

# ULIMI

Vol. 25

The Newsletter of the National African Language Resource Center (NALRC)  
HAMILTON LUGAR SCHOOL OF GLOBAL AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES, INDIANA UNIVERSITY BLOOMINGTON



ULIMI is published annually to disseminate information from the NALRC. For questions and comments regarding this newsletter and our services, please get in touch with us at [nalrc@iu.edu](mailto:nalrc@iu.edu).

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# The National African Language Resource Center (NALRC)

**The National African Language Resource Center (NALRC)**, located at the Hamilton Lugar School of Global and International Studies at Indiana University Bloomington, is a federally funded, Title VI, national foreign language center dedicated to the advancement of African language teaching and learning in the United States.

Established in 1999, the NALRC's mission is to serve the entire community of African language educators, learners, and professionals. The mission has four primary areas of focus: (1) develop pedagogical materials (2) host professional development and training for African language professionals, (3) promote African language pedagogy research, and (4) coordinate national efforts to support the African language teaching field. Through these services and programs, the NALRC plays a crucial role in supporting the growth and professionalization of African language education in the United States.

This edition of ULIMI showcases the Center's activities in 2024-2025 and invites you to be part of our programming aimed at developing our field.

## NALRC Team

**Kazeem Kéhîndé Sanuth, PhD**  
Director

**Rahman Arman**  
Language Instructional Specialist

**Ibrahim Odugbemi**  
Graduate Program Assistant

**Phelix Odihambo Lumumba**  
Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistant (Kiswahili) [2024-25]

**Ismail Kolade Akintola**  
Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistant (Yoruba) [2024-25]

## Contents

<u>From the Director</u> <u>Kazeem Kéhîndé Sanuth, PhD.</u>	<b>03</b>
<u>2025 NALRC Summer Institute</u>	<b>04</b>
<u>2025 Pedagogy Research Workshop</u>	<b>08</b>
<u>2025 Business in World Languages Workshop</u>	<b>10</b>
<u>2025 ALTA Conference</u>	<b>11</b>
<u>Learning Together: Using Game-Based Technology to Foster Equity in a Yoruba Language Classroom</u>	<b>14</b>
<u>African Language Scholars in the Spotlight</u>	<b>16</b>
<u>Tribute to Professor Alwiya S. Omar</u>	<b>18</b>
<u>African Language Program Highlight: University of Wisconsin-Madison</u>	<b>20</b>
<u>African Language Programs in the US</u>	<b>22</b>
<u>Workshop Participants Reflections</u>	<b>24</b>
<u>Partners in Our Success</u>	<b>29</b>
<u>Announcements</u>	<b>30</b>

# From The Director

Kazeem Kéhindé Sanuth, Ph.D.

It is with great pleasure and humility as Director of NALRC that I present to you this year's ULIMI newsletter, which highlights our activities for professional development, pedagogical exchange, and collaboration during the 2024–2025 academic year.

NALRC continues to serve as a national hub for African languages. We make learning materials available for a wide range of languages and are revising existing titles while developing corresponding online and digital resources for select materials, ensuring that instruction remains current, accessible, and adaptable. We plan to expand materials for even the most under-resourced languages, providing instructors with flexible pedagogical resources across diverse institutional contexts.

Through initiatives such as the Pedagogy Research Workshop, the annual Summer Institute on African Language Teaching and Learning, and the Pedagogy Best Practices Video Series, NALRC has supported instructors at different stages of their professional paths. We help instructors strengthen pedagogical approaches and research methods while encouraging reflection on teaching practice, classroom-based inquiry, and the evolving contexts in which African languages are taught and learned. NALRC has also maintained collaborations across institutions and programs, including the Business in World Languages Workshop and our ongoing engagement with the African Language Teachers Association. Together, these efforts strengthen professional connections and sustain a shared sense of purpose across the field.

Our experience this year also included navigating increasingly complex and evolving institutional landscapes, a reality many of us have faced for some time.



As I step into the role of Director, I am mindful of both the challenges we inherit and the opportunities that lie ahead. My approach is grounded in careful stewardship and strategic engagement. I am listening closely to colleagues and learning from work already underway. I want to ensure that the Center's programming remains responsive to the practical and intellectual needs shaping African language teaching today. My goal is to prioritize initiatives that support instructors and learners in concrete and sustainable ways, and to foster both professional growth and field-wide collaboration.

NALRC will remain dedicated to thoughtful, field-responsive programming and will maintain spaces for dialogue, learning, and professional exchange, whether online or in person.

I would like you to read this newsletter as a record of collective effort rather than a list of completed tasks. The work described here reflects collaboration among instructors, workshop leaders, NALRC staff, advisory board members, and institutional partners who continue to invest their expertise and time in the field. We are grateful for this shared commitment and invite you to remain actively engaged with the Center's work in the year ahead.

*Kazeem Kéhindé Sanuth, Ph.D.*

**Director, NALRC**



# The 2025 Summer Institute



The NALRC's  
flagship  
Professional  
Development  
training

The 2025 NALRC Summer Institute, an annual professional development program, was held May 20–31 and delivered the same successful outcomes that have defined previous editions. The institute focused on advancing African language instruction through innovative pedagogy, curriculum design, and assessment, and was facilitated by Dr. Esther Lisanza (Howard University) and Dr. Iman Alramadan (Indiana University).

Offered in a hybrid format, the first week featured synchronous online instruction on backward curriculum design, standards-based teaching, performance-based assessment, and sustained target-language use, aligned with the World Readiness Standards for Learning Languages. The second week emphasized microteaching, conducted in person at Indiana University's Hamilton Lugar School for U.S.-based participants and through recorded submissions for international participants.

Participants represented global institutions and taught nine languages, including Igbo, Isekiri, Hausa, Lugbarati, Nigerian Pidgin, Swahili, Urhobo, Wolof, Yoruba, and Swedish. Consistent with prior years, participants concluded the institute with demonstrated proficiency in communicative, student-centered instruction and extensive use of the target language. The program concluded on May 30 with a closing ceremony and the awarding of certificates to participants who fulfilled all requirements.



# The 2025 Summer Institute Participants

Name	Language	Institutional Affiliation	Country
Adebisi Banjo	Yoruba	University of Lagos	Nigeria
Alphonsina Ambrosi	Swahili	Mzumbe University	Tanzania
Benjamin Overare	Urhobo	Delta State University Abraka	Nigeria
Caleb A. Owolabi	Yoruba	FGGC, Onitsha/Nwafor Orizu University of Education, Nsugbe	Nigeria/United States
Comfort Durojaiye	Yoruba	Indiana University-Bloomington	United States
Hanna Sukhanova	Swedish	University of Pittsburgh	United States
Irene Efeakpor	Urhobo	Delta State University, Abraka	Nigeria
Iyabode Deborah Akande	Yoruba	Obafemi Awolowo University	Nigeria
Jane Peter Mhina	Swahili	Hotspot Media Promotions	United States
Jones Oma	Isekiri	College of Education, Warri	Nigeria
Mohamed Juma	Swahili	Kigamboni Municipal Council	Tanzania
Moses Darah	Urhobo	Delta State University Abraka	Nigeria
Odirin Abonyi	Yoruba	National Open University of Nigeria	Nigeria
Odunsanmi Waleola	Yoruba	Alamoja Yoruba	Nigeria
Oluwatosin Adebomeyin	Yoruba	University of Lagos	Nigeria
Patrick Oyinda	Swahili	Howard University	United States
Paul Ntinda	Swahili	Indiana University-Bloomington	United States
Rasheed Adegbenro	Yoruba	Alamoja Yoruba	Nigeria
Samuel Andema	Lugbarati	Aga Khan University Institute for Educational Development, East Africa	Tanzania
Ugonna Ahumibe	Igbo	Indiana University-Bloomington	United States
Umma Aliyu Musa	Hausa	University of Hamburg	Germany
Vieux Alassane Toure	Wolof	University of Illinois - Urbana Champaign	United States





## Quotes from Participants' Reflections



**Alphonsina Ambrosi**

"Participating in the NALRC Summer Institute 2025 has felt like a rebirth in my journey as a teacher of African languages. I feel profoundly renewed, both in spirit and in practice."



