

A History of African Linguistics

Bringing together a team of leading scholars, this volume provides the first global history of African linguistics as an autonomous academic discipline, covering Africa, America, Asia, Australia, and Europe. Defining African linguistics and identifying important forerunners, the volume describes its emergence from a 'colonial science' at the turn of the twentieth century in Europe, where it was first established mainly in academic institutions of former colonial powers. Its riddance from the 'colonial project' is traced, following its 'decolonization' and subsequent spread from imperialist Europe across all inhabited continents, with particular reference to its academic establishment in the various regions of Africa. Providing inside views of African linguistic research and its ramifications over time, active researchers in its various sub-fields present highly informative accounts of current and past research priorities and achievements. The 26 authors are themselves representatives of the various regions of both the world and Africa, in which African linguistics has become entrenched in academic institutions.

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Preface

African linguistics, as we accept it today as being a separate and autonomous field of academic research and teaching, had its origins in colonial Europe and was without parallels in other parts of the world. It partly pre-dated but mainly accompanied the imperialist regime of European colonial expansion and Christian mission in Africa, boosted by the notorious ‘Scramble for Africa’ that preceded and followed the Berlin Congo Conference of 1884/1885. Obviously, early African linguistics used to serve the colonial project by taking care of its linguistic dimension, in the beginning fostering but later and currently challenging the hegemonic dominance of the ‘North’ over the Global South. Thereby, it continues to weigh in on postcolonial national language policies and planning in Africa until this day.

Hence, African linguistics has come of age and has rid itself almost completely of the missionary and colonial paradigm. Today, it prides itself on its global academic representation as an autonomous academic discipline, as witnessed by the World Congress of African Linguistics, which has met triennially since 1994. Based on the early and ground-breaking work of its precursors, professional African linguistics arose during the peak period of European colonialism in Africa. It eventually also established itself outside the former European colonial powers, namely in Eastern and Northern Europe. Another boost followed decolonization and African independence after 1960. Since then, African linguistics has found an academic home not only across Africa, but also in the Americas and eventually in parts of Asia and in Australia.

Increasingly in recent years, if for a long time rather hesitantly, members of the scientific community of African linguistics have begun to turn their attention to their own academic history, not least with a view to challenging the prevailing ‘Northern’ by a complementary, if not alternative, ‘Southern’ perspective. The fact that African linguistics is not everywhere established as a separate academic discipline apart and distinct from ‘general linguistics’, on the one hand, and ‘African studies’, on the other, has tended to slow down the emergence of critical concern with not only its academic but also its ideological history. Further, with only few exceptions, there is little information available that would be reliable, comprehensive, and easily accessible on where, when,

by whom, and how African linguistics emerged and became entrenched in institutional structures of academia in the various parts of the world, including Africa herself. In its early days at the turn of the twentieth century, particularly in Europe, it remained in the shadow and under the influence of already established disciplines such as Egyptology and Semitic philology. For reasons of the geographic proximity of its object of study to languages and cultures in the Near and Middle East, it was administratively located near, or as part of, ‘Oriental studies’. Later, by the middle of the twentieth century and in the wake of African independence from European colonialism, it had to set itself apart from the intrusive and much more general African studies that had some of its roots in black studies and the modern human rights movement, mainly in the USA. In this volume, the authors trace the motivations for the establishment and subsequent growth of African linguistics, often beginning with simply providing language instruction for practical needs, if not for nostalgic purposes (as in the case of early black studies). Today, this academic field is pursued in autonomous and titular university departments of ‘African languages’ or ‘African linguistics’ in some parts of the world, or as an integral part of more encompassing institutions such as ‘general linguistics’, ‘African and Asian studies’, ‘foreign studies’, and ‘world cultures’ in others.

For this volume, and for the first time in history, 26 experts from Africa, the Americas, Asia, Australia, and Europe have come together to tell the story of African linguistics, namely how it emerged as an academic field more or less of its own accord in their various world regions. They tell the story from within, being actively involved themselves as researchers in various sub-fields of African linguistics in different places. They are not looking at matters from a distance as historians or archivists.

As a rule and characteristically for Africa as a whole, research on African languages began and was stimulated by impetus from outside Africa, often tainted by a Christian mission and colonial agenda. This linked African linguistics ‘in the field’ intimately to research activities that were conducted simultaneously outside Africa. The current volume takes a focused view on matters. Rather than sketching out research history according to language groupings or individual languages in particular regions of Africa, for which a growing literature is already available, it focuses on research activities from the perspective of the origin of researchers and institutions. The structure of the book, therefore, reflects different world regions as much as sub-regions of Africa, where African linguistics emerged under quite different conditions, involving both African and non-African individuals and institutions.

