
Introduction

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Proceedings of Conference on
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Introduction

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The present volume presents a collection of short papers of contributions to LDLT3, the third conference on Language Documentation and Linguistic Theory, held at SOAS from 19 to 20 November 2011. The inaugural LDLT conference was held in 2007 to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the Department of Linguistics at SOAS and the 5th anniversary of the Hans Rausing Endangered Languages Project, hosted by the Department since 2002. For LDLT2, a thematic focus on African languages and linguistics was adopted, and, following this tradition, the present conference has a special focus on Asia.

The conference title reflects the long-standing research traditions of the Linguistics Department at SOAS. From its inception in 1932 under the headship of J.R. Firth, the Department's research has been dedicated to developing theoretical models for the understanding of language structure and function, with innovative analyses being developed in particular in phonology and syntax. At the same time, linguistics at SOAS has always been deeply concerned with the description and analysis of non-European languages, and ways to develop theoretical insights about language in general based on the empirical findings from less well-described languages. During the last decades, particular emphasis has been placed on research in language documentation and the theoretically informed study of endangered languages. The work of the Hans Rausing Endangered Languages Project, comprising the Endangered Languages Academic Programme (ELAP), the Endangered Languages Archive (ELAR), and the Endangered Languages Documentation Programme (ELDP) is at the centre of this, conducting research and documentation projects throughout the world and providing academic and methodological training for researchers and communities.

The papers in the present volume reflect these research traditions. They address theoretical questions in areas such as phonetics, phonology, syntax, semantics, discourse and comparative and historical linguistics, as well as theoretical and methodological aspects of fieldwork and language documentation. There is a particular focus on the languages of Asia, but other areas of the world are presented as well, and many papers present data from languages for which very little material exists. The papers were supplied by conference speakers before the conference, and this volume is included in the conference materials distributed to attendees. The papers have been lightly edited for expression and consistency of style and format.

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26th October 2011

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