Objective

To provide foreign language professionals with a tool to familiarize themselves with major African languages, language families, available resources, and the dynamics of multilingualism on the African continent, and to aid them in language identification.

Definition

PASAGLOSSA—A U.S. government (USG) mapping program that links language-specific data to geographic locations of the world.

Relevance

To support USG capacity to meet requirements in African languages and cultures, CASL is enhancing PASAGLOSSA by populating the program with a rich variety of information for the languages of this region gathered via both fieldwork and linguistic research. The enhanced Africa portion of PASAGLOSSA will assist foreign language professionals with:

- **Language identification**—The development of the world’s largest database of sound inventories for African languages—with current coverage for at least 30 percent of the roughly 2,100 languages indigenous to Africa—supports aural language identification with a three-tier system of sound classification to accommodate varying levels of linguistic training. Foreign language professionals can be trained to recognize a particular African language based on the presence or absence of distinctive sounds in a speech sample.

  Language identification is further supported by comparison of a target speech sample with comparative lists of common words and phrases along with natural speech recordings (narratives, conversations) for major African languages.

- **Language familiarization and resource access**—The African linguistic landscape is presented in a manageable format by highlighting major and critical languages and providing convenient access to descriptive information and other resources relating to these languages. These include summary descriptions of languages, electronically available and published resources, and names of experts on particular languages.

For More Information

For more information about this project, contact us:

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