

*not with*  
**ONE  
MOUTH**

**CONTINUITY AND CHANGE  
IN SOUTHERN AFRICAN  
LANGUAGE STUDIES**



**EDITED BY ROBERT K. HERBERT**

**AFRICAN STUDIES • C. M. DOKE CENTENARY**

**VOLUME 52 • NO 2 • 1993**

The first issue of 1994 marks the beginning of a new era for **African Studies**. Aiming to bring southern African scholarship back home, and to reflect the immediacy and vibrancy of local debate, **African Studies**, guided by its new editorial board and committee, is broadening its disciplinary focus and intellectual scope.

With the transformations under way in South African society and in South African academic establishments, **African Studies** aims to provide a forum for the local publication of the kind of scholarly output which, in the heyday of the academic boycott, was mainly published in British or US journals.

**African Studies** plans to reflect something of the unique quality of debate taking place within southern African universities. The end of the academic boycott has facilitated South Africa's re-entry into the field of international scholarship, which has made for a freer exchange of ideas between local academics and those from abroad or from other parts of Africa who have started to visit the region or to commence research here. Conferences have been held locally on areas as diverse as ethnicity, reconceptualising class, ethnomusicology, and oral performance, with extensive support and attendance both by local scholars and by those from abroad and from the rest of Africa. In the ensuing interaction, metropolitan concerns have been transformed and recast in the light of indigenously-generated ideas and debates.

Arising out of these debates are new areas of research, and innovative perspectives on old ones. As well as providing a forum for the publication of such work, **African Studies** will offer review articles on topics of current concern and publish sets of articles centred on thematic issues of local interest. Commentary and critique on conferences and workshops are provided in **Notes and Reports**, while our **Debates and Correspondence** section will offer readers an opportunity to express their views and to engage in discussion about matters of contention. These additional sections in the journal are designed, in part, to give readers an up-to-date overview of those issues which are of immediate concern to the local scholarly community.

While mirroring the character of local debate, the journal aims as well to contribute to broader and more international debates in the field of studies on Africa. Based at the University of the Witwatersrand and published by the Witwatersrand University Press, the journal's wide range of referees, both within southern Africa and beyond the country, will ensure that parochial concerns are transcended and will allow for a broad spectrum of insights into African studies.

First published as **Bantu Studies** in 1921, the journal included among its early editors and contributors many pioneering scholars in anthropology and linguistics: Schapera, Gluckman, Marwick, Mayer, Vilakazi, Rheinallt Jones, Doke and Cole. Most recently, the journal was edited by WD Hammond-Tooke, assisted by an Editorial Committee of PL Bonner, NJ Pines and T Traill, and an Advisory Board. Building on this legacy, the journal aims now to cast its net more broadly and to include history, sociology, politics, and literary and cultural studies.

**ARTICLES**

**The Mystery of the Blue Ostriches: Clues to the Origin and Authorship of a Supposed Rock Painting**

*TA Dowson, PV Tobias and JD Lewis-Williams*

**The Social Origins of African Methodism in the Orange Free State, 1895-1913**

*Jim Campbell*

**Households and Gender in a South African Bantustan**

**A World Turned Upside Down: Households and Differentiation in a South African Bantustan in the 1990s**

*John Sharp*

**Angry Men and Working Women: Gender Relations and Economic Change in Qwaqwa in the 1980s**

*Leslie Bank*

**Disharmonious Spouses and Harmonious Siblings: Conceptualising Household Formation among Urban Residents in Qwaqwa**

*Isak Niehaus*

**Households and Gender in a South African Bantustan: A Comment**

*Henrietta Moore*

**NOTES AND REPORTS**

**Beyond the Buzzwords: Report on a Workshop, Albert Einstein Civics Project, 18-21 August 1993.**

*Colin Bundy*

**Report on the 11th Symposium on Ethnomusicology held at Natal University Durban, 23-25 August 1993.**

*Carol Muller and Deborah James*

**Report on the Conference of the Association for Anthropology in Southern Africa, held at the University of the Witwatersrand, September 1993.**

