

Call for Abstracts

9TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON BANTU LANGUAGES



Themes

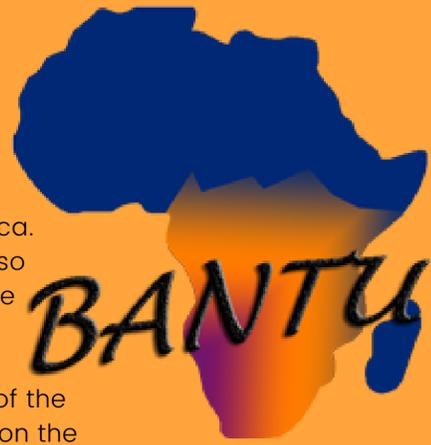
- Syntax
- Morphology/Morpho-syntax
- Semantics and Pragmatics
- Phonetics and phonology
- Typology
- Language contact
(Pidgins and creoles, borrowing, code switching)
- Sociolinguistics
- Language documentation
- Language and
technology
- Historical linguistics
- Language and development
- Textual and discourse analysis
- Decolonising Bantu Linguistics

**The conference starts on
June 7th - 10th, 2022**

**Make your submission through our portal
www.conferences.must.ac.mw**

**Deadline for
Abstract submissions
25 February, 2022**

Call for Abstracts



The Bantu language family is one of the world's largest in terms of numbers, geographic and demographic spread. It has some 500 languages spoken across East, Central and Southern Africa. This language family includes many national and international languages. However, there are also many languages that remain inadequately described, documented and resourced and some are endangered. Studies on Bantu languages have also been on the micro-variations among the languages and recent discussions have centered around decolonizing Bantu linguistics. The International conference on Bantu languages brings together scholars interested in any aspect of the description, analysis and comparison of Bantu languages. The second conference of this series on the African continent will be hosted in the warm heart of Africa, Malawi, at the Malawi University of Science and Technology with a virtual option for those not physically present. It will be an opportunity for scholars speaking and studying Bantu languages to exchange ideas and findings.

Instructions

Abstracts in English or French should be no longer than 300 words, in addition to references and examples. Altogether the length of one page A4 may not be exceeded. All abstracts will be reviewed anonymously by at least two reviewers. Please make sure that all examples are carefully glossed (using Leipzig Glossing Conventions and explaining any supplementary glosses) and that tones are marked on all examples in tone languages. All theoretical approaches are welcome, but abstracts should provide a clear research question and an indication of the relevance of its conclusions for a broad audience of linguists interested in Bantu languages. Keynote presentations will be chosen from among the submitted abstracts.

When submitting your abstract, you will have a choice between three categories: 'oral', 'poster' and 'oral poster'. The latter category means that you prefer an oral presentation but can also do a poster. If there are more good abstracts than we can accommodate, some will be scheduled as posters. If you choose either category 'poster' or 'oral or poster' you will increase your chances of acceptance. If you choose 'oral' you will also need to indicate whether your submission is for the 'general session' or 'workshop'.

Abstracts should be submitted as an MS Word or Open Office Writer file via the portal conferences.must.ac.mw. Please make sure you use a Unicode compliant font and that you do not use your name in the file name of your abstract. Please send two versions of your abstract. One should be anonymous, and one should include your name, affiliation and email at the top of the page, directly below the title.

Workshops

Three thematic workshops are scheduled as part of the conference (Workshops will be conducted on 10th June 2022). Submissions to the workshops must follow the same guidelines as submissions for the general session. Please indicate which workshop you wish your talk to be considered for at the top of your abstract and file name (ie. Workshop 1, Workshop 2, Workshop 3). Abstracts for the workshops should also be submitted via the conference portal www.conferences.must.ac.mw. All the abstracts submitted to the workshop will be reviewed individually by the Review committee and the workshop conveners. Below are the workshops.

WORKSHOP 1: THE VOICING CONTINUUM IN BANTU

Bantu languages vary with respect to whether they have contrastive voicing or not, and even when they do not have underlying voicing, show a vast range of phenomena that involve voicing. These processes include, but are not limited to, post-nasal voicing (Bemba M42, Yao P21), post-nasal aspiration and deaspiration (Chichewa N31, Malawian CiTonga N10), voicing dissimilation in e.g. Dhal's Law (Nyamwezi F22, Kinyarwanda JD61) or as manifested in Meinhof's Law (Luganda JE15, Umbundu R11) and depressor effects that involve voiced, breathy but also voiceless unaspirated sounds (Zulu S40, Tsonga S54, Ikalanga S16). Most voicing phenomena interact with or are in the context of nasals, which, as sonorants, involve spontaneous voicing and therefore do not themselves have true voicing. This workshop aims to understand the interaction and interrelations of these voicing processes across Bantu with a view to better understanding the phonological representation of voicing and in particular to shed light on whether voicing should be understood in discrete categories or not. The workshop will investigate the following themes and questions:

- What do voicing processes reveal about how phonological representations of voicing correlate to its phonetic categorisation in Bantu?
- Are voicing and laryngeal features different in Bantu languages with underlying voicing contrasts and those without?
- How do nasals feed into voicing and what features of nasals does this imply? Are such features/representations uniform across Bantu languages?
- Do languages with aspiration have different voicing patterns from those that do not and what does this reveal about the representation of voicing?
- Depressors show an interaction between different laryngeal specifications and tone. What does the pattern of depression across Bantu reveal about the interaction of tone and different voicing specifications?
- Given interactions between nasals and voicing in post-nasal voicing/aspiration and also between tone and voicing in depressors, are there also interactions between nasals and tone? What would such interactions add to our understanding of the representation of voicing?
- What do historical data show about the development of voicing and other laryngeal specifications and what predictions can we make on the future development or loss of voicing based on current systems?



WORKSHOP 2: YOUTH LANGUAGE PRACTICES AND MORPHOSYNTACTIC VARIATION

Youth language practices in Africa have received increased scholarly attention in the past 20–30 years with numerous studies concerning various linguistic phenomena. Building on these works, our workshop has two major purposes: While Bantu languages feature prominently in the published accounts on African youth languages (e.g. Sheng, Tsotsitaal, S'ncamtho/Isicamtho, Lingala ya Bayankee/Yanké/, Kindoubil, Luyaaye, Lughya ya mtaani, to name just a few) the latter are yet to become an established topic in Bantu linguistics. The objective of this workshop is to take a first step into that direction. Moreover, the study of (African) youth language practices has looked at various linguistic phenomena and domains including semantic processes, morphological and phonological changes, multilingual and contact phenomena such as codeswitching and the lexical domain in general. Another objective of our workshop is to shift the attention to morphosyntactic variation, which constitutes a major theme in Bantu linguistics but is still understudied in (African) youth languages. In the Bantu-speaking area, several youth language practices are connected and spoken in vast transnational areas. Based on this observation, it is likely that we can find morphosyntactic variation in those language practices, including phenomena such as noun class allocation, agreement and others. Another potential direction of the workshop also invites colleagues to look at closely related and seemingly “similar” youth language practices modeled onto the same base or matrix language, making use of approaches from within the field of morphosyntactic microvariation

Organizers: [Hannah Gibson](#), [Nico Nassenstein](#), [Fridah Kanana](#), [Sambulo Ndlovu](#), [Andrea Hollington](#)
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WORKSHOP 3: THE POTENTIAL FOR INCREASED USE OF BANTU LANGUAGES AT NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEVELS

In Tanzania, Swahili is being used at the national level and has official status. Swahili is also used in several surrounding countries, including Kenya and DR Congo. However, Swahili is not being used as a medium of instruction in higher education; in general, it does not enjoy the same status English has.

In South Africa, nine Bantu languages have official status. In spite of this, English dominance is increasing in that country. In the DRC Kituba, Lingala and Tshiluba are used as lingua franca in addition to Swahili. However, French remains the official language. In Rwanda and Burundi, Rwanda-Rundi is spoken by just about the entire population, but English and French are the official languages.

The African Academy of Languages (ACALAN) has identified a number of Bantu languages as Vehicular Cross-border Languages, with the vision that these can be used to facilitate communication between countries.

For Botswana, Chebanne and Van Pinxteren (2021) have argued that a gradual transition to using a Bantu language in domains such as higher education in that country will become unavoidable, if only for economic reasons. They propose five key principles for making rational choices for working with certain Bantu languages (limited number of languages, ease of learning, inclusivity, using multilingualism, linguistic collaboration). The distinction between discerned and designed languages helps in understanding why such choices are defensible. Their principles build on the ideas of authors such as Prah.

This workshop will explain and explore the theoretical framework used by Chebanne and Van Pinxteren. This should open up a new area of debate and discussion. The general method proposed by Chebanne and Van Pinxteren needs, by their own admittance, to be supplemented by more detailed linguistic knowledge as well as by an appreciation of what would be culturally appropriate and acceptable. Thus, participants will be challenged to reflect on what this approach would mean for the countries and languages they are familiar with and what perspectives they see for developing a discourse aimed at promoting the use of Bantu languages in more and more domains

Organizers: [Bert van Pinxteren](#), [Fridah Kanana Erastus](#) and [Gabriel Djomeni](#)
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Important Dates

Deadline for workshop proposals

21st January 2022

Notification of acceptance for workshops

25th January, 2022

Deadline for abstract submissions

25th February, 2022

Notification of acceptance for abstracts

31st March 2022

Registration opening in April 2022,

A preliminary programme will then also be made available.

Workshops: 10th June, 2022

Conference: 7th – 9th June, 2022