

Documenting Luyia Together: Interlinear Analysis of Bukusu Texts

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This presentation describes research analyzing the Bukusu language as part of the ASH Scholars research team *Documenting Luyia Together* during the 2019-2020 academic year. Our joint effort contributes to the documentation of Bukusu, a member of the Luyia language cluster in western Kenya. The 2019 Kenyan census identified about 1.2 million members of the Bukusu ethnic community, although it is unknown how many speakers of the language there are. The work of the 2018-2019 ASH Scholars team led to a major expansion of a linguistic corpus of the Bukusu language, as 90 additional folk tales collected by anthropologists in the 1930s and the 1960s were imported into the Fieldworks Language Explorer (FLEX) database. The imported texts included a written representation of the Bukusu story along with word-by-word and sentence-by-sentence translations into English. This year, we set to work analyzing each text linguistically to break up each word in a text into its prefixes, suffixes, and roots. Some of the initial work this year included restoring files that had been corrupted in the transfer to our FLEX database, before moving on to analysis of the repaired texts. We also worked to reconcile differences in spelling between the collection of texts from the 1930s and more modern spellings. Together, we have analyzed 40 texts over the course of the academic year, 39 of which are now at least 95% analyzed. Overall, this has provided us with 1,361 individual lines of analyzed texts. The analyzed texts will be used to examine the grammatical structures of the Bukusu language, and to compare it to other members of the Luyia language cluster that we are studying in our research.