*Chris de Wet*

**FORTHCOMING ISSUES**

**ARTICLES**

**Anthropology of Clothing and the Body**

**The Symbolic Significance of 'Traditional' Herero Dress**

*Hildi Hendrikson*

**A Man of Splendid Appearance: Angas's *Utimuni*, Nephew of Chaka the Late Zulu King**

*Sandra Klopper*

**Ethnicity in Africa**

**The Colonial and Post-Colonial Creation of Ethnic Identities in North-western Ghana**

*Carola Lentz*

**Ethnicity as Cultural Mediation and Transformation in Central-western Zambia**

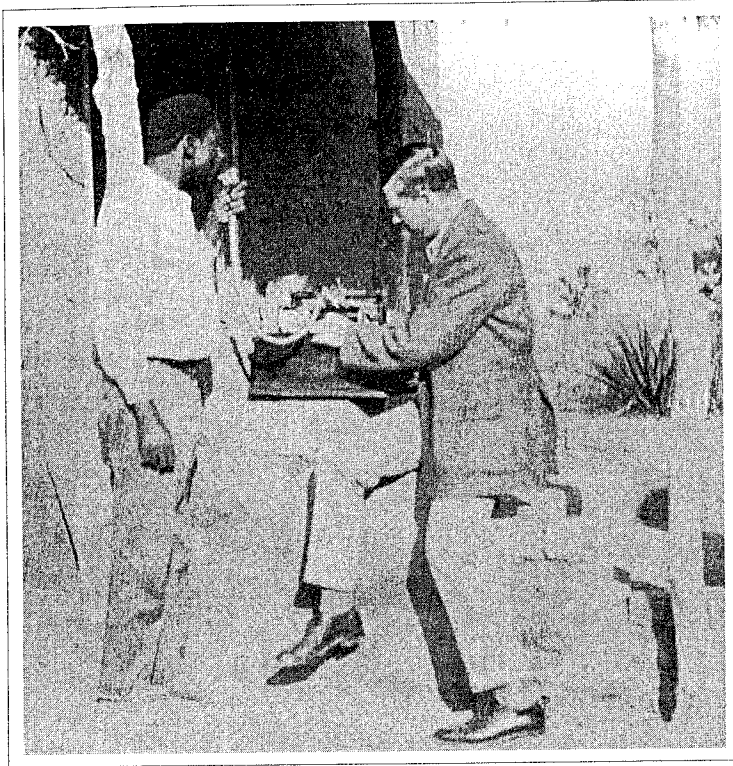
*Wim van Binsbergen*

**DEBATES AND CORRESPONDENCE**

*Karin Barber* on post-colonial theory

*not with*  
**ONE**  
**MOUTH**

HONNOLD LIBRARY  
SEP 28 1994



Recording data in the field: C M Doke with a Shona-speaking informant, 1929  
(Photo courtesy of Mrs G M Nixon)

*not with*  
**ONE**  
**MOU**TH

CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN  
SOUTHERN AFRICAN LANGUAGE STUDIES

EDITED BY  
ROBERT K. HERBERT

WUP

WITWATERSRAND UNIVERSITY PRESS

Witwatersrand University Press  
1 Jan Smuts Avenue  
2001 Johannesburg  
South Africa

ISSN 0002 - 0814  
ISBN 1 86814 271 X

© Witwatersrand University Press 1994

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior permission of the copyright owner.

First published 1994

Cover design by Sue Sandrock of Desktop Impressions

Printed and bound by The Natal Witness Printing and Publishing Company (Pty) Ltd, Pietermaritzburg, Natal, South Africa

## Contents

Introduction: Not With One Mouth R.K. HERBERT	1
List of Publications and Manuscripts C.M. DOKE	5
A Personal Tribute to Clement Martyn Doke L.W. LANHAM	17
C.M. Doke: A Critical Review by a Believing Outsider E.B. VAN WYK	21
A Change of Mood Towards a Re-analysis of the Dokean Classification DAVID H. GOUGH	35
A New Perspective on Bantu Expansion and Classification: Linguistic and Archaeological Evidence Fifty Years after Doke R.K. HERBERT AND T.N. HUFFMAN	53
C.M. Doke and the Development of Bantu Literature NHLANHLA P. MAAKE	77
C.M. Doke's Contribution to Translation Studies DEREK FIVAZ	89
The Contribution of C.M. Doke to Written Shona GEORGE FORTUNE	103
C.M. Doke's Contribution to Shona Linguistic Studies N.C. DEMBETEMBE	131
Some Thoughts on Future Language Policy for South Africa with reference to the Language Plan of Action for Africa MUBANGA E. KASHOKI	141
Language Plan of Action for Africa ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN UNITY	157

# Not With One Mouth

## An Introduction

---

R. K. Herbert

---

*Akanwa kamo ta komfwa bwalwa.*  
One mouth doesn't taste the beer.

*Umulandu to wama akanwa kamo.*  
A case is not satisfactory at one mouth.

Lamba proverbs

The title of the present collection *Not with One Mouth* derives from the two Lamba proverbs cited above. The common element in these proverbs is the focus on community – scholarly community in the present application – rather than on individual responsibility and judgement. In the first case, beer must be passed around for all to pronounce the verdict as to whether or not it is ready to drink. In the second proverb we are reminded that one person cannot satisfactorily settle a dispute: many witnesses need to give the evidence before the case is clear. Each proverb, then, is an appeal for broadly based co-operation or, at the very least, reminds us of the value of hearing several voices in a critical evaluation.

Such an appeal is appropriate in the field of African language studies in Southern Africa today. The discipline finds itself at a crossroads in its development as the region prepares for new social and educational dispensations. There is a need, now, to consider the foundations of the discipline and assess its present state so that practitioners may actively assist in the process of transformation and enable others to participate in

the new dispensations. Indeed, the increased awareness of language as a key variable in public and private domains of everyday life has forced a new consideration of the past and future of language studies in Southern Africa.

The Lamba source of these introductory proverbs is entirely appropriate, given the intimate association between Lamba studies, both linguistic and anthropological, and C M Doke. It is no exaggeration to claim that Clement Martyn Doke is the single most important figure in the history of Southern African linguistics. That the linguistic documentation for this area is among the most complete on the African continent, and that the standard of language scholarship is as high as it is can in some real measure be attributed to the genius of C M Doke and the generation of scholars which he inspired.

