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REPORT ON THE 56TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE ON AFRICAN LINGUISTICS (ACAL 56)
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Introduction

The Annual Conference on African Linguistics (ACAL), is a conference held on contemporary African Linguistics. The conference is held annually with the aim of bringing together both accomplished and budding scholars in African Linguistics to share their research and network. The 56th edition of the conference (ACAL 56) was held by the University of Minnesota -Twin Cities in Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA from May 15-17, 2025. The mode of interaction was both in-person and via Microsoft Zoom. The special theme for this conference was African Languages in the Diaspora.

Day 1-15th May

The day began with breakfast for all registered members. The conference opened on the first day with a welcome address by Claire Halpert, the chair of the Organising Committee. This was followed by a Remembrance in honour of Michael Cahill the immediate past chair who passed away in 2024.

The plenary for Day 1 was delivered by Simanique Moody an Associate Professor, on the topic: *Language Contact Outcomes in the African Diaspora*. She shared real life experiences as a person and as a scholar of languages in contact in the diaspora. She talked about how these languages mark identity and the need to preserve African languages. The session was followed by a Coffee Break. There were five (5) parallel sessions, and I joined Session E: *African Languages in Contact*. All presenters for the session, both in-person and online delivered very insightful presentations. A highlight for me in this session was on how parents' resort to all kinds of means to ensure intergenerational transmission of their languages while navigating the challenges of the diaspora. The after session equally presented informative presentations.

Day 2- 16th May

Breakfast was the first item on the programme for the day. Parallel session for the day began after breakfast. I joined Session F, the session on Sociolinguistics Perspectives. The presentations informed me of new areas of research such as courtrooms. After break, I delivered my presentation, and I received comments on it. My methodology to data collection was found to be helpful to a researcher who plans on carrying out similar research.

Day 3- 17th May

There were presentations in the morning and in the afternoon. In the evening, there was a Banquet, a plenary and poster session. There was also a business meeting where new executives were elected and the next host of ACAL announced. The next ACAL will be hosted by the University at Buffalo, USA.

Conclusion

The conference was very productive and enjoyable. The conference was a comprehensive 3-day conference that saw presentations on African Languages from both scholars on the African continent and those in the diaspora. It provided me the opportunity to meet in-person some scholars I have read and cited in my research. This demystified the whole mystery that sometimes surrounds scholarship and academia. The plenaries and presentations showed that research on African languages will be more impactful in society if they are multidisciplinary and do some advocacy.

MAY 15-17, 2025