**Benjamin Overare**

"For me, this training provided valuable insights into effective teaching methods and strategies for African languages. The workshop was a rich and enlightening experience that left a lasting impact on my approach to language instruction."



**Comfort Durojaiye**

"This experience...prioritized the African language teacher not only as a technician of drills, but also as a culture bearer, a knowledge bearer, and a community builder."



**Odirin Abonyi**

"I am still marvelled at how surprisingly fast a Beginner could be made to grasp basic communicative skills needed for phatic purposes in a single lesson modelled upon the Backward Curriculum complemented with a SMART lesson plan."



**Iyabode Akande, PhD**

"I learned that the key to a successful classroom is that a teacher must be a facilitator of knowledge, mostly through the use of multimodal teaching tools which will help students to process and understand the language of instruction"



**Adebisi Banjo, PhD**

"It fundamentally reshaped my approach to language instruction, moving beyond vocabulary to embrace the target language as a vital bridge to cultural understanding"

## Quotes from Participants' Reflections



**Oluwatosin Adebomeyin**

"One of the most valuable lessons I took away from the Institute was the importance of a student-centered approach. It became clear that teaching is not about the teacher — it is about the learner."



**Umma Musa, PhD**

"A key takeaway for me was the guiding question: How can I be more relevant and effective in the classroom? This reminded me of the importance of preparation, reflection, and intentional teaching practices."



**Waleola Odunsanmi**

"What I learned didn't just stay theoretical — I've already started putting it into action. I've taken the time to assess my students' proficiency levels more carefully."

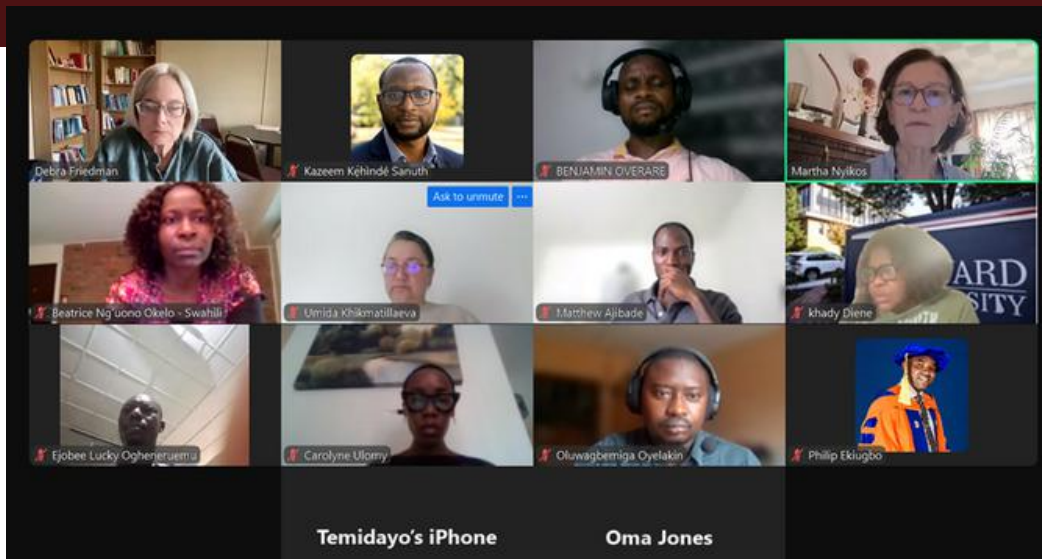


**Jones Oma**

"Now my teaching and learning strategies have improved tremendously, and my students and I now engage in different interactions"

[Read the full reflections on the back pages](#)

# The Pedagogy Research Workshop



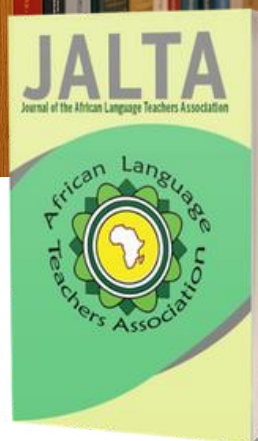
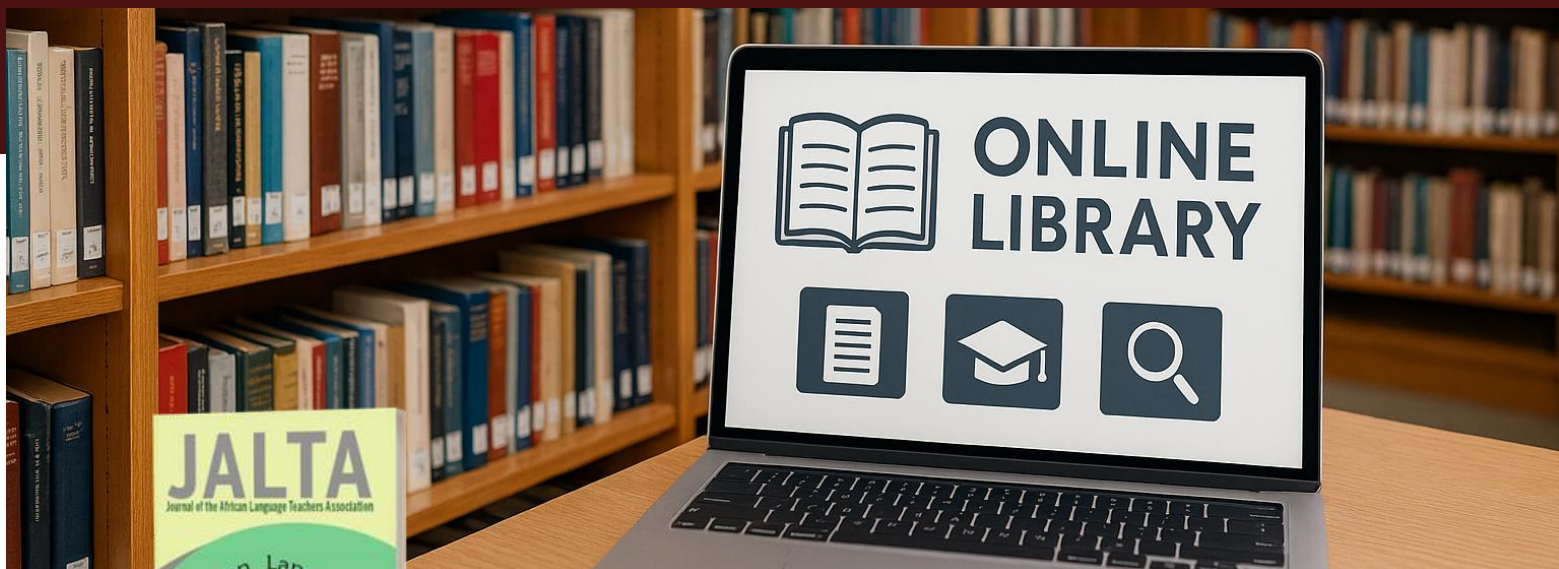
The 2025 Pedagogy Research Workshop was held by the NALRC from June 3 to June 7, 2025, in a fully virtual format. As part of NALRC's commitment to strengthening scholarship in African language pedagogy, the workshop focused on building research capacity among African language instructors. It was facilitated by Dr. Debra Friedman and Dr. Martha Nyikos of Indiana University Bloomington,