Doke was one of the first Africanists to free African language study from the constraints of classical and European models and to develop a method for linguistic analysis based upon structures within the African languages themselves. The 'Dokean model' continues to be the dominant approach within educational establishments in Southern and Central Africa, although certain shortcomings and limitations in it have been apparent for some time. Doke's classification of the Bantu languages was for many years the accepted view of the interrelations among the African languages. Further, his works on linguistic historiography, lexicography, and grammatical description of the languages of Southern Africa remain valuable references for the analyst today.

The celebration of the C M Doke Centenary (1893-1993) provides us with an appropriate forum in which to consider the discipline critically, in particular Doke's shaping influence upon it. The present collection originates with papers which were first presented at a special Doke Centenary Session sponsored by the African Language Association of Southern Africa (ALASA) at its international conference held at the University of the Witwatersrand in July 1993. A range of distinguished scholars were invited to address the topic of change and continuity in their respective subdisciplines, with particular attention to the contributions of C M Doke. The invitation was neither to praise nor bury Doke but rather to assess his lasting influence – for good and for bad.

Doke's contributions to literature were considerably more limited than his linguistic work, but his influence on Bantu philology spans the range of subdisciplines. An evaluation of Doke's role is, then, an evaluation of the discipline itself. Doke retired from academic life more than four decades ago, and it is not surprising that many of his findings have been

superseded by later research; this fact does not diminish the centrality of his contributions.

Like several other prominent Africanists of his generation, Doke entered the world of scholarly research from a missionary background. His first service was as a missionary for the South African Baptist Church in Lambaland, Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia). He served in this capacity during the period 1914-1921. In one of the first entries in his diary, Doke noted that one of his greatest frustrations in mission work was his inability to communicate with the Lamba. There were, of course, no textbooks for the language and the only written material available included a translation of Jonah and a collection of forty-seven translated hymns. Nevertheless, Doke soon set out to master the language, and published his first book *Ifintu Fyakwe Lesa* (The Things of God, a Primer of Scripture Knowledge in Lamba) in 1917. His interest in language led him to enrol in Johannesburg at the extension of Transvaal University College for an M.A. during his first furlough in 1919. His thesis was published as *The Grammar of the Lamba Language*. Doke had not yet established his innovative method of analysis and description for the Bantu languages, and the book is couched in traditional grammatical terms. His later publication, *Textbook of Lamba Grammar*,<sup>1</sup> is a far superior work.

This brief introduction is not the appropriate forum in which to discuss in detail any of Doke's many contributions to African linguistics. However, Doke's role in the unification and development of the Shona language cannot go without mention. At the request of the government of Southern Rhodesia, Doke investigated the range of dialect diversity among the languages of the country and made recommendations for 'Unified Shona'. His recommendations, accepted in broad outline, formed the basis for Standard Shona and, although there have been several sets of revision of Doke's principles for the orthography and word-division, it is not an exaggeration to name Doke the 'father' of Standard Shona. Whether the lessons of Shona unification will prove instructive in the various proposals to harmonise closely related languages in South Africa remains an open question.

Although not an active contributor as such, Doke was also an important force in the promotion of 'native literatures' in South Africa. He continued to work in the field of translation throughout the period of his career as a linguist and in his retirement. His major contributions here were of a practical nature, most of them involving Lamba, the language which he first learned in the mission field.

It was only on account of serious health problems that Doke retired from the mission field.<sup>2</sup> The missions' loss was a distinct gain for the newly-founded University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg. Doke was recruited and sent to London for formal training in Bantu linguistics and ethnology. He took up his post at the University in 1923 in the country's first Department of Bantu Studies. He moved quickly through the academic ranks, and was appointed Professor of Bantu Languages in 1931. Doke served at the University until his academic retirement in 1953.

Doke's numerous 'contributions to science and humanity' were marked by the award of the degree D.Litt. (*h.c.*) by Rhodes University and the degree Doctor of Laws (*h.c.*) by the University of the Witwatersrand in 1972, its diamond jubilee year. In its award citation, the latter university noted that Doke had

rendered outstanding and distinguished service to the University, to African linguistic studies, to the Christian Church and its missions, to the development of the Bantu languages as literary media, to African education, to the African peoples of the whole Southern African continent.

There is no need to review any further details of Doke's professional life here since several short biographies are available.<sup>3</sup> It is more appropriate in the present context to allow the 'mouths' of the several contributors to take up relevant details and to evaluate the Dokean legacy in their individual fields. Similarly, the reader is invited to 'taste' what is offered here.

*Akanwa kamo ta komfwa bwalwa.*

### NOTES

1. Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1938.
2. Doke's own account of his seven years as a missionary among the Lamba can be read in *Trekking in South-Central Africa* (repr. Witwatersrand University Press, 1993).
3. The most accessible short biography of C. M. Doke is that by G. Fortune entitled 'Clement Martyn Doke: A Biographical and Bibliographical Sketch', appearing in *The Catalogue of the C.M. Doke Collection on African Language in the Library of the University of Rhodesia*. Boston: G.K. Hall, 1972, pp. v-xix. Cf. also the present author's 'Contextualising a Missionary's Trek', in *Trekking in South-Central Africa*, pp. xi-xl.

## C.M. Doke List of Publications and Manuscripts

1913

A missionary tour in north-western Rhodesia. *South African Baptist*, November, pp. 158-162.

1917

Through a land of streams. *Lambaland* No. 2, 3pp.

