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Documenting Luyia Together: the Swadesh Wordlist, Siginyi Talking Wordlist

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The purpose of this project is to document the Siginyi language, presenting newly collected linguistic data about an understudied Bantu language spoken in Namutumba District in eastern Uganda. Very little is known about the language, which is not even listed in the *Glottolog*, one of the leading authorities on languages of the world (Hammarström et al. 2020). We are aware of only one prior study that provides any insight into the linguistic properties of Siginyi: Nabirye's (2016) survey of languages of the Busoga kingdom, which compared languages based on a 100-item wordlist.

The present project builds on Nabirye's prior research, providing additional documentation of Siginyi and further comparison of its vocabulary, sounds, and basic aspects of grammar to other languages in the region. The data were collected by fellow MU student Sarah Pribe in 2019 as part of the ASH Scholars project, *Documenting Luyia Together*. The data include an audio-recorded wordlist of about 600 words. Early stages of the research by Pribe created individual sound files of each word in the list and produced a preliminary written transcription of each word. My work picks up where Pribe left off when she graduated in Spring 2020, checking and updating the transcriptions using the International Phonetic Alphabet.

My next task is to compile a report about the Siginyi sound system, identifying and illustrating its consonants and vowels, and its noun class system (the prefixes that mark singular, plural, and gender on Siginyi nouns). In the future, I will incorporate Siginyi vocabulary into our team's comparative database to test to see whether we agree with Nabirye's classification of Siginyi among the Bantu languages of eastern Uganda. This research represents an initial attempt to better understand the linguistic properties and sociolinguistic status of the Siginyi language.

References

Hammarström, Harald, Robert Forkel, Martin Haspelmath, & Sebastian Bank. 2020. *Glottolog* 4.3. Jena: Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History. (Available online at <http://glottolog.org>, accessed on 2020-11-17.)

Nabirye, Minah. 2016. *A corpus-based grammar of Lusoga*. Ghent, Belgium: Ghent University Ph.D. dissertation.