The free workshop convened educators from U.S. and African institutions across faculty, graduate, and professional contexts. Participants represented eight languages, including Isekiri, Ijaw, Swahili, Urhobo, Wolof, Yoruba, and French. Participants received targeted training in practitioner and action research, data collection and analysis, and publication and dissemination strategies.

Overall, the workshop strengthened a growing community of African language educators equipped to contribute rigorously to pedagogy research and to advance effective, student-centered language instruction.

<b>Beatrice Ng'uono Okelo</b> Indiana University, Bloomington ~ Swahili
<b>Benjamin Akpovona Overare</b> Delta State University, Abraka ~ Urhobo
<b>Carolyn Saria Uloomy</b> University of Mississippi ~ Swahili
<b>Emuobonuvie Maria Ajiboye</b> Delta State University, Abraka ~ Urhobo
<b>Gbénga Samson Oyélákin</b> Indiana University, Bloomington ~ Yoruba
<b>Khady Diene</b> Howard University ~ Wolof
<b>Lucky Ogheneruemu Ejobee</b> Delta State University, Abraka ~ Urhobo
<b>Matthew Ajibade</b> Indiana University, Bloomington ~ Yoruba
<b>Oki Oruyei</b> College of Education, Warri ~ Ijaw (Ijaw)
<b>Oma Loretta Jones</b> College of Education, Warri ~ Isekiri
<b>Philip Ekiugbo</b> National Institute for Nigerian Languages, Aba ~ Urhobo
<b>Temidayo Opeyemi Kehinde</b> University of Mississippi ~ French, Yoruba
<b>Umida Hikmatilla</b> Indiana University, Bloomington





## **The Journal of African Language Teachers Association (JALTA)** ISSN 1524-9956

The Journal of African Language Teachers' Association (JALTA), published annually by the NALRC, focuses on the teaching and learning of African languages in foreign-language contexts. It serves language teachers, administrators, and researchers, welcoming manuscripts on innovative teaching methods, classroom-based research, and educational experimentation. The journal also invites scholarship on African language use, policy, and related sociocultural practices.

JALTA is refereed and published once a year. It is published online. The publication process is managed through the Open Journal System (OJS) hosted by the Indiana University PRESS Journals.

### **Publish with JALTA**

For guidelines and submission, click or scan this QR code or go to:

<https://scholarworks.iu.edu/iupjournals/index.php/jalta/about/submissions>



# Business in World Languages Workshop



The NALRC continued its collaboration with Indiana University's Center for International Business Education and Research and the Title VI National Resource Centers to hold the 2025 Workshop on Incorporating Business Concepts in World Languages Instruction from May 19 to May 23. This fully virtual workshop introduced instructors to integrating business concepts into language teaching and built on their prior training in Backward Curriculum Design.

**Beatrice Ng'uono Okelo**

Indiana University, Bloomington ~ Swahili

**Emuobonuvie Maria Ajiboye**

Delta State University, Abraka ~ Urhobo

**Everlyn Oluoch**

United States International University-Africa ~ Swahili

**Fnu Agustini**

University of Michigan ~ Indonesian

**Hany Noviia**

University of Wisconsin-Madison ~ Indonesian

**Quin E. Awuor**

United States International University-Africa ~ Dholuo, Swahili

**Seth Antwi Ofori**

Indiana University, Bloomington ~ Akan/Twi

**ThuyAnh Nguyen**

University of Michigan ~ Vietnamese

**Uwuma Ugwu**

Ignatius Ajuru University of Education ~ Ekpeye

**Philip Ekiugbo**

National Institute for Nigerian Languages, Aba ~ Urhobo

**Xuan Ye**

Indiana University, Bloomington ~ Chinese

**Ugonna Virginia Ahumibe**

Indiana University, Bloomington ~ Igbo

**Umida Hikmatilla**

Indiana University, Bloomington ~ Uzbek, Turkish, Russian

The NALRC continued its collaboration with Indiana University's Center for International Business Education and Research and the Title VI National Resource Centers to hold the 2025 Workshop on Incorporating Business Concepts in World Languages Instruction from May 19 to May 23. This fully virtual workshop introduced instructors to integrating business concepts into language teaching and built on their prior training in Backward Curriculum Design.

Facilitated by Dr. Jennifer Eddy of Queens College and Dr. Kazeem Sanuth of NALRC, participants applied the World Language Curriculum Framework that Incorporates Business Concepts for elementary and intermediate instruction. They developed learning plans and scenarios in their languages, which will be published by NALRC and made freely available online.

Participants represented six universities and two high schools, covering eleven languages: Akan/Twi, Chinese, Dholuo, Ekpeye, Indonesian, Russian, Swahili, Turkish, Urhobo, Uzbek, and French. The workshop equips instructors to enhance language learning with practical, real-world applications that prepare students for global business contexts.



# 2025 ALTA Conference

The 28th Annual ALTA Conference | University of Pittsburgh, April 10–12, 2025  
Theme: African Languages Across Disciplines, Professions, and Communities.

The National African Language Resource Center supported and participated in the 28th Annual Conference of the African Language Teachers Association, held April 10–12, 2025, at the University of Pittsburgh, bringing together educators, scholars, students, and community partners to exchange ideas on pedagogy, research, and professional practice.



## **Pre-Conference Workshop: Technology, Innovation, and the African Language Classroom**

The conference opened with an NALRC-sponsored pre-conference workshop led by Dr. Jeff Kuhn, Director of OHIO Esports and instructional designer at Ohio University's Games Research and Immersive Design Lab. The session focused on the pedagogical use of gaming, virtual reality, and artificial intelligence in language teaching and learning. Designed for instructors with varying levels of technological experience, the workshop offered hands-on exploration of accessible digital tools that support communicative practice, learner engagement, and curriculum development in African language classrooms.

## **NALRC-Sponsored Panel on Pedagogy Research**

NALRC organized and sponsored a panel on African language pedagogy research featuring participants from the previous summer's Pedagogy Research Workshop. Panelists shared findings, works in progress, and reflections from their classroom-based research.



## **Conference Highlights**

ALTA 2025 featured sessions in African languages, keynotes, roundtables, and language-specific meetings addressing pedagogy, scholarship, community engagement, and digital resources. The conference concluded with the ALTA Business Meeting and the African Languages Jamboree and Awards Ceremony, recognizing scholarly and professional contributions.