Lamba sketches: I. Lwambula and Walichupa. *Lambaland* No. 4, 1p.

Akasiwa ka Wenamofya. *Lambaland* No. 4, 2pp.

*Ifintu Fyakwe Lesa* (Primer of Scripture Knowledge in Lamba). South African Baptist Missionary Society. 22pp. (Several later editions: 2 ed. published at Kafulafuta, 1920.)

1918

The children of the forests. *Lambaland* No. 6, 1p.

Some strange Lamba beliefs. *Lambaland* No. 6, 1p.

Lamba sketches: II. Kasakambando. *Lambaland* No. 6, 1p.

*Kace-Kace* (Lamba Reading Book, No. 1; 2 ed. revised). South African Baptist Missionary Society. 16pp. (Several later editions.)

*Ifisimikisyo* (Lamba Reading Book, No. 2. Lamba Folk Tales). South African Baptist Missionary Society. 72pp. (Several later editions.)

*Mako* (Gospel of Mark in Lamba). London, Bible Translation Society. 68pp.



1919

With the gospel on the Lufwanyama. *Lambaland* No. 10, 3pp.

WaNsaka. *Lambaland* No. 11, 1p.

- ✓ The country of the Lamba people. *South African Geographical Journal* 3: 55-65.

1921

*Ukulayana Kwa Wukumo* (New Testament in Lamba). London, Bible Translation Society. 626pp.

Some notes on the infinitive in Bantu. *Bantu Studies* 1: 3-4.

1922

*Jona* (Book of Jonah in Lamba; 2 ed. revised). London, Trinitarian Bible Society. 7pp.

*Ibuku Lyakwe Lufi* (Book of Ruth in Lamba). London, Trinitarian Bible Society. 12pp.

*Icewō cakwe Samweli Umwanike* (Story of the Child Samuel in Lamba). London, Trinitarian Bible Society. 8pp.

*Ukwikalo 'kuweme* (Lamba Reading Book, No. 3. Health Reader illus.). South African Baptist Missionary Society. 48pp.

- ✓ *The Grammar of the Lamba Language*. London, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner. ix, 157pp.

1923

A dissertation on the phonetics of the Zulu language. *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies* 2: 685-729.

Social control among the Lambas. *Bantu Studies* 2: 35-41.

Notes on a problem in the mechanism of the Zulu clicks. *Bantu Studies* 2: 43-45.

1925

An outline of the phonetics of the language of the (hū: Bushmen of north-west Kalahari. *Bantu Studies* 2: 129-165.

The linguistic aspect. In "Native Affairs", *The Natives of South Africa: An Ethnographic Review*. Official Yearbook, Union of South Africa, No. 8. Department of Census and Statistics. pp. 964-965.

Die Bantoetale. *De Volkstem*, 11 December.

The Qhung Bushmen of the Kalahari. *The Star*, 2 May.

The Bushmen – the need of the gospel. *South African Baptist*, May.

Bush Babies. *Young Africa*, December.

- ✓ The Qhung Bushmen of the Kalahari. *South African Geographical Journal* 8: 39-44.

Bantu filologiese navorsing. *Transvaal Educational News*, December. 3pp.

1926

- ✓ *The Phonetics of the Zulu Language*. Johannesburg, Witwatersrand University Press. xii, 310pp. Reprinted by Kraus Reprint, 1969. (Special Number of *Bantu Studies*, volume 2)

The folklore of the Lamba people. *Rand Daily Mail*, 17 September.

The music of the veld. *Rand Daily Mail*, 18 September.

- ✓ A call to philological study and research in South Africa. *The South African Quarterly* 7: 39-40.

1927

The hunters of Lambaland. *Rand Daily Mail*, February.

A study in Lamba phonetics. *Bantu Studies* 3: 5-47.

The significance of Class 1a of Bantu nouns. *Festschrift Meinhof*. Hamburg, Kommissions Verlag von Friederischen, pp. 196-203.

- ✓ *Text Book of Zulu Grammar*, 1 ed. Johannesburg, Witwatersrand University Press, xiv, 341pp. (Special Number of *Bantu Studies*, volume 3) (2 ed., 1931; 3 ed., 1939; repr. 1943; 4 ed., 1945; 5 ed., 1954; 6 ed., 1961.)

- ✓ Edited *A Grammar of the Sesuto Language* by the late E. Jacottet with the help of Z.D. Mangoela. Johannesburg, Witwatersrand University Press. xxvi, 209pp. (Special Number of *Bantu Studies*, volume 3)

*Lamba Folk-lore* (Folk-tales, Aphorisms, Songs, Riddles). New York, American Folk-lore Society, Memoir volume 20. xvii, 570pp.

The missionary programme of the Sunday school. *Sunday School Advancer*, June.

The Baila tribesmen. *The Star*, 6 August.

The giant Kafue of Northern Rhodesia. *Rand Daily Mail*, 19 September.

1928

An outline of Ila phonetics. *Bantu Studies* 3: 127-153.

The linguistic situation of South Africa. *Africa* 1: 478-485.

- ✓ Lamba ideas of cosmogony. *South African Geographical Journal* 11: 18-21.
- ✓ The Orthography of South African Native Languages. In *Christianity and the Natives of South Africa*, ed. by J. D. Taylor. Lovedale, Lovedale Institution Press. pp. 159-163.

