

**CITATION ON PROFESSOR AYO BAMGBOSE FOR A NATIONAL  
MERIT AWARD FOR 1990**

**MR. PRESIDENT,**

**COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE NIGERIAN ARMED FORCES:**

Standing before you, Sir is a most distinguished Nigerian:

Professor Ayo Bamgbose, a Bachelor of Arts with honours of the University Of London and a holder of a Diploma and a Doctor of Philosophy in General Linguistics of the University of Edinburgh. While many of his contemporaries as Students trod the favorite tracks of Medicine and Law; he chose to study the little Known discipline of Linguistics. In this he has proved himself to be a scholar of Exceptional dimensions. He is indeed, the doyen of Nigerian, many African Linguistics; a committed teacher, a source of inspiration to all linguists in the Country to-day and the acknowledge mentor of the entire generation of linguists Coming after him.

Professor Ayo Bamgbose shot to the academic limelight with his treatise On a Study of Structures and Classes in the Grammar of Modem Yoruba which earned him the Ph.D. Degree of the University of Edinburgh in 1963.

Subsequently published as 'A Grammar of Yoruba in 1966 it instantly became a landmark not only in the scientific study of the grammar of Yoruba, but also in the development of the particular linguistic theory then being propagated by Michael Holliday in Britain. Thus propelled into the International arena of language disputations, Professor Ayo Bamgbose quickly rose to become the great authority on Yoruba grammar. He extended his interests to the literature of the language whilst at the same time keeping abreast with the rapid developments in linguistic theory. His work covers phonology, orthography, syntax of modem Yoruba. He has given to modem linguistics a number of original concepts such as "the assimilated low tone," "verb - nominal collocation," "lexical matching," "the modifying serial construction," all now part of the vocabulary of linguistic. It is undoubted true to say that since 1963 no one has published any thing of significance on Yoruba grammar without reference to and acknowledgement of Professor Ayo Bamgbose's seminal works.

Professor Ayo Bamgbose's interests have broadened further to embrace Socio-linguistics. His work on Yoruba metalanguage broke new grounds in the use of a major African language for language teaching. He has written extensively on the Bantu type language, Mbe, spoken in the Cross River State as an aid to the study of the expansion of Bantu languages outside Central Africa. He has written with great authority and characteristic lucidity on the twin topical issues of the English Language in Nigeria and a Language Policy for Nigeria. He bestrides the discipline of Linguistics and its allied subjects in Nigeria.

If Professor Ayo Bamgbose's stature at home is unassailable, his reputation abroad is equally a source of pride and encouragement to his fellow linguists. He has won outstanding recognition in Europe and America, where his name has virtually become synonymous with African Linguistics. Only recently has he returned from a most successful year as a Fellow and a life member of the prestigious Clare Hall, in the University of Cambridge.

Professor Ayo Bamgbose's contribution to national development has been tremendous, and is all the more impressive for being made quietly and unobtrusively; for he has combined immense scholarship with rare humility.

He has produced a whole generation of linguists for Nigeria and has been active in applying his great learning to the practical problems of the Country in such key areas as the National Language Centre and the former Nigerian Educational Research Council. He has also made notable contributions to the work of Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB)

Mr. President, Sir,

I therefore have the honour to present to you an eminent and illustrious Nigerian in the field of learning; a pioneer and teacher of teachers in the discipline of Linguistics; a scholar, recognized at home and acclaimed abroad and yet humble despite his profound erudition, for presentation of the accolade of the 1.990 National Merit Award:  
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