NALRC values its long-standing partnership with ALTA and its shared commitment to innovative, interdisciplinary, and community-engaged African language education. The next ALTA Annual Conference will be at Princeton University, April 9–11, 2026.



# Teach It Forward



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## NALRC Pedagogy Best Practices Series

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The Pedagogy Best Practices Series is an NALRC initiative through which African language instructors share exemplary teaching strategies with others in a short video.

### Be Part of the Series:



You can participate in this series through virtual video recording (Zoom) or by being physically recorded by a NALRC staff. Send us an email today to be a part of this initiative: [nalrc@iu.edu](mailto:nalrc@iu.edu).



## Access NALRC print textbooks and instructional resources through the NALRC STORE



*NALRC Store is effective and easy to use!*

Click or scan this QR code to place your order or go to <https://nalrc.mybigcommerce>.



## **Learning Together: Using Game-Based Technology to Foster Equity in a Yoruba Language Classroom**

Language classrooms are inherently diverse, representing a range of backgrounds, identities, and learning experiences. In most African language classrooms, this diversity is even more pronounced. The demographics often include heritage learners, who bring cultural familiarity, alongside non-heritage learners, who may have no prior exposure to the language being acquired. Teaching diverse students from different races, backgrounds, and age groups makes it a little challenging to get every one of them to participate in classroom instructions.

One response to this challenge is the introduction of educational technology to promote equity, participation, and collaboration through tools such as Kahoot and other game-based platforms. Integrating technological tools enables students to create and share communicative content regardless of factors that may otherwise marginalize them, including race, age, gender, marital status, or cultural heritage.

Collaborations are crucial elements in any language classroom, as they allow students to feel seen, heard, and valued for who they are. A collaborative and diverse language classroom fosters a safe and supportive environment for all students, regardless of their background, race, ethnicity, gender, or ability level.

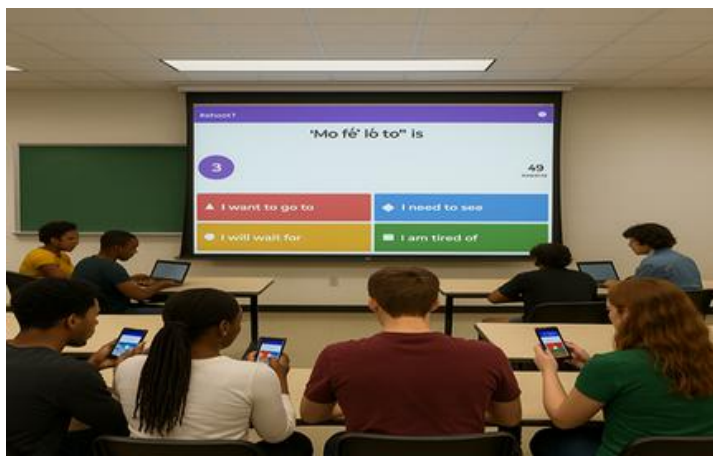
In such spaces, students are encouraged to embrace their differences and learn from one another, creating a rich and inclusive learning experience.

We also live in a period of significant technological transformation, as innovations associated with the Fourth Industrial Revolution continue to shape everyday life. With technology increasingly integrated into formal learning environments, there is a growing need to shift from traditional models of language instruction toward more interactive, technology-enhanced classrooms.

Language professionals expanded their use of digital tools during the COVID-19 pandemic, and many of these applications demonstrated strong potential to support more inclusive, equitable, collaborative, and socially connected learning both inside and outside the classroom.

Additionally, in classrooms that include both heritage and non-heritage learners, educational games such as Kahoot play an important role in facilitating collaborative learning experiences that transcend instructional barriers. Drawing on over three years of classroom use, I have observed that Kahoot helps transform African language classrooms into more equitable and participatory learning spaces.





AI-generated images of a language classroom engaging with the Kahoot game.

A game-based quizzes, Kahoot allows all students to participate simultaneously, either individually or in groups, regardless of confidence level or language proficiency. When played individually, heritage learners often enjoy showcasing their cultural knowledge, while non-heritage learners can participate without fear of being singled out. When played in groups, Kahoot brings heritage and non-heritage learners together, fostering collaboration and enabling students to benefit from one another's strengths.

In addition, Kahoot's competitive but fun format encourages both fairness and accountability. Since everyone answers the questions simultaneously and anonymously, each student is responsible for their own responses. This setup removes the usual classroom hierarchy where only the most outspoken or confident voices take over. It also creates space for shy, quiet students, or those who may feel marginalized by factors such as level of proficiency or prior exposure to the target language, to participate on equal terms.

In conclusion, a collaborative and diverse classroom recognizes and values each student's unique contribution. Through intentional use of technology, language instructors can create engaging, interactive, and inclusive learning environments that benefit all learners, regardless of background or level of proficiency in the target language.

### How I Use Kahoot for Yoruba Grammar Review

#### Define a clear grammar focus

I target one or two grammar points, such as tense markers or verb serialization, to keep the review focused.

#### Design contextualized questions

I create short Yoruba sentences based on familiar contexts like daily routines or campus life.

#### Build in common learner errors

I include distractors that reflect typical mistakes to turn errors into learning opportunities.

#### Use individual play mode

Students respond independently, ensuring equal participation regardless of confidence or proficiency.

#### Pause for guided discussion

I explain correct answers, invite reasoning, and model accurate forms after each question.

#### Use missed questions to diagnose

I briefly reteach concepts when multiple students select the wrong option.

#### Close with application

I ask students to create an original sentence using the target structure to reinforce learning.

# African Language Scholars in the Spotlight

*Celebrating the academic and professional accomplishments of African language instructors, recognizing their efforts and commitment to the development of our field.*

In this edition of *African Language Scholars in the Spotlight*, we highlight two emerging language experts and scholars who are contributing to renewed momentum in Hausa language pedagogy through their teaching, research, and community outreach activities. After the decline of Hausa instruction, their works are strengthening language study through classroom teaching, curriculum development, and scholarly engagement.

## **Abubakar Bala**

Abubakar Bala is a doctoral candidate in Educational Leadership at Miami University whose work advances Hausa language pedagogy in the United States. A former Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistant and fixed-term Hausa language tutor at Michigan State University, he developed instructional materials and led cultural outreach initiatives grounded in communicative and culturally sustaining pedagogies. His research examines literacy, identity, and access in Hausa language learning, drawing on more than a decade of instructional and leadership experience. His 2025 study on non-native learners' orientations toward the Ajami writing system contributes empirical evidence to debates on script choice, instructional legitimacy, and cultural continuity in African language education. He also investigates mobile-assisted language learning as a means of expanding access and strengthening learner agency beyond formal classrooms. His engagement with educational reform, including a 2024 TED-style RedHawk Talk at Miami University, on preventing students' lost learning, situates his language education scholarship within equity-oriented, systems-level thinking.