MS. The effect of Christianity upon the native of South Africa. Unpublished typescript. 3pp.

MS. The need for a Bantu classification in Bantu grammar. Unpublished typescript. 6pp. Sent to Dr. C.T. Loram for Carmichael Volume.

1929

In collaboration with B.H. Barnes, The pronunciation of the Bemba language. *Bantu Studies* 3: 423-456.

*The Problem of Word-division in Bantu, with Special Reference to the Languages of Mashonaland.* Salisbury, Department of Native Development. 22pp. (Occasional Paper, No. 2)

*Ibuku lya Fyakutaŋga ne buku lya Kufuma* (Genesis and Exodus in Lamba). London, British and Foreign Bible Society. 113pp.

1930

Additional Lamba aphorisms. *Bantu Studies* 4: 109-135, 181-192.

Twenty-five years of Bantu development. *South African Railways & Harbours Magazine*, October, pp. 1574-1577.

A motor trip to southern Africa's oldest town. *The Star*, 15 April.

1931

*Report on the Unification of the Shona Dialects* (Presented to Legislative Assembly 1931). Hertford, Printed for the government of Southern Rhodesia by Austin. 156pp., plus maps, charts.

*A Comparative Study in Shona Phonetics.* Johannesburg, Witwatersrand University Press. viii, 298pp., illus., maps, charts.

*The Lambas of Northern Rhodesia.* London, G.G. Harrap. 408pp., illus.

1932

In collaboration with E.W. Grant, *Graded Zulu Exercises.* Lovedale, Lovedale Press. 56pp. (2ed., 1946.)

Edited *Amaculo ase-Baptist* (Xhosa Baptist Hymnal). South African Baptist Missionary Society. xii, 415pp.

MS. The standardization of Bantu dialects and the development of literature in the vernacular. Unpublished typescript, 6pp.

1933

A preliminary investigation into the state of the native languages of South Africa, with suggestions as to research and the development of literature.

*Bantu Studies* 7: 1-98.

✓ Phonetic Summary: Zulu. In E. Westermann and I.C. Ward, *Practical Phonetics for Students of African Languages.* London, Oxford University Press, for the International Institute of African Languages and Cultures. pp. 197-202.

Bible translation among the Bantu. *The Bible in the World*, July and August, pp. 107-109, 123-124.

A short Aushi vocabulary. *Bantu Studies* 7: 285-295.

The earliest vocabulary from Mashonaland. *Nada* No. 11, pp. 67-71.

*English-Lamba Vocabulary.* Johannesburg, Witwatersrand University Press. 134pp. (2 ed. enlarged, 1963.)

1934

✓ Lamba literature. *Africa* 7: 351-370

1935

✓ Vernacular text books in South African native schools. *Africa* 8: 183-209.

Early Bantu literature – the age of Brusciotto. *Bantu Studies* 9: 87-114.

✓ *Bantu Linguistic Terminology.* London, Longmans, Green. 237pp.

Edited *Baptist Catechism in Southern Sotho.* (2 ed. published in Johannesburg, 1949).

Edited *Baptist Catechism in Zulu.*

1936

The future of Bantu literature. *African Observer* 6: 18-22.

An outline of *khomani* Bushmen phonetics. *Bantu Studies* 10: 433-460.

Reprinted in *The Bushmen of the Southern Kalahari.* Johannesburg, Witwatersrand University Press, 1937.

Games, plays and dances of the *khomani* Bushmen. *Bantu Studies* 10: 461-471, illus. Reprinted in *The Bushmen of the Southern Kalahari.* Johannesburg, Witwatersrand University Press, 1937.

✓ The Bushmen of the Kalahari. *Transvaal Educational News*, December, pp. 11-14.

1937

✓ Two Zulu language pioneers. *The Missionary Herald* (Boston, Mass.) 133: 17-18.

MS. Lamba-English dictionary. Unpublished typescript. 1957pp.

Language. In *The Bantu-speaking Tribes of South Africa*, ed. by I. Schapera, London, Routledge. Chapter XIV, pp. 309-331.

1938

The earliest records of Bantu. *Bantu Studies* 12: 135-144.

Transliterated and edited *Incwadi Yenkonzo* (Methodist Prayer Book and Hymns in Zulu). Cape Town, Methodist Book Room, pp.295 and 328.

*Amasamo* (Psalms bound with 2 ed. Lamba New Testament). London, British and Foreign Bible Society. 193pp.

✓ *Text Book of Lamba Grammar*. Johannesburg, Witwatersrand University Press. viii, 484pp.

Edited *Baptist Catechism in Xhosa*.

MS. Umumbulu Wēulu. *The Hound of Heaven* by Francis Thompson, translated into Lamba by C.M.D. Unpublished typescript. 4pp.

1939

European and Bantu languages in South Africa. *Africa* 12: 308-319.

Lamba folk tales annotated. *Bantu Studies* 13: 85-111.

Transliterated and edited *Methodist Zulu Catechism, No. 1* (32pp.) and *No. 2* (pp. 91 and 47). Cape Town, Methodist Book Room.

1940

Some principles of Bantu lexicography. *Scientia*, January. pp. 23-29.

Bantu language pioneers of the nineteenth century. *Bantu Studies* 14: 207-246.

