



Kofi Annan Institute for Conflict Transformation
University of Liberia

Public Lecture

**Kolokwa:
Where did it come from
and where is it headed?**

Speaker:

Dr. John Singler

Professor Emeritus, New York University

The English of modern Liberia, in particular Kolokwa, reflects Liberia's history. The settlers brought English with them when they came from the United States, but many people along the coast were already speaking a pidginized variety when they arrived. Modern Kolokwa grammar reflects the language of both of its "parents," that is, African American English and West African Pidgin English. The rise in this century of the term "Kolokwa" captures the variety's uniqueness and its power as a marker of Liberian identity.

Dr. John Singler is Professor Emeritus of linguistics and former department chair at New York University. While teaching at St. Joseph's School in Greenville, Sinoe County, in 1969-1970 and the Episcopal High School in Robertsport, Grand Cape Mount County, in 1971-1975, he grew interested in the English of Liberia. He has written *An Introduction to Liberian English*, has co-edited *The Handbook of Pidgin and Creole Studies*, and co-edited a new edition of *Guanya Pau: The story of an African princess*, by Joseph Jeffrey Walters. He has published more than forty articles on language in Liberia. He is one of the founders of the African Linguistics School.

University of Liberia
Capitol Hill Campus
GD Building, Ground Floor Hall
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