# African Language Scholars in the Spotlight



## **Nura Abubakar**

Nura Abubakar is a doctoral candidate in Interdisciplinary Arts at Ohio University whose scholarship and teaching foreground Hausa language, literature, and film as interconnected pedagogical resources. His research examines Hausa literary texts and Kannywood films with attention to gender, faith, and cultural representation, advancing critical approaches to Hausa-language cultural production. As a former Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistant at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, Nura taught elementary Hausa, developed instructional materials, and led cultural outreach initiatives that expanded student engagement with Hausa as a less-commonly taught language. Through his publications and public scholarship, he demonstrates how literature and film can serve as powerful tools for sustaining and revitalizing Hausa language study for diverse learners.

## **Extending Hausa Scholarship Beyond the Classroom**

Abubakar Bala and Nura Abubakar currently volunteer their time, expertise, and skills with language companies and AI initiatives advancing Hausa pedagogy through emerging technologies, helping to ensure that the language remains pedagogically sound within rapidly evolving digital spaces.

Together, this year's *Scholars in the Spotlight* exemplify the promise of the next generation of Hausa language educators while demonstrating how African language scholarship can generate broader societal impact. They are revitalizing Hausa language study in the diaspora and extending their influence beyond the classroom to shape public understanding, global education, cross-cultural dialogue, and curriculum policy.



# *Happy Retirement!*

## **Honoring Professor Alwiya S. Omar** **The Immediate Past Director of the NALRC**

The NALRC celebrates Dr. Alwiya S. Omar, Clinical Professor and immediate past Director of the National African Language Resource Center (NALRC), as she embarks on a well-earned retirement.

Dr. Omar's leadership at the NALRC, which she directed from 2022 until her retirement, was rooted in a lifelong commitment to advancing the teaching, learning, and visibility of African languages in the United States and beyond. She provided dedicated leadership, ensuring that the center remained a national hub for resource development and professional training for instructors of African languages.

With a PhD in Linguistics from Indiana University in 1992, Dr. Omar specialized in pragmatics, sociolinguistics, and second language acquisition, and her work has profoundly influenced the pedagogy of African languages. Her textbook, *Tuwasiliane kwa Kiswahili* (2007), remains a cornerstone for advanced Swahili learners, blending linguistic rigor with cultural authenticity.

For over two decades, Dr. Omar mentored language instructors, led professional development workshops, and championed best practices in language pedagogy. She was instrumental in the success of multiple federal grants, including the Title VI-funded Undergraduate African Language Flagship Program and STARTALK initiatives, which introduced Swahili to hundreds of American high school students.



# *A Lifelong Champion of African Languages*

**Alwiya  
Saleh  
Omar**



Dr. Omar's contributions extended far beyond Indiana University through her leadership in national organizations. She served as President of the African Language Teachers' Association (ALTA) and President of the National Council of Organizations of Less Commonly Taught Languages (NCOLCTL), and she contributed to national standards in language assessment.

Among her many honors, Dr. Omar received the African Studies Association Outstanding Service Award (2024), the Indiana University Trustees Teaching Award (2024), and the NCOLCTL Walton Award for Distinguished Lifetime Service (2018).

Beyond her professional achievements, Dr. Omar is remembered for her warmth, mentorship, and unwavering advocacy for African languages.

As she steps into retirement, we celebrate Dr. Alwiya S. Omar not only for what she has accomplished, but for the dynamic future she has helped create for African languages in global education. Her legacy lives on in every student who greets in Kiswahili, every teacher she trained, and every program she supported.

We extend our deepest thanks and best wishes to Dr. Omar. May her retirement be as enriching and joyful as the many lives she has touched.

# African Language Program Highlight

## *University of Wisconsin-Madison*



UNIVERSITY of WISCONSIN-MADISON



### **African Cultural Studies**

Researching and teaching the languages and expressive cultures of Africa and Africans around the world since 1964

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The University of Wisconsin-Madison's African language program is housed in the Department of African Cultural Studies, one of the oldest and most respected centers for African language and cultural instruction in the United States. The program offers robust classroom-based instruction in languages such as Arabic, Swahili, Wolof, Yoruba, Hausa, and Zulu, and provides opportunities for self-directed study in additional languages, including Amharic, Bassa, Kinyarwanda, Luganda, Sierra Leonean Krio, and Zulu.

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UW-Madison combines linguistic competence with cultural literacy and interdisciplinary learning. Students engage in projects, community exchange, and coursework linking language to literature, history, politics, and the arts. Small classes, culturally grounded pedagogy, and individualized support help learners build proficiency and intercultural understanding, making the African language program a dynamic environment for meaningful engagement.

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### **Key Faculty and Contact**



**Program Website:** <https://african.wisc.edu/languages/>

**Program contact and advising:**

Adeola Agoke, Ph.D. | [adeola.agoke@wisc.edu](mailto:adeola.agoke@wisc.edu)



# LEARN A LANGUAGE



# INDIANA UNIVERSITY

## SUMMER 2026 LANGUAGE WORKSHOP

### LEARN IN PERSON

ARABIC	CHINESE	RUSSIAN
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### LEARN ONLINE

AZERBAIJANI	BCS	CZECH	DUTCH
ESTONIAN	FINNISH	HUNGARIAN	JAPANESE
KOREAN	KURDISH	KYRGYZ	LATVIAN
LITHUANIAN	MONGOLIAN	NORWEGIAN	PASHTO
PERSIAN	POLISH	SWAHILI	TURKISH
ROMANIAN	UKRAINIAN	UZBEK	VIETNAMESE

### LEARN OVERSEAS

AZERBAIJANI (BAKU)	BCS (CETINJE)	CZECH (PRAGUE)
HUNGARIAN (BUDAPEST)	KYRGYZ (BISHKEK)	POLISH (KRAKOW)

#### HOWEVER YOU LEARN...

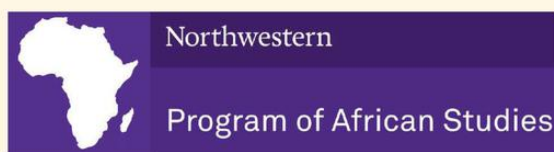
- YOU GET 1 YEAR OF LANGUAGE IN 2 MONTHS
- YOU PAY IN-STATE TUITION
- YOU CAN APPLY FOR FUNDING

LANGUAGEWORKSHOP.IU.EDU

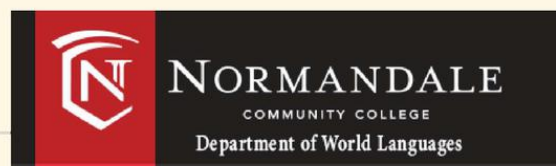
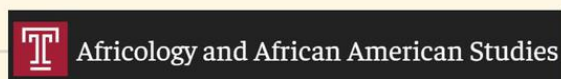


# African Language Programs in the US

Add your program.



# African Language Programs in the US



Add your program.





# Summer Institute Participants' Reflections

## **Alphonsina Silayo Ambrosi** *Mzumbe University*

Participating in the NALRC Summer Institute 2025 has felt like a rebirth in my journey as a teacher of African languages. I feel profoundly renewed, both in spirit and in practice. My passion for teaching has been reignited, and I now approach my profession with a deep sense of peace and purpose. If it were possible to envy oneself, I would envy the version of me who experienced this transformative training. It has completely reshaped my outlook on language instruction and academic life.

I believe that those who have not had the opportunity to participate in this training have missed out on a wealth of invaluable tools and insights, resources that can elevate their teaching to a level where language learning becomes a true joy. This experience reminded me of the book “Someni kwa Furaha” – Learn Joyfully. Today, I understand how meaningful that phrase is, particularly in the context of teaching Kiswahili. I now see it as my responsibility to help my students experience joy in learning.

The institute introduced me to a range of practical strategies for language teaching: communication modes every teacher should master, ways to integrate the Backward Curriculum Design (BCD) into lesson planning, writing performance objectives, conducting assessments, and incorporating technological tools into language instruction. The guidance from instructors like Dr. Esther Lisanza and Dr. Iman Alramadan gave me a new perspective and more importantly, the confidence to transform my teaching approach, especially in the context of African languages.

As a Kiswahili instructor, I have already begun implementing the ideas and techniques I gained from the 2025 Summer Institute in my classroom. Previously, I had read that using the target language in teaching African languages is more effective than relying heavily on a shared language. However, I often encountered resistance when trying to share or defend this approach. I lacked the confidence and practical grounding to advocate for it professionally. This institute changed all of that.

Now, I feel ready to advocate for using 90% of the target language in instruction. I am also confident enough to train my fellow instructors and engage skeptics with evidence-based reasoning. As Dr. Lisanza reminded us, “Do not translate content to your students; let your learners be slightly uncomfortable.” This statement alone has become a guiding principle in my classroom. Thanks to Dr. Kazeem, Dr. Lisanza, Dr. Alramadan and everyone who made this possible.

I am incredibly proud to count myself among the African language instructors who benefited from the NALRC Summer Institute 2025. Connecting with passionate teachers worldwide has broadened my worldview and inspired me in countless ways. I walk away from this experience as a newly reborn educator, renewed and re-energized and ready to share the beauty and power of African languages with the world.

## **Benjamin Akpovona Overare** *Delta State University, Abraka*

In my academic journey as a linguist, I consider the NALRC workshop on African language pedagogy as one of the most remarkable academic exercises that I have gone through. I count it a great privilege to participate in the 2025 African languages pedagogy workshop. For me, this training provided valuable insights into effective teaching methods and strategies for African languages. The workshop was a rich and enlightening experience that left a lasting impact on my approach to language instruction.

The workshop highlighted several key takeaways that I believe will significantly impact my practice as a language educator. These include:

**Cultural relevance:** Through the workshop, I learnt that incorporating cultural context and relevance into language instruction can be crucial for promoting language learning and cultural appreciation.

**Language preservation:** African language pedagogy workshop 2025, among other things, also promotes the preservation of African languages vis-à-vis maintaining cultural heritage and identity.

**Innovative methods:** Through the workshop, I was able to explore innovative teaching methods, such as technology integration and interactive activities, as a tool for enhancing language learning and engagement.

The workshop emphasized the importance of contextualized instruction. Tailoring instruction to the specific needs and contexts of African language learners can improve language acquisition and cultural understanding.

The workshop also elucidated collaborative approaches. Here, it encourages collaboration among teachers, learners, and community members. This can largely foster a sense of community and promote language learning. During this workshop, culturally responsive teaching practices were encouraged, which consequently promote language learning and cultural appreciation.

Overall, the workshop highlighted the need for Ongoing professional development. This is where NALRC comes in.

## Summer Institute Participants' Reflections

Providing ongoing support and professional development for African language teachers is established to be helpful, as it ensures that educators are equipped with the latest teaching methods and strategies.

On a final note, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Dr. Kazeem and the committed facilitators for their tireless efforts in organizing and delivering this workshop. The experience was enriching, and I am confident that the knowledge and skills that I gained will have a lasting impact on my practice as a language educator.

### **Comfort Durojaiye**

*Indiana University-Bloomington*

Reflecting on the 2025 Summer Institute, I recall not only the content but also the sensation that accompanied the workshop, exemplifying the depth of the role I now occupy as a teacher of African languages in the contemporary setting. The May workshop came at a time when I already had a packed schedule of teaching and other commitments. I recall the first few sessions, I was trying to make sense of the multifaceted, multi-layered content and topics while grappling with the schedule and the breadth of expertise offered by the facilitators. However, with the passage of a few days, I began to make sense of the content and actively engaged rather than passively absorbing it.

The unlearning and relearning process, coupled with some of the most engaging and creative teachers, began to spark an excitement. Despite the constraints, I was allowed to reflect on years of retraining and rethinking African language teaching, from Nigeria to the US and beyond. The Summer Institute did not seem strange, but rather, a seamless part of a long and enduring process of becoming.

I had been introduced to proficiency-based teaching, curriculum design, and classroom strategies long before this. This experience, however, differed in that it prioritized the African language teacher not only as a technician of drills, but also as a culture bearer, a knowledge bearer, and a community builder. During one of the workshop sessions, we examined the culture in the language classroom, as well as various types of performance-based assessments. Each of these sessions sparked more profound reflections within myself, pulling me in the direction of viewing my work not only as a Yorùbá teacher but as a link across generations and continents. Even the work I did in the middle of the night, which I did out of fatigue, felt like more than just collaborative exercises; it showed me how I viewed myself.

African languages are frequently taught in remote areas, often with insufficient resources, nonexistent theories, and a complete lack of appreciation, which is particularly evident in the case of the work. Regardless of the nature of the situation, the work being done is of utmost importance. This community, which I encountered during the summer, motivated me to pursue this endeavor, not just to receive the tools to work with it, but also to be part of this community. In this case, as the receiver, I productively used the summer with the other teachers around me.

I am appreciative of the rigor that challenged me. I appreciate the facilitators who generously shared from their wellsprings of experience. I appreciate the opportunity to reflect upon the past and take stock of my experiences and my future.

As a Yoruba language instructor, this training is more than a mere checkbox. It is a very personal milestone. It contributes to the sequence of professional development activities I have pursued in African language pedagogy – each one enhancing my skills, calibrating my commitment towards our languages, and reassuring me that they demand not only our teaching but our diligent and effective teaching. And for that, I owe a debt of gratitude.

### **Iyabode Deborah Akande, PhD**

*Obafemi Awolowo University*

The workshop is the most stimulating, educative and impactful workshop I have ever attended. The two-week training, which was full of activities and mind-blowing ideas related to language teaching, has really widened my horizon on current trends in language teaching methodology. I realized during the workshop that many of the things we do take for granted, such as mastering the names of all the students in our class matters a lot as they can foster a healthy relationship between the teacher and their students. The workshop has groomed me and other participants, I believe, on how to be an effective teacher who can think out of the box, make use of innovative ideas by serving as a facilitator to their students.

The workshop broadened my knowledge on how to use 90% of the target language in a language class to achieve effective learning. I learned that the key to a successful classroom is that a teacher must be a facilitator of knowledge, mostly through the use of multimodal teaching tools, which will help students to process and understand the language of instruction while considering the strengths and weaknesses of the learners.

## Summer Institute Participants' Reflections

Also, the workshop gave me the opportunity to learn how 'Backward Curriculum Design' could be used in facilitating effective teaching and learning of the Yoruba language. Honestly speaking, it was during this workshop that I learnt about different degrees of language proficiency (novice low, mid, and high; intermediate low, mid, and high; advanced low, mid, and high, and all the three stages of superior) and their guidelines. I believe this will go a long way in transforming my language teaching pedagogy. In a nutshell, the workshop gave me the opportunity to learn new things that would enhance my teaching ability as a language instructor.

