

# University of Benin Hosts 6th Biennial International Conference on Franco-Nigerian Literature, Language and Culture

*International scholars gathered at the University of Benin's 6th Biennial Conference, featuring GARI-sponsored awards for academic excellence.*

AUSTIN, TEXAS, TX, UNITED STATES, May 30, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Department of Foreign Languages, Faculty of Arts, University of Benin successfully hosted the 6th Biennial International Conference of the Department of Foreign Languages under the theme "Franco-Nigerian Literature, Language and Culture." The international scholarly gathering brought together academics, researchers, language scholars, literary experts, emerging researchers, and distinguished guests from institutions across Nigeria and abroad.

The conference was held from Sunday, 17th May to Wednesday, 20th May 2026 at the Banquet Hall and the Department of Foreign Languages, University of Benin, Ugbowo Campus, Benin City, Nigeria. The opening ceremony commenced on Monday, 18th May 2026 at 10:00 a.m. West Central Africa Time. The event focused on intellectual engagement in language studies, literature, translation, cultural scholarship, decolonial linguistic inquiry, and mentorship of emerging academics. The conference flyer and official materials emphasized the event's commitment to promoting viable research, scholarly



A Cross-Section of Scholars, Researchers, and Conference Participants at the Conference



Dr. Martha Nguwasen CHIA winner of the Best Paper Presenter Award

mentorship, and international academic collaboration.

The conference was organized under the distinguished chairmanship of Prof. Edoba Bright Omoregie, SAN, Chief Host and Vice Chancellor of the University of Benin. The conference host was Prof. Osarhieme Benson Osadolor, Dean, Faculty of Arts, University of Benin, while the consultant to the conference was Emeritus Prof. R. O. Elaho, JP, Department of Foreign Languages, University of Benin.

The conference convener/chairman was Prof. Ngozi O. Iloh, while the Head of Department of Foreign Languages was Dr. Osarenmwinda Emokpae-Ogbebor. The conference secretary

was Dr. Adenike P. Odiboh. The conference further featured prominent invited guests and scholars including Prof. Austin Moye, Professor of French Metropolitan Literature and Francophone Studies; Mr. Francis Ogbemudia, Assistant Comptroller of Customs; Professor Cyril Mokwenye (Retired), former Dean of the Faculty of Arts, University of Benin; and Prof. Kester Echenim (Retired), the first President of the University French Teachers Association of Nigeria. Their presence on the high table further underscored the academic prestige, institutional significance, and intergenerational scholarly legacy represented at the conference.

The keynote address was delivered by Professor Ramonu Sanusi, Professor of French Studies, African and Caribbean Literatures and Cultures, whose participation added significant scholarly prestige to the conference. The conference also featured an important international scholarly presentation by Dr. Nicholas Faraclas of University of Puerto Rico in collaboration with Prof. Desmond Odugu of Lake Forest College. Their presentation, titled:

“The Spread of French in Nigeria versus the Spread of Naija: Decolonizing How We Think About Language Spread in Particular and About ‘Language Development’ in General”

examined decolonial perspectives on language spread, linguistic vitality, and Nigerian Pidgin (“Naija”), while challenging traditional colonial assumptions in applied linguistics and language documentation. The presentation represented a multinational collaborative effort involving scholars affiliated with the University of Puerto Rico, Lake Forest College, Michigan State University, Karoli Gaspar University, and the University at Buffalo.



Ruth D. ADEOYE winner of the Emerging Scholar Award

One of the major highlights of the conference was the international sponsorship and academic support provided by the Global Association for Research and Innovation (GARI). Through its Founder/President, Dr. Jimoh Braimoh, GARI served as an official Financial Sponsor of the conference and supported the advancement of scholarly excellence through conference sponsorship and award funding. A formal Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) executed between GARI and the Department of Foreign Languages confirmed GARI's role as a Financial and Supporting Sponsor of the conference. The sponsorship included:

- USD \$1,000 as general conference sponsorship
- ₦100,000 designated for the Best Paper Award
- ₦100,000 designated for the Emerging Scholar Award

The MoU further specified that the award funds would be used exclusively for the designated academic awards and that the Host Institution would recognize GARI as a Financial Sponsor through conference materials, verbal acknowledgments, and award presentations. The agreement also established that GARI's sponsorship was made in furtherance of its educational and research mission.

In a separate official Letter of Acknowledgment/Appreciation issued by the Department of Foreign Languages, the Local Organizing Committee formally expressed gratitude to GARI for its "generous donations in support of the Conference" and specifically acknowledged the sponsorship of awards for the Best Paper Presenter and the Best Young Emerging Scholar. The department noted that the initiative would inspire participants to present quality research and contribute meaningfully to academic discourse.

The conference's competitive award segment represented one of the most prestigious aspects of the event, aimed at encouraging high-quality academic research and mentoring younger scholars.

The recipient of the Best Paper Presenter Award was:

Dr. Martha Nguwasen CHIA  
Department of Foreign Languages  
University of Uyo

Dr. Chia received the ₦100,000 Best Paper Award in recognition of the outstanding quality, originality, and scholarly contribution of her conference presentation. The award was formally presented by Emeritus Professor R. O. Elaho, JP, whose distinguished academic reputation added considerable prestige to the award presentation ceremony.

The recipient of the Emerging Scholar Award was:

Ruth D. ADEOYE  
Department of French Studies  
Tai Solarin Federal University of Education

Ruth D. Adeoye received the ₦100,000 Emerging Scholar Award in recognition of exceptional promise, innovation, and contribution to emerging scholarship in French and language studies. The award was presented by keynote speaker Professor Ramonu Sanusi, further underscoring the academic significance of the recognition.

The conference also served as a platform for alumni engagement and institutional support. Members of the 1986 Alumni Set, represented by Reverend Dr. Mrs. Gina Obadan and Ogboru Justina, donated a projector and a 72-inch projection screen to the Department of Foreign Languages as part of preparations for their forthcoming 40th anniversary celebration. The alumni representatives further pledged to return in July for a larger reunion celebration honoring both the department and lecturers who had contributed to their academic formation.

Conference organizers emphasized that the event was designed not only as an academic forum, but also as a mentorship and career-development platform for younger scholars. Official conference communications highlighted that established scholars from the host institution and other universities would mentor emerging academics while fostering intellectual discussions, professional networking, and interdisciplinary collaboration.

The successful hosting of the 6th Biennial International Conference further strengthened the international academic profile of the Department of Foreign Languages, University of Benin, while reinforcing the growing role of strategic international partnerships and scholarly sponsorships in advancing research, language studies, intercultural dialogue, and emerging academic talent in Nigeria and beyond.

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