

# 2025 LSSA CONFERENCE



## FINAL CALL FOR PAPERS

The Linguistic Society of South Africa (LSSA) will host its inaugural conference in collaboration with the University of Johannesburg, the University of South Africa (Unisa), the Tshwane University of Technology (TUT), the Vaal University of Technology (VUT) alongside the Gauteng Department of Sport, Arts, Culture, and Recreation as well as the South African Centre for Digital Language Resources (SADiLaR) through its ESCALATOR Programme in Ekurhuleni, Gauteng, South Africa.

## 19-22 AUGUST 2025

**VENUE: BIRCHWOOD HOTEL & OR TAMBO CONFERENCE CENTRE, BOKSBURG.**

Conference theme: The status of linguistics after 30 years of democracy: Reflection on the past, analysing the current, and postulating pragmatic recommendations to ensure the future and sustainability of South African linguistics.



2022-2032 | INTERNATIONAL DECADE OF  
Indigenous Languages



There is “*the urgent need to counteract existing linguistic imperialism and hegemony embedded within colonial knowledge systems by enacting transformative policies that will prioritise...linguistic diversity, linguistic justice...*” (Rakgogo, 2024:1).

Linguistic Society of South Africa (LSSA) is a linguistic society that deals with South African linguistics. Founded in 2023, its primary goal is to promote the philosophy, sociology, and scientific study of language and its role within the broader South African society. It further advocates for the linguistic rights, epistemic justice, incorporation, education, recognition, and celebration of South African linguistics.

During the Republic of South Africa’s commemoration of 30 years of democracy, the LSSA issued a call for book chapters under the theme, “*A Linguistic Assessment on the 30 Years of Democracy: A South African Context.*” The theme of this book and the conference aligns closely with the celebration of 30 Years of Democracy and offers scholars an opportunity to reflect on past linguistic injustices and achievements, cogitate the current linguistic landscape, and propose practical recommendations to ensure the future sustainability of South Africa’s linguistic community.

It has been just over three decades since South Africa attained its democracy. With this attainment came the adoption of South Africa’s Constitution, which among other aspects, acknowledges twelve official languages – a rare and admirable linguistic heritage. Moreover, “over three decades, various interventions such as acts, national legislations, policies, public frameworks and ministerial task teams have been prominent in discussions within the linguistic community, particularly regarding language policy imperatives, language planning strategies and the utilisation of South African indigenous languages...” (Rakgogo, 2024:1). Suffice it to say that, the acknowledgement of the twelve languages as official in South Africa is, “socio-politically speaking”, quite a notable achievement (Kadenge and Mugari, 2015:22). It could be said that this acknowledgement has resulted in the status of most of South Africa’s local languages somewhat changed, due to the provisions of the Constitution on languages. Of course, this acknowledgement imminently kindled South African citizens’ optimism that their formerly marginalised languages would finally be re-empowered, in much the same way South Africa’s advent of democracy in 1994 and the subsequent adoption of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa did in 1996 (Maḡadzhe, 2019:205). The optimism shared by the citizens was fueled by the confidence that, in addition to ‘former’ colonial languages, African languages would be used as languages of teaching and learning, among other notable uses, throughout the country’s education sectors (Rakgogo, 2024). However, an overview of the language situation in South Africa in particular reveals an undemocratic development where the so-called *minority* (indigenous) languages are indeed “minoritised” (Maseko, 2021:187).

By minority languages, it is meant here those “languages that are spoken by relatively small indigenous groups...” and are thus endangered (Hang’ombe and Mupande, 2020:88). These languages are essentially “characterised by weak or non-dominant positions compared to other languages, and low status and limited use in public and official spaces” (Maseko, 2021:187).

Numerous reasons are attributable to the minoritisation and marginalisation of local languages in any country, common among them being globalisation, negative attitudes towards indigenous languages, economic factors, lack of will by state officials to promote indigenous languages (Makamu, 2009; Prah, 2009; Maqadzhe, 2019); colonial language policies, linguistic neo-colonialism (Viriri, 2003; Prah, 2006; Sibanda, 2019; Hang’ombe and Mupande, 2020), and linguistic imperialism underpinned by the idea of power in society (Rakgogo, 2024). Ultimately, some autochthonous languages then for one reason or the other, both overt and covert, end up seen as unsuitable for use in education, politics, business, media, etc., and as such, should give way as much as possible to colonial languages. Nevertheless, African- language scholars in particular have been making notable contributions towards the advocacy for African languages, multilingualism, decolonising the linguistic landscape of higher education, language rights etc., with some writing, presenting and publishing their submissions in African languages (see Ndlangamandla and Chaka, 2020; Mbembe, 2015; Ngubane, Ntombela and Ndebele, 2024; Rakgogo, 2024). Other scholars interrogate the development and implementation of language policies, which is also a necessary endeavour because “language policies conceal linguistic, political, social and economic ideologies which affect the growth and development of language-related disciplines and professions” (Ndlovu and Moyo, 2021:294-5). Among the submissions made by some of these scholars is a view such as:

Despite 30 years of democracy, the influence of colonial-era language philosophy and western epistemologies persist...[therefore, a]...comprehensive implementation of language policies could effectively address the transformation and decolonisation agenda...there is a need for alignment between policy and practice through pragmatic, intentional and transformative initiatives aimed at identifying, interrogating and disrupting the coloniality of power and its western epistemologies , as far as language policy and practice are concerned (Rakgogo, 2024:1).

In view of the foregoing, the Linguistics Society of South Africa calls for papers/abstracts that proffer a linguistic assessment and reflect on the state and status of languages in South Africa in its three decades of democracy. Scholars are thus invited to highlight and reflect on the status of languages both in the frontlines and peripheries of South Africa, unravelling in the process



their perspectives on linguistic equality and rights. In this linguistic assessment, the conference will also welcome the official and informal functions of South African languages in the socio-linguistic landscape, and analyse the picture at a grassroots level in as far as the implementation of the provisions on languages enshrined in the South African Constitution is concerned. Delegates are encouraged to submit their abstracts in any of the official languages of South Africa.

This conference aims to gather scholars, researchers, interpreters, language practitioners, language managers, language educators and curriculum advisors from diverse linguistic disciplines, fostering a collaborative space for both seasoned and emerging academics to engage in discussions centered around the theme and sub-themes. These sub-themes encompass, but are not limited to, the following 13 areas:

#### **(1) APPLIED LINGUISTICS**

- Translation and language practice
- African languages and translation
- African languages and lexicography
- Language editing techniques and African languages
- Terminology development
- Interpreting
- Subtitling
- Language and economics
- Language and statistics

#### **(2) AVIATION LINGUISTICS**

- Automated multilingual systems
- Aviation and linguistic training
- Intercultural communication
- Cross-cultural communication
- Language and aviation safety
- Language and geography
- Language, accent and pronunciation
- Aviation and language barriers

### **(3) COLONIAL AND DECOLONIAL LINGUISTICS**

- Language and decoloniality
- Language, power and dominance
- Language rights and social justice
- Language and social cohesion
- The hegemony of English
- African Knowledge Systems
- Language and curriculum transformation
- African epistemologies

### **(4) COMPUTATIONAL LINGUISTICS AND THE FUTURE WORLD OF WORK**

- The role of digital humanities for inclusive pedagogies
- Perspectives for local and international collaboration in digital humanities
- Intersectionality and the digital humanities
- Social change and activism through digital resources
- Bridging the gap between academia and marginalised communities through digital tools and resources.
- Digital archives, corpora, glossaries, and term banks
- Critical approaches to digital humanities
- Human Language Technology
- The role of digital humanities the preservation of marginalised voices and indigenous perspectives
- Digital humanities and African knowledge systems

### **(5) CLINICAL LINGUISTICS**

- Healthcare communication
- Language and communication disorders
- Language and rights
- Language and health
- Language and service delivery
- Language and speech therapy
- Psycholinguistics

## **(6) ECONOMIC LINGUISTICS**

- African languages and their role in the political economy
- Language and economic development
- Language and labour
- Language skills as human capital
- Language, marketing and advertising
- Language and market behaviour
- Language and opportunities
- Language and politics
- Language and National Development
- Local languages and their role in the local/township economy
- Standard languages and economic advantages
- Unequal distribution of resources
- Local languages and their role in the local/township economy

## **(7) GENERAL LINGUISTICS**

- Phonetics and phonology
- Morphology, syntax, and morphosyntax
- Semantics and pragmatics
- Text and discourse
- Cognitive Linguistics
- Language Typology

## **(8) LANGUAGE IN EDUCATION**

- Academic literacy
- African language teaching and literacy
- Bilingual and multilingual education
- Communication for Occupational Purposes
- Communication for Academic Purposes
- Language and curriculum transformation
- Literacy challenges
- Literacy development
- Policy prescripts and medium of instruction
- Mother tongue education
- Translanguaging and code-switching

