

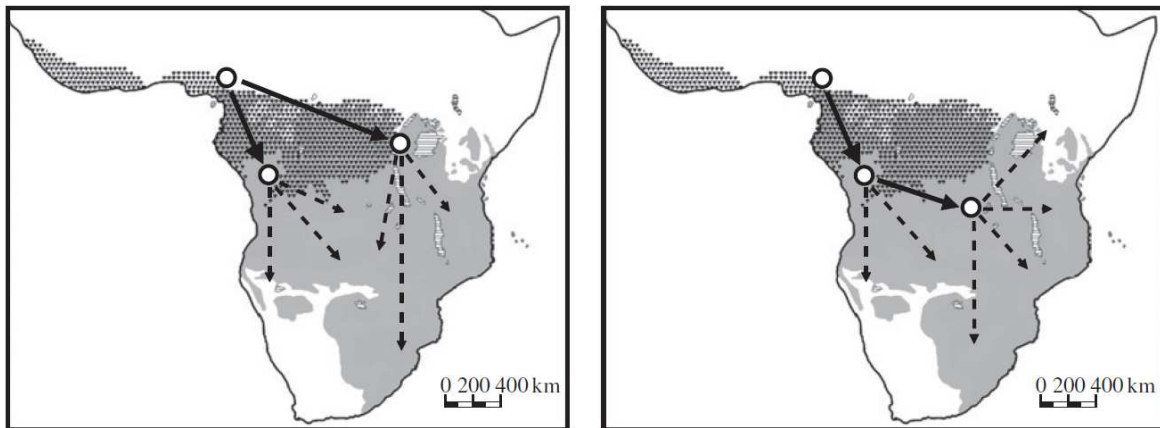
Bantu languages of Southern Africa: an overview

“Speaking (of) Khoisan”: a symposium reviewing southern African prehistory.

Hilde Gunnink - Ghent University - hilde.gunnink@ugent.be

Koen Bostoen - Ghent University - koen.bostoen@ugent.be

The Bantu expansion: from Cameroon/Nigeria to southern Africa



Source: de Filippo *et al.* (2012)

Southern Bantu

Southern Bantu (cf. Doke 1954): many shared developments, but no single Proto-Southern-Bantu ancestor can be reconstructed due to lack of spirantisation and vowel merger in Sotho subgroup.

Table 1: spirantization in Southern Bantu languages

Spirantization					No spirantization	
Proto-Bantu	Nguni	Tsonga	Inhambane (Copi)	Venda	Sotho	Makua
*tu	fu	fu	fu	fu	ru	pu
*ti	si	si	si	tshi	ri	hi

Source: Janson (1991/1992)

S.10: Shona

- Korekore, Zezuru, Manyika, Karanga, Ndaou, Kalanga
- early split from Southern Bantu (Ehret 1972; Finlayson 1987) or unrelated to Southern Bantu (Janson 1991/1992)
- similarities to Venda due to contact (Ehret 1972; Finlayson 1987)

S.20: Venda

- shared developments with Sotho (Janson 1991/1992)

S.30: Sotho

- Southern Sotho, Pedi (Northern Sotho), Tswana, Kgalagadi, Lozi
- outlier among Southern Bantu due to its seven vowel system and lack of spirantisation (Janson 1991/1992; Louw and Finlayson 1990; van der Spuy 1990)
- Southern Sotho has clicks, as does Kgalagadi (Dickens 1987)

S.40: Nguni

- Xhosa, Zulu, Swati, Ndebele, Phuthi, Ngoni
- all Nguni languages have clicks
- possibly closer to the Sotho languages than to other subgroups (van der Spuy 1990)

S.50: Tsonga

- Tswa, Tsonga (Shangaan), Rhonga
- possibly closer to Nguni than to other subgroups (Janson 1991/1992)

S.60: Copi

- Copi, Tonga
- virtually no data available

P.20: Makhua

- linked to Sotho through uncommon shared developments

*mb / *nd / *ng > /p/ /t/ /k/

*dinda ‘wait’

Makhuwa *-lita* ‘wait’

Tswana *-leta* ‘wait’ (Janson 1991/1992)

Bantu Botatwe

- East
 - Shanjo, Fwe
 - Mbalangwe, Totela, Subiya
- West
 - Soli
 - - Lundwe
 - Toka, Leya

Herero

- Dhimba/Himba, Herero
- Dhimba/Himba not mutually intelligible with Herero (Cameron and Kunkel 2002)
- possibly related to Wambo languages (Baucom 1972)

Wambo

- Northern
 - Kwanyama, Kafima, Evale
 - Mbalanhu, Dombondola, Mbandja
- Southern
 - Ndonga
 - Kwambi
 - Ngandjera, Kwaluudhi, Kolonkadhi, Eunda (Baucom 1972)

Yeyi

- Caprivi Yeyi (Namibia) and Ngamiland Yeyi (Botswana) (Gowlett 1997)
- position within Bantu unclear (Seidel 2005)
- extensive Khoisan influence

References

- Bastin, Yvonne, Andre Coupeze & Michael Mann. 1999. *Continuity and divergence in the Bantu languages: perspectives from a lexicostatistic study*.
- Baucom, Kenneth L. 1972. "The Wambo languages of South West Africa". *Journal of African Languages* 11.45-73.
- de Filippo, Cesare, Koen Bostoen, Mark Stoneking & Brigitte Pakendorf. 2012. "Bringing together linguistic and genetic evidence to test the Bantu expansion". *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Biological Sciences* 279.3526-3263.
- de Luna, Kathryn. 2010. "Classifying Botatwe: M60 languages and the settlement chronology of south central Africa". *Africana Linguistica* 16.65-96.
- Dickens, Patrick. 1987. "Qhalaxarzi consonants". *African Studies* 46.297-305.
- Doke, C.M. 1954. *The Southern Bantu Languages*. London: Oxford University Press for the International African Institute.
- Ehret, Christopher. 1972. "Outlining southern African history: A re-evaluation A.D. 100-1500". *Ufahamu: A Journal of African Studies* 3.9-28.
- Finlayson, Rosalie. 1987. "Southern-Bantu origins". *South African Journal of African Languages* 7.50-57.
- Gowlett, D.F. 1997. "Aspects of Yeyi Diachronic Phonology". *Namibian Languages: Reports and Papers* ed. by Wilfrid H.G. Haacke & Edward E. Elderkin, 235-263. Cologne: Rüdiger Köppe Verlag.
- Janson, Tore. 1991/1992. "Southern Bantu and Makua". *Sprache und Geschichte in Afrika* 12/13.63-106.
- Louw, J.A. & Rosalie Finlayson. 1990. "Southern Bantu origins as represented by Xhosa and Tswana". *South African Journal of African Languages* 10.401-410.

- Möhlig, W.J.G. 1997. "A dialectometrical analysis of the main Kavango languages: Kwangali, Gciriku and Mbukushu". *Namibian Languages: Reports and Papers* ed. by Wilfrid H.G. Haacke & Edward E. Elderkin, 211-234. Cologne: Rüdiger Köppe Verlag.
- Seidel, Frank. 2005. "The Bantu languages of the Eastern Caprivi: a dialectometrical analysis and its historical and sociolinguistic implications". *South African Journal of African Languages* 4.207-242.
- van der Spuy, Andrew. 1990. "Phonological relationships between the Southern Bantu languages". *African Studies* 49.119-147.
- Vansina, Jan. 2004. *How societies are born: Governance in West Central Africa before 1600*. Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press.