The absence of previous worldwide surveys, the selective availability of digitalized historical documents available via the Internet, and presuming that relevant sources still remain undiscovered and hidden in archives that

are difficult, if not impossible, to access from where today's researchers live and work, mean that gaps in knowledge and information persist. This must be accepted for the time being. The editor and the contributors share the hope that this volume may stimulate local in-depth research into the history of the study of African languages and linguistics in the various parts of the world. This should then subsequently allow for a broader and critical review of African linguistics, which would link up with current general debates on colonial and postcolonial continuities and their impact on knowledge production in and about Africa. Against this backdrop of persisting lacunae, the present book pilots a broad approach to the complex history of African linguistics in a global perspective. It does so by providing expert 'inside' views on the academic history of African linguistics within and outside Africa, which may serve as a first fact-finding and fact-describing vade mecum to the global history of African linguistics since its inception as a 'colonial science' in imperialist Europe more than 130 years ago.

This volume accompanies *The Cambridge Handbook of African Linguistics* (Wolff 2019), for which a survey of the regional histories of African linguistics was considered an essential topic. The restricted space available in the *Handbook* allowed only for abridged summarising treatments. This companion volume, therefore, provides the necessary space needed for a more detailed treatment including extensive bibliographical references. It is compiled by the same editor in cooperation with mainly the same authors, who contributed historical accounts of different length and detail to both volumes.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

AATA	American Association of Teachers of Arabic
AAU	Addis Ababa University
ACACIA	Arid Climate, Adaptation and Cultural Innovation in Africa, 1995–2007
ACAL	Annual Conference of African Linguistics
ACALAN	Association of Contemporary African Linguistics
ADEA	African Academy of Languages
AIDEA	Association for the Development of Education in Africa
AIDA	Association Internationale de Dialectologie Arabe
<i>AJL</i>	<i>Australian Journal of Linguistics</i>
<i>AL</i>	<i>Africana Linguistica</i>
ALS	African Linguistics School
	Australian Linguistic Society
	Arabic Linguistic Society
ALSEC	Afar Language Studies and Enrichment Center
ALUPEC	Alfabeto Unificado para a Escrita do Cabo-Verdiano
ALUSTP	Alfabeto Unificado para a Escrita das Línguas Nativas de S. Tomé e Príncipe
<i>ARAL</i>	<i>Australian Review of Applied Linguistics</i>
<i>ARAS</i>	<i>Australasian Review of African Studies</i>
a.r.t.e.s.	Graduate School for the Humanities Cologne (AGSHC, Cologne)
ASAFAS	Graduate School of Asian and African Area Studies
ATR	advanced tongue root
AAVE	African American Vernacular English
BA	baccalaureus artium, bachelor of arts
BaFraLe	Colloquium on Berber Languages
BAKITA	National Swahili Council
BFSU	Beijing Foreign Studies University
BICCL	Biennial Colloquium on the Chadic Languages
BIGSAS	Bayreuth International Graduate School of African Studies
BLR	Bantu Lexical Reconstruction

xx Abbreviations and Acronyms

BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa
CALL	Colloquium on African Languages and Linguistics
CAR	Central African Republic
CERD	Centre d'Études et de Recherches de Djibouti
CFS	Côte française des Somalis
CIBIO/InBIO	Research Centre in Biodiversity and Genetic Resources
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CLARIN	European Research Infrastructure for Language Resources and Technology
<i>CLO</i>	<i>Cahiers de Littérature Orale</i>
CMS	Church Missionary Society
CNRS	Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique
CODESRIA	Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa
CPLP	Comunidade dos Países de Língua Portuguesa (Community of Portuguese Language Countries)
CRI	China Radio International
CRLD	Centre for Research on Linguistic Diversity
CRUD	Centre de Recherches de l'Université de Djibouti
CSIR	Centre for Scientific and Industrial Research
CVCP	Canadian Volunteer Cooperation Program
DaF	Deutsch als Fremdsprache (German as a Foreign Language)
DEL	Documenting Endangered Languages
DELL	Department of Ethiopian Languages and Literature
DLING	Department of Linguistics
DMG	Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft
DoBeS	Dokumentation Bedrohter Sprachen
DOBES	Documentation of Endangered Languages Program
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
E.C.	Ethiopian Calendar
EHES	École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales
ELDF	Endangered Languages Documentation Fund
ELDP	Hans Rausing Endangered Languages Documentation Program
ELRC	Ethiopian Languages Research Center
ENLOV	École Nationale de Langues Orientales Vivantes
EPHE	École Pratique des Hautes Études
ESL	English as a Second Language
EST	extended standard theory
FLAS	Foreign Language and Area Studies
FOCAC	Forum on China–Africa Cooperation

Abbreviations and Acronyms

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FQRNT	Fonds Québécois de la Recherche sur la Nature et les Technologies (formerly FCAR)
FQRSC	Fonds Québécois de la Recherche sur la Société et la Culture
FQRSC	Fonds Québécois de la Recherche sur la Société et la Culture
G.C.	Gregorian Calendar
GDR	German Democratic Republic
GILLBT	Ghana Institute of Linguistics, Literacy and Bible Translation
GLECS	Groupe Linguistique d'Études Chamito-Sémitiques
GLOW	Generative Linguistics of the Old World
HUFS	Hankuk University of Foreign Studies
IAAS	Institute of African and Asian Studies
IAI	International African Institute
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IES	Institute of Ethiopian Studies
IKS	Indigenous Knowledge System
ILCAA	Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa
ILD	Institut des Langues de Djibouti
ILS	Institute of Language Studies
INALCO	Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales
INDE	Instituto Nacional de Desenvolvimento da Educação (National Institute for Education Development)
INE	Instituto Nacional de Estatística
INEAS	Institute of Near Eastern and African Studies
IPA	International Phonetic Alphabet
IRICA	Institut de Recherche Indépendant de la Corne de l'Afrique
ISCED	Instituto Superior de Ciências de Educação (Higher Institute for Educational Studies)
ISE	Instituto Superior de Educação
ISERST	Institut Supérieur d'Études et de Recherches Scientifiques et Techniques
ISNTD	Institut des Sciences et des Nouvelles Technologies de Djibouti
JALL	<i>Journal of African Languages and Linguistics</i>
JCU	James Cook University
JOLAN	<i>Journal of the Linguistic Association of Nigeria</i>
JWAL	<i>Journal of West African Languages</i>
LACITO	Langues et Civilisations à Tradition Orale
LAN	Linguistic Association of Nigeria

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LBT	Lutheran Bible Translators
LCRC	Language and Culture Research Centre
LLACAN	Langage, Langues et Cultures d'Afrique
LoT	Languages of Tanzania Project
LREC	Language Resources and Evaluation
MaLEX	Malawi Lexicon Project
MIT	Massachusetts Institute of Technology
MoI	medium of instruction
MPhil	magister philosophiae, master of philosophy
NACALCO	National Cameroonian Languages Committee
NC	Niger-Congo
NECAAS	Network of European Centers of Asian and African Studies
NELIMO	Núcleo Estudos de Línguas Moçambicana (Institute for the Study of Mozambican Languages)
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGO	nongovernmental organization
NINLAN	National Institute for Nigerian Languages
NISA	Nilo-Saharan - Linguistic Analyses and Documentation
NISALICO	Nilo-Saharan Linguistics Conference
NRF	National Research Foundation
NSF	National Science Foundation
NTNU	Norwegian University of Science and Technology
NUC	National Universities Commission
NUFU	Nasjonalt Utvalg for Utviklingsrelatert Forskning og Utdanning (National Committee for Development-Related Research and Education)
OPSL	Occasional Papers in the Study of Sudanese Languages
ORSTOM	Office de la Recherche Scientifique et Technique d'Outre-Mer
PALOP	Países Africanos de Língua Oficial Portuguesa (Officially Portuguese-Speaking African Countries)
PANMAPAL	Pan-African Master's and PhD Programme in African Languages and Applied Linguistics
PhD	philosophiae doctor
RCLT	Research Centre for Linguistic Typology
REST	revised extended standard theory
RIÉ	<i>Recueil des inscriptions de l'Éthiopie</i> (Bernand et al. 1991)
RMA	Language Resource Management Agency
RMCA	Royal Museum for Central Africa (Musée Royal de l'Afrique Centrale)
RTP-Afrika	Rede de Televisao Portuguesa
RUD	Revue Universitaire de Djibouti
RUEPUS	Research Unit for Experimental Phonology of the University of Stellenbosch

Abbreviations and Acronyms

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SAJAL	<i>South African Journal of African Languages</i>
SAL	<i>Studies in African Linguistics</i>
SELAF	Société d'Études Linguistiques et Anthropologiques de France
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SIL	Summer Institute of Linguistics
SNU	Seoul National University
SOAS	School of Oriental and African Studies
SSHRC	Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council
ST	standard theory
SUNY	State University of New York
SUSO	Unified Orthography of a Unified Language called Shona
SyWAL	Symposium on West African Languages
TAM	tense, aspect, and mood
TFAI	Territoire Français des Afars et des Issas
TGG	transformational-generative grammar
TUFS	Tokyo University of Foreign Studies
TWB	Translators without Borders
UBS	United Bible Societies
UCB	University of California, Berkeley
UCLA	University of California, Los Angeles
UD	University of Djibouti
UDC	Union pour le Développement Culturel
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UQAM	Université du Québec à Montréal
USC	University of Southern California
VAD	Vereinigung der Afrikawissenschaften in Deutschland
WALS/SLAO	West African Linguistic Society/Société Linguistique de l'Afrique Occidentale
WOCAL	World Congress of African Linguistics