

Editors' foreword

 <https://doi.org/10.1075/cilt.100.01edi>

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Topics in African Linguistics: Papers from the XXI Annual Conference on African Linguistics, University of Georgia, April 1990

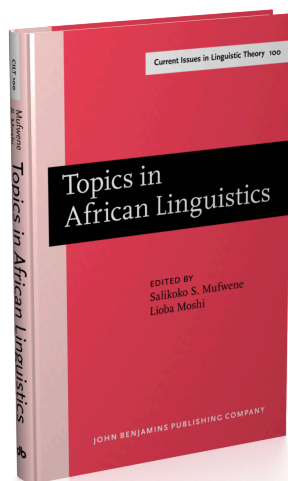
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[Current Issues in Linguistic Theory, 100] 1993. x, 307 pp.

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EDITORS' FOREWORD

This book contains a selection of the papers presented at the Twenty-First Annual Conference on African Linguistics, held at the University of Georgia 12-14 April 1990, organized by Salikoko Mufwene (Chair), Lioba Moshi (Associate Chair), Ben Blount and Mbulelo Mzamane. Covering a variety of African languages from different families and geographical areas, they represent the state of the art in the subfields of African linguistics into which the book is organized: 1) morphosyntax, 2) semantics, 3) phonology, and 4) language contact. The last part covers topics such as code-switching and mixing, pidginization/creolization, and language planning. This reflects more or less recent efforts in linguistics to bridge areas that are topically related, though scholars may have collaborated little with each other in the past. The overall structure was otherwise intended to give the book structure and unity out of the diverse topics usually covered by general meetings such as those of the Annual Conference on African Linguistics.

The papers in **Part One: Morphosyntax** focus particularly on the verb and verb phrase in a variety of Niger-Congo languages, discussing especially aspects of the verb morphology. *Larry Hyman* offers comparative data and a morphological analysis of the Bantu verb stem while *Andrew Allen* looks at the morphological structure of the Ewe verb both in derivational and in periphrastic constructions. *Mwatha Musanji Ngalasso* diverges from the above trend only in going beyond the verb in his thorough discussion of reduplication strategies in Kikongo-Kituba. The next three papers bring the reader back to the verb: *Edmond Bilao* discusses clitic climbing in Bantu languages, *Ade-nike Lawal* looks at serial verb construction in complex and simple Yoruba sentences, while *Paulette Roulon-Doko* focuses on the interaction of negation and time reference and mood in Gbáyá 'Bòddòè. Some readers will find this paper particularly informative about the role of floating tones in determining the tonal contour of items in utterances.

The papers in **Part Two: Semantics** start with a discussion of some foundational questions regarding the proper/common noun distinction in two geographically very distant African languages: Gborbo Krahn in the west, by *Janet Bing*, and Luo in the east, by *Ben G. Blount*. Both languages follow very similar principles, as far apart as they are territorially from each other. On the other hand, despite differences in the titles, the essays on Kivunjo-Chaga by *Lioba Moshi* and on Emai by *Ronald Schaefer* and *Oisaghaede Egbokhare* address the question of the semantic basis for assigning property concepts to different lexical categories. Moshi focuses on the usefulness of the concept 'time stability' to identifying a category of adjectives, while Schaefer and Egbokhare discuss the typological character of property concepts.

With only two contributions, **Part Three: Phonology** is the smallest of the volume. A couple of the papers we had wished to include were withdrawn due to delays in the publication of these proceedings. Those published here, by *Al Mtenje* and *José Tourville* focus on the prosodic features of Chiyao and Manding, respectively, using some of the most current analytical frameworks.

The apparent heterogeneity of **Part Four** reflects undoubtedly the topical diversity that its title **Language Contact** covers. *Eyamba Bokamba's* and *Carol Myers-Scotton's* papers are nonetheless related in more ways than in simply dealing with contact phenomena. Their interests are similar regarding variation and the mostly formal constraints associated with them, even though the essays have different foci: Bokamba's on new morphological creations and Myers-Cotton's on code-switching. *Helma Pasch* compares segmental features of Sango and Yakoma in the Central African Republic to determine whether the former is a creole. Lastly, *Edmun Richmond* discusses the choice of national official language in sub-Saharan Africa. Except for Pasch, all of the papers in Part Four cover several languages and geographical areas.

This volume would not have materialized without the contribution of many individuals, to whom we wish to address our hearty thanks. We would like to start with John J. Kozak, former Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences for supporting Mufwene's proposal to host the Twenty-First Annual Conference on African Linguistics at the

University of Georgia and awarding us the initial funds for its organization. The Conference would not have been as successful as it was without the kind assistance of Joe L. Key, Vice President for Research in additional funds, which allowed us in part to sponsor our invited speakers. We are also grateful to Michael Olien, then Acting Head of the Department of Anthropology and Linguistics, and to Egbert Krispyn, then Head of the Department of Comparative Literature, for their administrative support; to Darl Snyder, then Associate Vice-President for International Development, for sponsoring the opening reception; and to the many students who helped with the registration and information desks. It is difficult to measure our indebtedness to those we worked most closely with, especially Mbulelo Mzamane, for helping organize the meeting together with a parasesion on Language and Literature, and Ben G. Blount for also helping plan the Conference and participating in the review and selection of papers for these proceedings. Deborah Schmidt joined the University of Georgia the year following the Conference and helped with the review and selection of papers on phonology. Part of the "dirty work" of converting and/or reformatting the computer disks sent to us was done by following dedicated graduate assistants: Alice Bettini, Xilong Chen, and Jessica Cooper. During these days of budget cuts it would be very ungrateful to omit mentioning the Departments of Linguistics at the University of Chicago and of Comparative Literature at the University of Georgia for supporting the costs of copies, fax, and telephone while the manuscript was being readied for publication. Last but not least, we wish to thank all the contributors for their patience. For reasons in part out of our control we simply could not have these proceedings published before this year.

Chicago, IL. and Athens, GA,
May 1993

Salikoko S. Mufwene
Lioba Moshi