Finally, I would like to appreciate the entire NALRC community for giving me the opportunity to participate in the 2025 NALRC workshop. It is a great privilege that I will never take for granted. I wish to show my gratitude to Prof. Alwiya Omar and Dr. Kazeem K. Sanuth for their great efforts during the workshop. My appreciation also goes to our knowledgeable and erudite facilitators, Dr. Iman Alramadan and Dr. Esther Lisanaza, for their brilliant and impactful trainings. I also appreciate the NALRC 2025 fellows; it was nice interacting with all of you.

**Adebisi Elizabeth Banjo, PhD**  
*University of Lagos*

The 2025 African Languages Pedagogy Workshop at Indiana University was a truly trans-formative experience. It fundamentally reshaped my approach to language instruction, moving beyond vocabulary to embrace the target language as a vital bridge to cultural understanding, with comparative exploration as our guide.

The dedication of our instructors, Mwalimu Sanuth, Mwalimu Iran, and Mwalimu Esther, particularly in micro teaching Arabic and Swahili, was exceptional. Their selfless strategies and unwavering patience have profoundly impacted my pedagogy, despite my years of experience. The collaborative spirit among participants fostered a rich environment for sharing and growth.

Armed with this newly acquired pedagogical toolkit, I am eager to implement these insights under the auspices of the National African Language Resource Center (NALRC) and Indiana University. My sincere gratitude extends to the organizers and facilitators; their dedication to advancing African language education across the continent is truly inspiring and deeply appreciated.

Thank you, NALRC. Thank you, Indiana University. A dupe púpọ.

**Oluwatosin Adebomeyin**  
*University of Lagos*

I approached the 2025 NALRC Summer Institute with mixed feelings — hopeful for growth, yet uncertain about the extent of impact it would have. The anticipation kept me awake at night, imagining what the program might entail. However, from the moment it began, it felt as though scales had fallen from my eyes. My perspective on teaching and classroom management underwent a profound transformation, one that centered the learner in every aspect of instruction.

Although I participated online, the experience was nothing short of inspirational and unforgettable. The richness of the program far exceeded my expectations. It was a journey of learning, unlearning, and relearning. While I had previously heard about Backward Curriculum Design (BCD), the Institute introduced it with a level of clarity and expertise that made me reflect deeply on my teaching practice. I realized how I had previously struggled to teach effectively, and for the first time in a long while, I felt renewed hope — exceptional hope.

One of the most valuable lessons I took away from the Institute was the importance of a student-centered approach. It became clear that teaching is not about the teacher — it is about the learner. Before now, I had never imagined the possibility of conducting 90% of instruction in the target language. I thought it was unrealistic — until I saw it taught, practiced, and proven. This demonstration was powerful and enlightening.

Another key takeaway was the structured, participatory teaching model — “I do,” “We do,” “You do.” This method emphasizes active engagement, clear objectives, and progressive responsibility in the learning process. It's a simple yet profoundly effective framework that I look forward to implementing in my own classroom.

The instructors deserve special mention. They were exceptional — knowledgeable, patient, and passionate. Their ability to teach with clarity and warmth, always wearing a smile, made each session engaging and impactful. They inspired me daily, and I consistently looked forward to each new lesson.

The NALRC Summer Institute is an essential training for all language educators and aspiring teachers. It equips participants with practical tools, innovative strategies, and a renewed sense of purpose. I highly recommend it to anyone serious about effective language instruction.



# Summer Institute Participants' Reflections

## **Jones Loretta Oma**

*College of Education, Warri*

It is beautiful to be addressed as an NARLC fellow. To express my reflection on the just-concluded NARLC Summer Institute 2025, permit me to put it as Oma L. Jones before the workshop, and a more refined OMA LORETTA JONES after the seminar, the difference is reflecting in my profession now.

The workshop made me realize that the effectiveness of a skill or method of teaching and learning is not just the method; it is how efficiently the method is applied. You must obey and follow all intricacies to achieve the best result. A lot of language instructors may have heard about Backward Curriculum Design or may be practicing the method in their field, yet not getting the ultimate result.

The fact that instructors must use the target language 90% in the class seems like a mirage to me at first, but it is just the best. Now my teaching and learning strategies have improved tremendously, and my students and I now engage in different interactions — 1. Student and Instructor, 2. Student and Student, 3. Student and Content.

Of course, with the modes of communication tailored to these patterns — “I do”, “We do”, “You do”. The classroom made an addition to wind up “I do”.

My students have become more excited about the Isekiri language class, and the workshop taught me that the language must not be a problem for the learners. It was indeed ‘a learn and re-learn’ experience for me.

Thank you all for this mind-setting organization.

## **Umma Aliyu Musa, PhD**

*University of Hamburg*

My learning journey at the 2025 NALRC Summer Institute began with the opportunity to meet new colleagues who share a passion for language education. It was inspiring to see language instructors from diverse backgrounds come together with the shared goal of equipping learners with practical skills through thoughtful, engaging instruction.

Throughout the workshop, I gained a clearer understanding of the Institute's mission and the TELL (Teaching Effectiveness for Language Learning) framework, which emphasises purposeful, student-centred planning. A key takeaway for me was the guiding question: How can I be more relevant and effective in the classroom? This reminded me of the importance of preparation, reflection, and intentional teaching practices.

The use of breakout rooms allowed for dynamic small-group discussions, promoting collaboration and diverse perspectives. Among the most impactful sessions were those on Backward Design Curriculum (BDC) and performance objectives using the SMART framework. These concepts challenged me to think more critically about how I structure lessons to ensure measurable, relevant learning outcomes.

I especially appreciated the discussion on the ACTFL Five Cs — Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities. Hearing examples from other participants demonstrated how these standards can be integrated meaningfully into our classrooms, enhancing student engagement and cultural understanding.

The sessions on interpersonal and presentational communication also reignited my commitment to using the target language more fully in class. The emphasis on using visuals and authentic input reassured me that it is not only possible but effective to conduct lessons primarily in the target language.

One of the most enriching parts of the Institute was the opportunity to connect theory to practice through participant-led teaching demonstrations. Each lesson plan presentation offered a fresh perspective, sparking ideas for more creative, context-sensitive approaches. The feedback from facilitators and peers alike was constructive and affirming.

A special moment for many of us was the presence of Professor Alwiya Omar — a gentle and deeply respected scholar whose retirement we were honoured to witness and celebrate. Her legacy at Indiana University Bloomington is felt deeply by all who know her.

Equally, I would like to express heartfelt appreciation for Dr. Kazeem Sanuth, whose visit to Hamburg in 2024 helped inspire my decision to attend the Institute in Bloomington. I also extend my gratitude to Mwalimu Esther Lisanza and Mwalimu Imam Alramadan for their intensive engagement during our sessions. Their thoughtful mentorship enriched our experience, especially in demonstrating how to meet performance objectives effectively using the target language. Malam Rahman Arman's presence was greatly appreciated, as it helped make our participant activities more balanced and inclusive.

