

Stanford



William R. Leben

Professor of Linguistics, Emeritus

 Curriculum Vitae available Online

 Resume available Online

Bio

BIO

I taught in the Department of Linguistics from 1972 to 2006 and still teach the occasional course. My teaching lies mostly in the areas of phonological theory, tone and intonation, English word structure, phonetics, and African languages.

I worked for a total of five years in West Africa, including two years as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Niger, two years in research and teaching in Nigeria, and a year of research and teaching in Côte d'Ivoire. My main research interests are in linguistic tone and intonation, the structure of English vocabulary, African linguistics, and the use of language in advertising and in brand names.

After many years of consulting for Lexicon Branding, Inc., I'm now chair emeritus of Lexicon's linguistics program.

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

- Emeritus Faculty, Acad Council, Linguistics

ADMINISTRATIVE APPOINTMENTS

- Chair, Department of Linguistics, (1992-1996)

HONORS AND AWARDS

- Dean's Award for Distinguished Teaching, Stanford University (1977)
- Officier de l'Ordre du Mérite Ivoirien, République de Côte d'Ivoire (2014)

PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

- Ph.D., M.I.T. , Linguistics (1973)
- M.A., Northwestern U , Linguistics (1968)
- B.A., Boston College , Modern Language (1965)

LINKS

- Download publications: <https://sites.google.com/site/willleben/info>

Research & Scholarship

CURRENT RESEARCH AND SCHOLARLY INTERESTS

Outline of current book project.

"Advertising and the Language of Persuasion" tries to add something new to past treatments of language in advertising. The book spends little time on discrediting deceptive practices, which pretty much discredit themselves. Instead, the emphasis is on treating ads as verbal and visual art, which leads us to explore the many different ways that language, image, and structure can work together together to form a careful and creative composition. Examples are drawn from dozens and dozens of ads, focusing on the very best ones, just as one might do in a book on art or music appreciation.

Along the way, the book documents ways in which ad content and design derive from marketers' knowledge of human psychology. Examining ads in this light teaches us something about ourselves as wells as helping us see ourselves as advertisers see us.

Publications

PUBLICATIONS

- **(with Brett Kessler and Keith Denning) English Vocabulary Elements: A Course in the Structure of English Words. In press.**
Leben, W. R., Kessler, B.
Oxford University Press.2023
- **Beauty of construction, richness of expression: Paul Newman and the history of Hausa.** *Brill's Journal of Afroasiatic Languages and Linguistics*
HYMAN, L. M., LEBEN, W. R.
2023; 15 (2): 433-475
- **Book Review Newman, Paul & Roxana Ma Newman. 2020. Hausa Dictionary: Hausa-English English-Hausa, Kamusun Hausa: Hausa-Ingilishi/Ingilishi-Hausa.** *Journal of African Languages and Linguistics*
LEBEN, W. R.
2021; 42 (2): 287-290
- **Tone and length in Mende.** https://www.researchgate.net/publication/319873858_Tone_and_length_in_Mende *Schuhschrift: Papers in Honor of Russell Schuh*
edited by Bowler, M., Major, T., Torrence, H.
eScholarship Publishing, U. of California..2019: 77–87
- **Introduction to the Languages of the World**
Lyovin, A. V., Kessler, B., Leben, W. R.
Oxford University Press.2017
- **The phonetics of downstep in Abron and Adioukrou.** *Revealing structure*
edited by Buckley, E., Crane, T., Good, J.
CSLI Publications.2017
- **The Nature(s) of Downstep.** https://www.researchgate.net/publication/327449656_The_Natures_of_Downstep *SLAO/1er Colloque International*
Leben, W. R.
Humboldt Kolleg.2016
- **Morphophonologie des langues kwa de Côte d'Ivoire** *Series: Grammatical Analyses of African Languages*
edited by Leben, W. R.
2006; 29
- **Autosegments** *The Blackwell companion to phonology.*
Leben, W. R.
Blackwell.2011
- **Phonological reflexes of emphasis in Kwa languages of Cote d'Ivoire** *West African Linguistics: Papers in Honor of Russell G. Schuh,*
Leben, W. R.
Studies in African Linguistics.2006