1941

*Old Testament Stories* (in Lamba). Kafulafuta Mission Press. 81pp. (2 ed. 1949.)

1942

The native languages of South Africa. *African Studies* 1: 135-141.

1943

The growth of comparative Bantu philology. *African Studies* 2: 41-64.

*Outline Grammar of Bantu*. 65pp. (roneoed)

Edited *First Aid to the Injured for the African People of the Witwatersrand and Southern Transvaal*, Centre of the St. John Ambulance Association. (In English, Zulu, Xhosa and Sesotho.) v, 170pp.

1944

Conjunctive writing for Bantu languages. *Rhodes-Livingstone Institute Journal*, June, pp. 10-15.

An unusual Bantu tale of the Little-hare series. *African Studies* 3: 31-36.

Etudes relative aux langues bantoues en Afrique du Sud. *Aequatoria* 7: 152-154.

1945

*Bantu: Modern Grammatical, Phonetical and Lexicographical Studies since 1860*. London, International African Institute. 119pp. (Reprinted by Dawsons, 1967.)

Edited *Baptist Ministers' Manual* in Southern Sotho.

Edited *Baptist Ministers' Manual* in Zulu.

Edited *Abridged Baptist Hymnal* in Xhosa.

Edited *Abridged Baptist Hymnal* in Zulu.

1946

Edited *Baptist Ministers' Manual* in Xhosa.

*Imvulamlo*. 26pp. (Longmans' Zulu Readers, 1st Primer)

*Ingqamazinyo*. 48pp. (Longmans' Zulu Readers, 2nd Primer)

*Ufundukhuphuke*. 92pp. (Longmans' Zulu Readers, Standard I)

1947

*Unokuhlekisa*. 91pp. (Longmans' Zulu Readers, Standard II)

*Unoziwe*. 113pp. (Longmans' Zulu Readers, Standard III)

*Usokuzula*. 124pp. (Longmans' Zulu Readers, Standard IV)

*Utungulula*. 53pp. (Longmans' Ndebele Readers, 1st Primer, adapted)

*Ukumlamazino*. 48pp. (Longmans' Ndebele Readers, 2nd Primer, adapted)

*Uqinisinsini*. 92pp. (Longmans' Ndebele Readers, Reader I)

Bantu wisdom-lore. *African Studies* 6: 101-120.

William Carey. Paper read at Baptist Union Assembly, Johannesburg, 1934.

Reprinted in *South African Baptist*, March and April. 7pp.

✓ Vilakazi's contribution to Zulu Literature. *Catholic African Teachers' Federation Review*, December, pp. 4-5.

1948

Bantu, a family of languages. *Scientia*, January-February, pp. 22-28

A tribute to Mahatma Gandhi. *Mahatma Gandhi Memorial Number of Indian Opinion*, March, pp. 8-9.

In collaboration with the late B.W. Vilakazi, *Zulu-English Dictionary*. Johannesburg, Witwatersrand University Press. xxvi, 903pp. double col. (2 ed. 1953.)

The basis of Bantu literature. *Africa* 18: 284-301.

*Suggestions for a Programme of Linguistic Research in Bantu and Other Native Languages of South Africa.* Pretoria, The National Council for Social Research. 8pp. (Issued also in Afrikaans)

1949

*Umakuhlekisa.* 90pp. (Longmans' Ndebele Readers, Reader 2)

*Ulozizwe.* 112pp. (Longmans' Ndebele Readers, Reader 3)

Our Baptist witness for these days. Roneoed typescript of Presidential Address delivered at Baptist Assembly in Cape Town, and issued to delegates, October. 18pp.

Recollections of Mahatma Gandhi. In C. Shukla, *Incidents of Gandhiji's Life.* Bombay, Vora & Co., pp. 40-42.

*Ifyewo Ifya' Kulayana Kwakale*, 2 ed. of *Old Testament Stories* (1941). Fiwale Mission Press. 36pp.

1950

*Izinkamb' eAfrika.* 179pp. (Longman's Zulu Readers, Standard V)

Edited *Amaculo ase-Baptist* (Xhosa Baptist Hymnal, 3 ed.). 322pp.

Bantu languages, inflexional with a tendency towards agglutination. *African Studies* 9: 1-19.

Edited *Lifela tsa-MaBaptist* (Southern Sotho Hymn Book). Johannesburg, South African Baptist Press. 174pp.

*Ambi Amabuku AmuKulayana Kwakale* (Certain Old Testament Books in Lamba). London, British and Foreign Bible Society 610pp.

H.P.S. Schreuder som Språkforsker. *Norsk Tidsskrift for Misjon* Årg. 4: 222-226.

*Ukuhlakaniph' eAfrika.* 185pp. (Longmans' Zulu Readers, Standard VI)

*Umazula.* 112pp. (Longmans' Ndebele Readers, Reader 4)

Article on "Bantu". *Chamber's Encyclopaedia.* London, Newnes. Volume 2. (New ed. 1959.)

1953

*Zulu-English Dictionary*; 2 ed. Johannesburg, Witwatersrand University Press. xxvi, 918pp.

1954

*The Southern Bantu Languages.* London, Oxford University Press, for the International African Institute. 262pp. (Reprinted by Dawsons, 1967.)

The concept of hope among the Bantu. *The Bible Translator* 5: 9-19.

1955

Edited 'A fragment on Xhosa religious beliefs' by Chas. Brownlee. *African Studies* 14: 37-41.

Edited *Paul the Leper* by O.C. Doke. South African Baptist Press. 39pp. *The Authority of the Bible.* Cape Town, Protestant Association of South Africa. 32pp.

*Zulu Syntax and Idiom.* Cape Town, Longmans, Green. vi, 234pp.

1956

The points of the compass in Bantu languages. *The Bible Translator* 7: 104-113.

1957

In collaboration with the late S.M. Mofokeng, *Textbook of Southern Sotho Grammar.* Cape Town, Longmans, Green. xv, 491pp.

Some difficulties in Bible translation into a Bantu language *Scientia*, June-July, pp. 1-6.

Dr S.M. Mofokeng – a personal tribute. *South African Outlook*, July, p. 110.

1958

✓ In collaboration with D. McK. Malcolm and J.M.A. Sikakana, *English-Zulu Dictionary.* Johannesburg, Witwatersrand University Press. xii, 572pp.

*Zulu-English Vocabulary.* Johannesburg, Witwatersrand University Press. viii, 342pp.

*English and Zulu Dictionary.* (Parts I and II, as above, combined.)

Scripture translation into Bantu languages. *African Studies* 17: 82-99.

Obituary: Dr Edwin W. Smith. *African Studies* 17: 116-118.

MS. In South Central Africa – tales true and otherwise. Unpublished typescript. 110pp.

1959

Bantu language pioneers of the nineteenth century; revised ed. *African Studies* 18: 1-27.

Early Bantu literature – the age of Brusciotto; revised ed. *African Studies* 18: 49-67.

Ikelesya (Lambaland Addresses on The Church). 40pp. (roneoed)

*Ukuwulisisiwa Kwamasiwi Ambi AmwiBuku LyawaLesa* (Lamba Bible Dictionary). Johannesburg, South African Baptist Press. vi, 139pp.

The linguistic work and manuscripts of R.D. MacMinn. *African Studies* 18: 180-189.

*Amasiwi AwaLesa* (The Bible in Lamba, lit. The Words of God). London, British and Foreign Bible Society. O.T. 913pp.; N.T. 269pp. (Arrived in South Africa, April 1960.)

MS. Kalulu and his pranks (Lamba Fables of the Little-hare). Unpublished handwritten manuscript.

1960

The earliest records of Bantu; revised ed. *African Studies* 19: 26-32.

The growth of comparative Bantu philology; revised ed. *African Studies* 19: 193-218.

MS. The Messianic line. Unpublished typescript. xiv, 367pp.

1961

*Contributions to the History of Bantu Linguistics* (Papers contributed by C.M. Doke and D.T. Cole). Johannesburg, Witwatersrand University Press. 129pp. Repr. 1969.

The linguistic work of H.W. Woodward. *African Studies* 20: 197-202.

MS. Race relations in the light of the Scriptures. Unpublished typescript. 16pp.

1962

The loss of Bantu scholars in 1962. *South African Outlook*, December, p.183.

MS. Our Lord speaks in the Old Testament. Unpublished typescript. iv, 185pp.

1963

*English-Lamba Vocabulary*; 2 ed. revised and enlarged. Johannesburg, Witwatersrand University Press. 179pp.

Obituary: Dr D. McK. Malcolm, and Professor G.P. Lestrade. *African Studies* 22: 37,38.

*Graded Lamba Grammar and Exercises*. Ndola, Lambaland Baptist Mission. vi, 261pp.

1964

*The Sword of the Preacher in the Mission Fields*. An Address to the Baptist Assembly 1956. Reprinted from *South African Outlook*, May, June and July. 23pp.

1965

MS. The Holy Spirit according to the Scriptures. Unpublished typescript. xii, 303pp.

1966

The translation of 'The Holy Spirit' in Bantu languages. *The Bible Translator* 17: 32-38.

The Baptist Convictions. *South African Outlook* 96 (1145): 156-158.

MS. God, the human form, and symbolism. Unpublished typescript. viii, 185pp.

1967

MS. The Trinity in the Old Testament. Unpublished typescript. 87pp.

MS. The unnamed prophets and their messages. Unpublished typescript. 25pp.

*Akabuku KabaMinisitala* (Ministers' Manual in Lamba).

MS. Do you know...? Unpublished typescript. 69pp.

1968

*BaPaulu Intanjisi YabaLamba*. Translation into Lamba of O.C. Doke, *Paul the Leper*.

MS. The Three-Sixteens. Unpublished typescript. 36pp.

1969

The gift of tongues – according to the Scriptures. *South African Baptist*, June, pp. 8-10, July, pp. 4-5.

1970

MS. Questions by God's Son. Unpublished typescript. 283pp.

1975

*Trekking in South-Central Africa*. South African Baptist Historical Society. New edn, ed. by Robert K. Herbert, with additional illustrations, 1993, Johannesburg, Witwatersrand University Press. x1, 210pp.

