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How Knowledge of Philippine Languages Prepared Me For Bantu Languages

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1, African Overview - one continent, 52 nations, 4 genetically distinct language families, and 2,054 speech varieties. [See Table 1 for other info]

Niger-Congo	1,436 (Bantu is a subgroup within this family)
Afro-Asiatic	371
Nilo-Saharan	194
Khoisan	53

The Philippines has 85 million people with at least 800 distinct speech varieties broken into about 80 major languages.

2. Bantu Languages are characterized by noun classes (complex grammatical gender), tone, and a wealth of auxiliary verbs.

I have worked on

Sotho
Xhosa
Zulu
Rwanda-Rundi

3, Tone involves three phenomena:

pitch
amplitude
stress

INTONATION (that is, a pragmatic or discourse function)

LEXICALIZATION (that is, differences in the creation of words to suit society)

MORPHOLOGY (that is, grammatical differences in word formation)

Zorc. 1977:64-67 established five Bisayan accent patterns:

Same	accent falls on the SAME syllable as the root
Rightward	accent moves to the ULTIMATE syllable of the word
Leftward	accent moves to the PENULTIMATE of the word
Reverse	accent moves to the OPPOSITE syllable of the root
Stative ~ zero	accent ALWAYS falls on the FINAL syllable

Zorc. 2003. 24 Rwanda-Rundi tone rules established. [See Table 3]

4. Sentence argument identification or expansion on verbs

In Philippine languages:

pa- (causative prefix)
-an (locative suffix, also benefactive and reciprocal)
i- (instrumental prefix, also temporal and reason with **-ka-**)

In Bantu languages:

-ir- (benefactive presuffix) Rwanda **kór-er-a** 'work for s.o.'
-eesh- (causative presuffix) Rwanda **kór-eesh-a** 'employ, cause s.o. to work'

-an- (reciprocal presuffix) Rwanda **kór-an-a** 'work together'

Exceptionally complex DITRANSITIVE, TRITRANSITIVE, QUADRITRANSITIVE verbs.

Table 1. African Nations by Number of Languages

Country	POP in millions	Living languages
Nigeria	100.6	470
Cameroon	12.9	279
Democratic Republic of Congo (Zaire)	41.8	221
Sudan	29.1	132
Tanzania	32.9	131
Chad	06.4	127
Ethiopia	52.6	86
Côte d'Ivoire	12.9	73
Ghana	17.5	72
Burkina Faso	10.4	71
Central African Republic	03.4	68
Kenya	25.7	61
Congo	02.3	60
Benin	05.5	51
Uganda	22.0	46
Togo	04.0	43
Angola	11.5	41
Gabon	01.4	40
Zambia	10.1	39
Senegal	08.5	39
Liberia	03.0	34
Mozambique	17.9	33
Mali	10.9	32
Guinea	07.8	30
Botswana	01.5	30
Namibia	02.2	28
South Africa	39.2	27
Sierra Leone	04.7	23
Guinea-Bissau	01.1	23
Niger	08.3	21
Gambia	01.0	20
Zimbabwe	11.4	19
Algeria	29.3	17
Malawi	09.6	15
Somalia	08.5	13
Libya	05.4	12
Equatorial Guinea	00.5	12
Egypt	60.5	11
Morocco	29.1	11
Eritrea	03.7	11
Tunisia	09.0	9
Mauritania	02.3	8
Madagascar	13.9	6
Mauritius	01.1	5
Swaziland	00.9	4
Comoros	00.5	4
Djibouti	00.5	4
Cape Verde Islands	00.4	4
Rwanda	08.6	3
Burundi	06.3	3
Lesotho	02.0	3
Reunion	00.6	3

Table 2. Derived Homographs in Rundi and Rwanda

/basoma/ {both}	they do read s.t.; they are reading s.t.	affirmative indicative immediate imperfective conjoint
/baasoma/ {Rundi}	they recently read s.t.	affirmative indicative recent imperfective conjoint
/baásoma/ {Rundi}	they have read s.t.	affirmative indicative preterit imperfective conjoint
/baasoma/ {Rwanda}	they would read	affirmative indicative conditional immediate imperfective
/básoma/ {both}	they reading	affirmative participial immediate imperfective
/báasoma/ {Rundi}	they having recently read	affirmative participial recent imperfective conjoint or disjoint
/báásoma/ {Rundi}	they having read s.t.	affirmative participial preterit imperfective conjoint
/basomá/ {both}	who read; that they read	affirmative relative immediate imperfective
/baasomá/ {Rundi}	who recently read	affirmative relative recent imperfective conjoint or disjoint
/baásoma/ {Rundi}	who have read	affirmative relative preterit imperfective conjoint or disjoint
/baasomá/ {Rwanda}	if they read; who then would read	affirmative relative conditional immediate imperfective

Table 3. Summary of Rwanda-Rundi Tone Patterns

Abr	G§	Mnemonic device (memory guide)
1	2.4.14	1 st vowel after a consonant
2	2.4.15	2 nd (second) mora of the word
3	2.4.11	3 rd mora – with one object tone cannot be beyond the third mora starting with the first infix
A	2.4.16	a fter the prefix tone is on the first mora
A2	2.4.17	tone on the 2 nd mora a fter the prefix
B	2.4.6	b orrowed noun – penultimate vowel has a long vowel with high tone on the second mora
E	2.4.22	e nd syllable – high tone falls on the last syllable
E2	2.4.23	high tone on 2 nd syllable from the e nd of the word
E3	2.4.24	high tone on 3 rd syllable from the e nd of the word
F	2.4.19	a ffix, e.g., future, gets high tone
H	2.4.18	h igh tone after the prefix on the next vowel if allowed
I	2.4.22	í - – reflexives have their own tone pattern
J	2.4.8	j ump to the right – tone moves one mora to the right
L	2.4.2	l ow tone throughout; high tones are l ost
M	2.4.9	m obile morpheme – tone m oves one mora to the left
N	2.4.13	n egative or ni – high tone generally falls on the initial syllable of the word if this word
O	2.4.10	o bject tonality – tone occurs on first o bject and skips every other syllable
O2	2.4.12	2 objects postradical tone rule – high tone on the second object and no further into the word
P	2.4.4	p ostradical tone; p ostradical syllabic tonality – tone falls on the 2nd syllable of the root
P2	2.4.5	p ostradical moraic tonality (2 nd mora of the root)
R	2.4.1	r oot tonality; r adical tone
T	2.4.3	t one appears – introduced high tonality
U	2.4.20	uú - – subject relative of weak verbs has high tone on second mora of vowel prefixes
V	2.4.7	v ocative tonality – vocatives of low tone roots receive a high tone on the second mora
X	2.4.25	Two consecutive high tones do not cooccur; a high tone one mora after another is cancelled (X ed out)