## **(9) LANGUAGE PRACTICE IN THE WORKPLACE**

- Courtroom Interpreting
- Language and law
- Language and politics
- Language and linguistic rights
- Language and linguistic justice
- Language and governance
- Language and business
- Language policies and social inequalities
- Linguistic inequalities
- Renaming and law

## **(10) LITERATURE**

- Literature in African languages
- Colonial and postcolonial literature in Africa
- Conflict and post-conflict narratives
- Teaching African languages literature (including literature in education)
- Literary theories in African languages
- African Feminist Literature
- Oral tradition and storytelling
- Literary activism and social justice
- Publishing in African Languages in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

## **(11) MIGRATION LINGUISTICS**

- Language shift
- Language erosion
- Language maintenance
- Language contact and change
- Language, culture and heritage loss
- language policy conflicts
- Linguistic discrimination
- Multilingualism
- Language and identity preservation

## **(12) SOCIOLINGUISTICS**

- Dialectology
- Intersectionality and language
- Language planning and policy
- Language policy and practice
- Language policy and implementation
- Language, culture, and identity construction
- Language and ethnicity
- Language, sexuality, and gender
- Language standardisation
- Onomastics
- Queer Linguistics
- Renaming and law
- Renaming and transformation
- Renaming and commerce
- Renaming and semiotics

## **(13) SOUTH AFRICAN SIGN LANGUAGE (SASL) AND ITS DEVELOPMENT**

- The linguistic and historical development of South African Sign Language (SASL)
- The journey toward the recognition of SASL as an official language
- The diversity of SASL dialects across South Africa
- The integration of technology in the use and promotion of SASL
- Systemic challenges faced by the Deaf community in South Africa
- SASL and the promotion of linguistic rights for the Deaf community
- The role of SASL in improving service delivery and accessibility
- Opportunities created through the advancement and recognition of SASL
- Raising awareness about SASL and its importance in South African society

### **SUBMISSION DATES (midnight at 23:59)**

Abstracts for workshops and papers: Tuesday, 15 July 2025

*Final notification of acceptance of abstracts: Tuesday, 22 July 2025*

Submission of Full Papers: Sunday, 10 July 2025

*Final Feedback on Full Papers: Sunday, 17 July 2025*

Delegates are encouraged to begin working on their full papers as soon as they receive feedback on their abstracts. The internal review committee will conduct a preliminary review, provide constructive feedback, and further recommend suitable DHET-accredited journals for submission. This internal process aims to enhance the likelihood of manuscript acceptance and ensure publication within a reasonable timeframe.

Delegates who choose to submit their full papers after the conference, within a timeframe to be announced during the conference, will receive the same assistance as those who submitted before the conference. The aim is to support novice researchers in actively participating and contributing to scientific knowledge.

## **GUIDELINE FOR SUBMISSIONS**

Abstracts of 250-400 for \*workshop presentations and 150-250 for paper presentations should be submitted by e-mail as **MS Word files** accompanied by the following information:

### *Page 1*

- Title, full name(s), and surname
- Institutional affiliation (i.e., position of the delegate, institution's name, faculty/school, department, and location)
- E-mail address (if paper has multiple authors, please state name of corresponding author)
- Contact details (mobile and/or office number)

### *Page 2*

- Full title of the paper
- Abstract

\* A workshop is an opportunity for a group of interested delegates to be engaged in intensive discussion and activity on a topic and innovative research on any area relating to the Conference theme.

## **PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING**

- Abstracts must be submitted in any South African official language.
- No references, tables or graphics should be included in the abstract.
- When using abbreviations within the body of the abstract, please spell out the name in full at first mention and follow with the abbreviation in parenthesis.
- Please make sure that you submit an abstract that has been text edited.

- An hour (60 minutes) will be allocated for workshops, and each should have a minimum of two authors.
- Paper presentations will be limited to 20 minutes plus a 10-minute question/discussion session.
- All abstracts will be adjudicated.
- No changes will be made on abstracts once they had been adjudicated.
- No abstracts will be accepted after the deadline (i.e., Friday, 28 March 2025).

To submit paper and workshop abstracts, please click on the following link: <https://linguisticssa.org/apply/>.

