

Editorial of JWAL Volume 41. Issue1

The Editorial Board of the Journal of West African Languages (JWAL) is pleased to present Volume 44, Issue 1. This volume comprises six papers in areas that include syntax, phonology, bilingualism, and pragmatics, covering languages such as Yoruba, Fula, Kusaal, Igbo, Nawuri and Chumburung.

The lead article, titled “Interrogative Projections in Yoruboid Languages” is written by Fọlọrunṣọ Ilọri. It examines the projections of interrogative constructions in Yoruboid languages, a subgroup of Defoid-Kwa languages spoken in Central and Southern Nigeria comprising Yorùbá, Ígálà and Itshekiri,...providing syntactic and semantic evidence to show that “...focus and interrogative (Inter) heads though somehow knitted in these languages are separately projected and differentiable”. The paper will contribute to our knowledge of the role of information structure in contemporary syntactic studies.

Pierre Sambou in the second article, written in French, titled “Passifs Non-Canoniques Dans Quelques Langues Atlantiques Du Sénégal” describes passivization in some West Atlantic languages of Senegal. The study attempts to go beyond the usual passive derivation that consists in promoting an object argument to a subject status to studying those that consist in promoting oblique arguments to syntactic subject role.

The third article is titled “Ideophones in Kuśaál”, a Mabia language spoken in the Upper East Region of Ghana, and it is written by Hasiyatu Abubakari. The paper argues that ideophones, while exhibiting some syntactic links with adjectives and adverbs, are different from these because they show distinctive morphological, phonological and semantic properties in comparison to other word classes.

The fourth paper is titled “On the Status of Lone English Verbs in Igbo-English Bilingual” and it is written by Ihuoma I. Akinremi, discussing the difference in behaviour between lone and multi-word constituents in code-switching scenarios. It essentially argues for a codeswitching account of (integrated) lone English verbs in discourse framed in Igbo.

Rod Casali in his article “High-vowel Patterning as an Early Diagnostic of Vowel-Inventory Type” discussed problems involved in ascertaining the right type of vowel-inventory in early stages of phonological fieldwork on African languages. The paper proposes several specific diagnostic tests based on phonological patterning that can aid in vowel-inventory analysis.

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The last, but not the least, paper is written by Akinrinlola Temidayo. It is titled: “(Im)politeness and Pragmatic Strategies in Goodluck Jonathan and Muhammadu Buhari's 2015 Campaign Speeches”. Based on the politeness theoretical framework of Brown and Levinson, the paper discusses two presidential campaigns and discovers the strategies that were engaged in order to discredit and threaten the face of their opponents. These, according to the author, include: self-justification, amplifying political and intellectual ineptitude, expressing intellectual weakness, making recourse to history, branding, blaming, spinning, counter discourse and rhetorical questions.

Following these articles are two obituary announcements, one by Prof. Norbert Cyffer on the passing of Prof. Russel Schuh, and the other by Prof. Felix Ameka on the passing of Prof. Mary Esther Kropp-Dakubu. These two scholars are among the most notable figures in African linguistics in the past 50 years.

I wish to thank the reviewers of these six articles as well as those of articles that did not make it into this volume. I also wish to thank our authors, readers, and the general West African linguistic community for their enthusiastic interest in JWAL. We have a keen readership and very healthy submission rates. We are working hard on improving the journal and in this regard will continuously restructure our editorial board. We welcome Ms Izabela Jordanoska, a new PhD student at the University of Vienna, for joining the team as an Assistant Editor. Izabela has experience working on the Journal of African Languages and Linguistics, edited by Felix Ameka, one of our editorial board advisors. Finally, I thank the editorial board members for some collective team work, especially our able Assistant Editors, Ms Hasiyatu Abubakari and Ms Izabela Jordanoska, for layout and formatting of the six papers into one volume – Volume 44, Issue 1.

Adams Bodomo
Editor, JWAL