the 11 research papers, we have a book review by Malami Buba.

I would like to thank the reviewers of these 11 papers as well as those of papers that did not make it into this 50th anniversary volume. I also wish to thank our authors, readers, and the general West African linguistic community for their enthusiastic interest in JWAL. We continue to attract a keen readership and very healthy submission rates. Finally, I thank the editorial board members, especially our able Associate Editors, Dr Hasiyatu Abubakari and Prof Samuel Issah, as well as our new Assistant Editor, Dr Alexander Angsongna, for layout and formatting of the 11 papers into one volume – Volume 50.

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