If you encounter any technical issues, feel free to email [2025conference@linguisticssa.org](mailto:2025conference@linguisticssa.org)

## REGISTRATION WITH AUTOMATIC MEMBERSHIP

### *For \*students*

Registration: R4 000 (R3600 + R400 LSSA membership fee)

\* For the purposes of the conference, a **student** is a person who has registered for a Master's or Doctoral degree at a recognised institution of higher learning in 2025, and does not hold a permanent position at a recognised institution of higher learning. Proof of registration should be sent to [Secretariat@linguisticssa.org](mailto:Secretariat@linguisticssa.org)

### *For non-students*

Registration: R5 000 (R4600 + R400 LSSA membership fee)

### *For online presenters*

Registration: R2 000 (1600 + R400 LSSA membership fee)

No refunds. Substitutes are welcome at no extra cost (if it is a student for a student or a nonstudent for a non-student).

If membership for 2025 had already been paid, please send **proof of payment** to [secretariat@linguisticssa.org](mailto:secretariat@linguisticssa.org) and carbon copy [2025conference@linguisticssa.org](mailto:2025conference@linguisticssa.org)

## **REGISTRATION PROCEDURE**

Delegates will be requested to fill in electronic registration forms after acceptance of their abstracts. An invoice will be created and sent to individual delegates with personal details, registration amount and banking details. It is only after this process that delegates will be able to deposit a registration fee into the society account. The conference organisers will handle no cash at the registration desk at the conference.

## **DAILY PROGRAMME**

**Day 1: REGISTRATION:** Opening Ceremony, Conference Programme & Evening Reception

**Day 2:** Conference Programme and Workshops

**Day 3:** Conference Programme and Gala Dinner (evening)

**Day 4:** Conference Programme, Closing Function & Departure

## **COSTS**

Travel, accommodation, subsistence, etc. related to delegates' participation in the conference must be covered by the delegates of their institutions, regardless of the proposal acceptance. LSSA and its conference organisers are not liable and hold no responsibility for any of these costs. Free airport transfers and discounted rates for accommodation which will include bed, breakfast and dinner will be communicated in future.

## **MEMBERS OF CONFERENCE ORGANISING COMMITTEE:**

1. Conference Co-Chairpersons: Dr YLP Majola, Dr L Masha, Prof EB Zungu & Mr TJ Thamaga
2. Conference Convener: Dr YLP Majola
3. Chairperson of the Scientific Committee: Dr NE Letsoalo, Prof M Sebola & Prof G Mazibuko
4. Conference Coordinators: Dr K Seshoka, Ms L Khumalo & Mr N Sinoyolo
5. Marketing and Communication: Ms RM Maboja, Ms L Maenetja, Mr AJ Sibanyoni & Ms Nthabi Malatjie
6. Conference Administrators: Dr TM Bhuda and Mr T Molatou
7. Conference Advisors: Dr TJ Rakgogo, Mr C Ngcobo & Mr N Thoka

## ENQUIRIES:

### General and registration:

Conference Administrator: Dr TM Bhuda at [2025conference@linguisticssa.org](mailto:2025conference@linguisticssa.org)

## REFERENCES:

- Hang'ombe, K and Mupande, I. 2020. Language Situation and Language Policy in-Education in Zimbabwe: A Perspective towards Tonga Learners. *Multilingual Margins*, 7(3):84-98.
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- Ndlangamandla, S.C. and Chaka, C. 2020. The Intersection between Multilingualism, Translanguaging, and Decoloniality in the Global South. *Scrutiny*2, 25(1):1-5. Doi: <https://10.1080/18125441.2020.1832328>
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Prah, K.K. 2009. The Language of Instruction Conundrum in Africa. In: Brock-Utne, B. and Garbo, G. (eds.), *Language and Power: The Implications of Peace and Development*. Dar es Salaam, Tanzania: Mkuki na Nyota. pp. 1-15.

Rakgogo, T.J. 2024. A Linguistic Evaluation of the South African Higher Education Sector: A Reflection on 30 Years of Democracy (1994-2024). *Transformation in Higher Education*, 9(0), a342. <https://doi.org/10.4102/the.v9i0.342>

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Viriri, A. 2003. Language Planning in Zimbabwe: The Conservation and Management of Indigenous Languages as Intangible Heritage. In: 14<sup>th</sup> ICOMOS General Assembly and International Symposium: 'Place, Memory, Meaning: Preserving Intangible Values in Monuments and Sites', 7-31 October, Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe

