

Editorial

Embracing the Dawn of the Makerere Journal of Languages, Literature and Communication

It is with great honour that we present the inaugural issue of the Makerere Journal of Languages, Literature and Communication (MJLLC), a multidisciplinary publication established within the School of Languages, Literature and Communication at Makerere University. The launch of this journal represents not merely the addition of another academic outlet, but the creation of a dynamic platform dedicated to advancing rigorous scholarship, fostering critical dialogue, and cultivating innovative perspectives across the interconnected fields of language studies, literary criticism, and communication practices. This first issue stands as a milestone in our continuing endeavour to revitalise intellectual discourse, strengthen a culture of research excellence, and facilitate the dissemination of scholarly contributions that enrich both academic and professional communities. By doing so, MJLLC aspires to serve as a forum for informed, critical, and constructive engagement among scholars and practitioners committed to exploring the evolving terrain of language, literature, and communication.

The MJLLC is a peer-reviewed publication dedicated to the dissemination of original, high-quality scholarship in the fields of languages, literature, and communication. It provides a forum for academics within the Eastern Africa region and beyond to publish research that engages diverse perspectives across the broad domains of language, literary, and communication studies. The journal is particularly committed to fostering interdisciplinary inquiry, encouraging contributions that illuminate the dynamic intersections among these disciplines. By promoting such integrative scholarship, MJLLC seeks to inspire scholars, students, and practitioners alike to venture into new intellectual frontiers, to challenge established paradigms, and to contribute to the ongoing evolution of critical thought in these fields.

Accordingly, the MJLLC will prioritise research that critically engages both traditional and contemporary theories, while advancing innovative approaches to language, literary, and communication studies, particularly as they unfold within the African context. The journal values scholarship grounded in Afrocentric and post-colonial paradigms, whether these serve to affirm or interrogate prevailing perspectives. MJLLC will also provide a platform for contributions on a wide range of topics, including but not limited to: language and new media; documentation and description of indigenous and endangered languages; corpus and computational linguistics; digital communication and multilingualism; the aesthetic dimensions of literature across genres such as poetry, prose, and drama; emerging communication practices within development contexts; the social impact of communication; and the transformative role of new media technologies vis-à-vis traditional communicative forms. Equally central will be the encouragement of interdisciplinary approaches that open new intellectual trajectories and address pressing real-world challenges through scholarly inquiry.

In its pursuit of excellence, MJLLC is firmly committed to inclusivity and diversity, seeking to advance research that is both meaningful and applicable to contemporary academic and societal contexts. The Journal aspires to highlight emerging trends and engage critically with ongoing debates, fostering a rigorous and dynamic intellectual environment. By welcoming contributions from both established and emerging scholars across diverse linguistic traditions, cultural contexts, and academic orientations, MJLLC aims to cultivate a pluralistic space that enriches scholarly discourse and broadens the horizons of inquiry in language, literature, and communication studies.

This inaugural issue presents a carefully curated selection of articles that reflect research excellence, particularly showcasing the contributions of vibrant early-career scholars from Uganda, Tanzania, and Nigeria. Four of the articles engage with literary studies: one interrogates the representation of women's power in a Ugandan novel; another examines the interplay of rural and urban sensibilities in Ugandan poetry anthologies; a third explores the revitalisation of a Ugandan artist through an analysis of his narrative songs; while the fourth offers a critical reading of the poetry of a Nigerian poet. The remaining five articles address themes in language and linguistics. These include investigations into the dynamics of multilingualism within specific speech communities; the role of Luganda second-language users' attitudes in processes of identity construction; the use of negation as a linguistic device in constructing gender identity within Runyankore-Rukiga marriage songs; delegitimation strategies employed by John Pombe Magufuli in denying the existence of COVID-19 in Tanzania; and an analysis of the verbal inflectional morphology of the emerging Ugandan variety of Swahili.

This issue also pioneers the inclusion of two book reviews and a film review, thereby broadening the scope of scholarly engagement. The first review examines *Beyond Monuments: The Politics and Poetics of Memory in Post-war Northern Uganda* (NISCA [Pty] Ltd: African Humanities Association, 2022), while the second considers *The Promise of Linguistics and Language Studies in Africa* (Fountain Publishers, Kampala, 2024). In addition, the issue features a critical review of *Tuko Pamoja*, Dr Cindy Magara's monumental 13-episode documentary series released in 2024. Collectively, these contributions not only advance understanding within their respective domains but also stimulate new questions, debates, and collaborative possibilities for future scholarship.

As we inaugurate this new journal, we remain acutely mindful of the responsibility to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity and scholarly excellence. Our editorial team is committed to maintaining a rigorous peer-review process that ensures both credibility and trustworthiness in every publication. We extend our profound gratitude to the authors, book reviewers, and peer reviewers whose contributions have been indispensable to the realisation of this maiden issue. Their dedication and intellectual engagement have laid a firm foundation for this new academic venture. At the same time, we warmly invite feedback from our readership, particularly with regard to this inaugural issue, as such insights will be invaluable in refining the Journal's quality and enhancing its long-term scholarly impact.

We acknowledge the financial support from the Mellon Foundation of New

York that enabled production costs of this volume. We are equally grateful to the Centre of Languages and Communication Services in the School of Languages Literature and Communication for providing additional costs of this book.

On a solemn note, we mourn the passing of Dr Brian Semujju, the founding editor whose vision, dedication, and tireless efforts laid the foundation for this Journal. Appointed in early 2021 by the Dean of the School of Languages, Literature and Communication, Dr Semujju spearheaded the establishment of the Journal, assembling the editorial team and shaping its scholarly direction with a steadfast commitment to quality. Although he did not live to witness the publication of this inaugural issue, his legacy endures, and we remain committed to honouring his devotion to academic excellence. This edition also carries an extended obituary in recognition of his remarkable contributions as an astute academic and champion of rigorous scholarship.

Welcome to this journey of discovery. Together, we aspire to grow MJLLC into a distinguished platform in the scholarly world.

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