

Preface to this issue

This Special Issue of Ghana Journal of Linguistics is a collection of papers presented at the 1st African Pragmatics Conference hosted by the School of Languages, University of Ghana, Legon on February 6-7, 2020. The conference brought together a wide range of scholars, researchers, and students from around the globe who discussed scientific research touching on political and health discourse, pragmatics and literature, pragmatics in gender and religion, computer-mediated communication from the perspective of African languages.

This Special Issue presents fourteen (14) papers which address specific pragmatic themes. In one of the two plenaries, **Kofi Agyekum** discusses crucial elements of pragmatic theory and how the study of pragmatics of African languages may be harnessed to foster appreciation for indigenous systems of communication and help accelerate national development across Africa. In the second plenary, **Akin Odebunmi** analyses discursive practices in Doctor-Patient interactions and how repetition is used to negotiate healthcare delivery.

The following four papers address the themes of stereo-types, humour and body part expressions in West African languages. **Eric Anchimbe** presents an analysis of interlocutors' use of verbal and non-verbal communication to mark in-group membership on one hand, while excluding out-group members on the other across Cameroun. **Victoria Ofori, Grace Diabah, Kofi Agyekum, Nana Anima Wiafe Akenten, and Nicholas Agyekum** provide ethno-pragmatic approach to the use of humour in Akan language radio show Kokurokoo and draught (*dame*) games by arguing that humour is artfully used to diffuse tension and to preempt potential conflict. In the next paper, **Obádélé Kambon** and **Lwanga Songsore** advance the idea that the use of body-part expressions to encode emotional and psychological states in Akan, Yoruba, Kiswahili and Kemet represents a shared fundamental African worldview.

The following five (5) papers all address aspects of political discourse. **Akin Tella** examines how language is used in Nigerian primary elections to put across different points of view among politicians. **Maxwell Mpotsoiah, Charles Marfo, Isaac Forson, and Emmanuel Fordjour** provide a critical discourse analysis of the use of invectives in Ghanaian political discourse to lower an opponent's chances in an election. Next, Ayo Osisanwo analyses the language of election campaign songs and how they may contribute to election related violence in Nigeria. **Adetutu Aragbuwa's** contribution brings to the fore the discourse of resistance in domestic violence narratives in Stella Dimoko Korkus' domestic violence blog. **Sopuruchi Aboh and Bestman Odeh** analyse the syntactic structure and construction of hate speech among political actors across Nigeria.

Two (2) papers discuss the pragmatics of discourse markers in Kiswahili (Tanzania) and Toposa (South Sudan). **Sarah Marjie and Felix Sosoo** discuss the use of the conjunction *yaani* in non-canonical positions in social media conversations on WhatsApp. **Helga Schroeder** considers how different information status is marked in clause chaining in Toposa and their interpretation.

In the final contribution, **David Olorunsogo** shows politeness strategies as reflections of hierarchy in doctor-patient discourse in Akure (Nigeria).

We are confident that this Special Issue will highlight the rich pragmatic stake in African languages and provide excellent resource to future explorations. We would like to thank the organisers of the conference, participants, and reviewers for making this publication a reality.

Helga Schroeder, Guest Editor
Reginald Akuoko Duah, Co-Editor, GJL