It was a joy to meet in person many of the participants with whom we started this journey online. Their voices and lesson presentations continue to echo in my memory — a testament to the meaningful connections we built and the success of the workshop as a whole.

## Summer Institute Participants' Reflections

### Waleola Odunsanmi

*Alamoja Yoruba*

I want to start by expressing my heartfelt thanks to the incredible team behind the National African Language Resource Centre Summit. A special shoutout to Dr. Iman Alramadan, Dr. Esther Lisanza, and Dr. Kazeem Sanuth — your passion and commitment made this summit not just informative, but truly inspiring. Thanks to your efforts, I was able to attend this training and it turned out to be a transformative experience that reshaped how I approach teaching.

As the summit progressed, I found myself struck by a few revelations that felt both simple and profound. One of the most significant was realizing just how essential it is to understand my students' proficiency levels. It dawned on me that these levels are like rungs on a ladder, and my role is to help each student climb higher. That shift in perspective was a quiet turning point, reframing how I see my responsibilities. But it wasn't just about assessment — there was something else that caught me off guard: the power of bringing the community into the classroom. I'd never fully embraced this idea before, but during the summit, I saw its potential. Since then, I've started inviting native speakers to join my students for unrehearsed conversations. I'll admit, I was nervous at first — letting go of control isn't easy — but I was amazed at how well they handled it. Most of the time, they navigated those interactions with confidence, adapting on the fly. Watching that unfold was a game-changer for me, even if it took some effort to trust the process.

There were lighter moments, too, that left a mark. One of the highlights was connecting with Alphasina, a language teacher from a university in Tanzania. We clicked during the summit, and we've stayed in touch since. I'm genuinely excited about the possibility of swapping ideas with her in the future — it's one of those unexpected gifts the event gave me. But beyond the connections, the summit crystallized two lessons that I can't shake: knowing where my students stand in their learning journey is non-negotiable, and creating opportunities for them to engage with native speakers is a must. This feels especially urgent for teaching Yoruba online, where resources for listening practice are harder to come by.

What I learned didn't just stay theoretical — I've already started putting it into action. I've taken the time to assess my students' proficiency levels more carefully, sketching out specific objectives they need to meet to progress. And I've kept up the practice of bringing in native speakers.

The first time I tried it after the summit was unforgettable. My student, Fúnké Fan, a Chinese, learning Yorùbá, joined one of these sessions, and it was beautiful to watch. She listened to the native speaker, picking up sentence structures and meaning in real-time, grasping the gist like it was second nature. Seeing her thrive in that moment showed me just how effective this approach can be — it's not just a theory, it works.

Looking back, the summit didn't just give me new techniques; it changed how I teach at a deeper level. I feel more intentional now, more attuned to what my students need and how I can help them grow. It's a shift I'm still building on, and I'm eager to see where it takes us.

### Odirin Abonyi

*National Open University of Nigeria*

"Language teaching or facilitation is not social studies or cultural studies." This forms the nucleus of my fully virtual experience in the NALRC Summer Institute 2025. Each of the facilitators reiterated this in the course of their model microteaching and during the feedback given when we did ours. I am still marvelled at how surprisingly fast a Beginner could be made to grasp basic communicative skills needed for phatic purposes in a single lesson modelled upon the Backward Curriculum, complemented with a SMART lesson plan. Although the principle of the student-centered pedagogy is not entirely new, it has taken on an entirely new dimension with the emphasis given to the 90/10 rule. Deploying non-verbal and visual cues, humor, creativity, and innovation as lesson props made the turnaround language teaching experience, which had seemed practically impossible, become functionally doable within the shortest time possible — one week!

Now, I have become a more refined language facilitator, striving to apply the 90/10 rule in my own language class, currently composed of Intermediate High learners. I thank the instructors for their patience, guidance, and for providing the scaffolds needed for the diverse students from different or the same nationality but with different languages despite having to shuttle the training with their other demanding schedules. That it took a few days of experience to simplify what language learning is and is not has made this Summer Institute not only a novel experience but also a lifelong and career-defining one for me. Asante! Gbosa! Twale!

# Partners in Our Success

*Appreciation to the organizations and individuals whose support, contributions, and partnership made the 2024-2025 activities possible*



## **International and Foreign Language Education**

### **U.S. Department of Education**

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## **Hamilton Lugar School of Global and International Studies (HLS)**



## **African Language Teachers Association (ALTA)**



### **ALTA Language-Specific Groups**

- American Association of Teachers of Yoruba (AATY)
- Chamacha Ukuzaji waKiswahili Duniani (CHAUKIDU)
- Southern African Languages Group (SALG)
- Wolof Language Teachers Association (WOLTA)



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# Announcements

## Summer Language Programs (2026)

### African Flagship Languages Initiative (AFLI)

Domestic Intensive Summer Program: University of Florida

✉ [afli@africa.ufl.edu](mailto:afli@africa.ufl.edu) | ☎ (352) 392-2183

🔗 <https://africa.ufl.edu/academics-programs/african-languages/afli/>

### African Language Summer Institute:

#### Howard University

☎ (202) 806-5904

🔗 <https://cfas.howard.edu/ALSI>

### Language Workshop:

#### Indiana University–Bloomington

✉ [languageworkshop@indiana.edu](mailto:languageworkshop@indiana.edu)

☎ (812) 855-2889

🔗 <https://languageworkshop.indiana.edu/>

### Intensive Summer Multilanguage Seminar:

#### University of Wisconsin–Madison

✉ [multilanguage@lpo.wisc.edu](mailto:multilanguage@lpo.wisc.edu) | ☎ (608) 263-3724

🔗 <https://multilanguage.wisc.edu/>

### Summer African Language Institute:

#### University of Kansas

✉ [kasc@ku.edu](mailto:kasc@ku.edu) | ☎ (785) 864-3745

🔗 <https://kasc.ku.edu/summer-african-language-institute>

## Conferences (2026)

### 29th Annual ALTA Conference

📅 April 8–10, 2026

📍 Princeton University, NJ

🔗 <https://altaglobalweb.org/alta2026/>

### African Studies Association (ASA) 2026

📅 December 3–6, 2026

📍 New Orleans, LA

🔗 <https://africanstudies.org/annual-meetings/asa-cfp/>

### ACTFL Annual Convention

📅 November 20–22, 2026

📍 San Antonio, Texas

🔗 <https://www.actfl.org/attend/future-conventions>

### MLA Annual Convention

📅 January 8–11, 2026

📍 Toronto, Canada

🔗 <https://www.mla.org/Events/2026-MLA-Convention>

### AAAL Conference

📅 March 21–24, 2026 (in-person);

April 24, 2026 (virtual)

📍 Chicago, Illinois

🔗 <https://www.aaal.org/events>

## NALRC Professional Workshops

### NALRC Summer Institute

📅 May 18–29, 2026

📍 Indiana University–Bloomington

🔗 <https://nalrc.indiana.edu/prof-dev/index.html>

## Fulbright-Hays

### Group Projects Abroad (GPA)

#### Zulu GPA

Audrey N. Mbeje, Ph.D.

✉ [mbeje@sas.upenn.edu](mailto:mbeje@sas.upenn.edu) | ☎ (215) 898-4299

🔗 <https://africana.sas.upenn.edu/program/zulugpa-southafrica>