#### JOURNALS AND VOLUMES EDITED

1922-1947 Editor: *South African Baptist* (Incl. numerous editorial articles)

1931-1941 Joint Editor: *Bantu Studies*

1942-1953 Joint Editor: *African Studies*

1935-1953 Editor: "Bantu Treasury" Series (Eleven volumes published)

1949-1953 Editor: "Bantu Grammatical Archives" (Three volumes published)  
Editor: "Bantu Lexicographical Archives" (One volume published)

# A Personal Tribute to Clement Martyn Doke

---

L.W. Lanham

---

A new student's first interview with Professor Doke was a somewhat intimidating experience. There was no exchange of pleasantries, and information sought and given was strictly to the point. One was not asked to sit down. One was not given a sense of being disposed of as rapidly as possible, but of the Professor being intensely busy. And this was indeed true. His intensity of concentration was formidable. I know of no other academic capable of such sustained industry through long working days, and over months and years. There was, however, one day in the week on which all work stopped, for Clement Doke lived by the strictest of religious codes. Sunday was not so much a day of rest as a time for prayer and a reading of religious texts. On occasions, he preached and gave addresses in his local church, doubtless without rhetorical extravagance, but the sermon would have been prepared with thorough care.

I came to study with Professor Doke in 1948, older and more mature than the average run of students, and I remained to become his solitary senior student at the time of his retirement in 1953. One seldom saw Professor Doke outside his study on the first floor of the Cullen Library at Wits, nor, to my knowledge, did he ever frequent the staff common room. "Doc" Jeffreys (M.D.W. Jeffreys, who was Senior Lecturer in Anthropology) was among the more regular visitors to his study where conversation between the two would most likely be in the form of a good natured argument. No two men could have been more different in temperament, personality and belief: Jeffreys, bluff and hearty, with a cavalier attitude to data; Doke with the occasional fleeting smile and always meticulous about anything committed to writing.

From an early hour each day, Professor Doke would be closeted with J M Sikakane, working on the English-Zulu dictionary. An intruder would receive a mere dismissive word. Usually before lunch, he would give his lectures in his study, standing before a raised lectern. In his last years in the Department, he limited his teaching, confining himself mainly to advanced syntax – much as it appears in his *Zulu Syntax and Idiom* – and comparative Bantu. The programme of lectures was punctuated by long assignments (which were lengthy indeed) in both topics. More practical than theoretical, these projects required data collection and contact with informants. The Department of African Languages offered a representative range of languages at that time, all of which were expertly taught: C L S Nyembezi (Zulu), D T Cole (Tswana), F S M Mncube (Xhosa), and S M Mofokeng (Southern Sotho); the latter was deeply mourned when he died young. One project which took much of my time was writing a grammar – obviously in the Dokean model – of each of two remote Bantu languages for which I had access only to the New Testament and a concordance! This exercise stood me in very good stead in later years when, in the Molteno Project, I was required to prepare teachers' guides to teaching initial literacy in the mother tongue in Bantu languages of which I knew little. For the senior student, the main strengths in Doke's department lay in the comparative study of Bantu languages and in literature study (novels and poetry). After four years, I had been taken through all the better known works in Zulu, Xhosa and Southern Sotho in considerable depth. The department's main weakness was in the little success it achieved in imparting oral skills. The staff, distinguished in every other respect, had little training in method and approach.

With the passing of the years, a rather easier relationship developed with Professor Doke. I was invited to his home in Cecil Avenue, Melrose, for cocoa and cake, and conversation centring mainly on his dictionary research and his work in Bible translation. He vouchsafed little personal information, for example, his experiences working with his missionary father in the wilder parts of the Copper Belt' and the anguish of a long vigil over a dying wife. In turn he asked little of me, but was interested in my intentions as to an occupation after leaving university and in my financial state.

Never an affable man, one sensed a special privilege when Doke did unbend. I owe much to him. Apart from what was gained from his department in the broadest of perspectives on Bantu linguistics, and enthusiasm for the subject, I had stern lessons in the full meaning of that most critical of terms in academe: scholarship. There was seldom any inkling of what Doke had done on one's behalf. The waiving of

University regulations allowing me to finish the Honours degree a year early was probably engineered by him. A financial windfall in the form of a bursary in my most impecunious moments was certainly his doing. In 1953, the year of his early retirement, he told me of his intention, with the explanation that a progressive illness contracted in his years on the Copper Belt was one reason for giving up. Another was the urge to get on with his last great work: the translation of the Bible into Lamba, the language of his early missionary days. Briefly, in passing, he mentioned that his departure might open a junior post in the Department for which I should apply. For this opportunity, I was duly grateful. Academic posts were not readily come by in the immediate post-war years.

Professor Doke retired to the remote Eastern Province town of Alice. In so doing he imposed an intellectual isolation on himself which few other academics would have stood. He built a house around a huge library-cum-study in which he maintained his full working-day routine, surrounded by possibly the largest and probably the most valuable collection of Bantu bibliotheca and linguistic Africana. He was cared for in his advancing years by his daughter Erica. I was then (1956-60) on the staff of Rhodes University and occasionally made the dusty, uncomfortable journey to Alice to spend the day with the Dokes. Our conversation was much as it had ever been, with the bequeathing of his library being added to the topics. I never quite knew why he decided on the University of Zimbabwe (then Rhodesia) as the recipient for his academic library; the religious works went to the Baptist Theological College in Johannesburg.

My last meeting with Professor Doke was on the occasion of the tardy award of an honorary doctorate to one of the select few of truly distinguished scholars (in the strictest sense of the term) by the University of the Witwatersrand in 1972. Clement Doke's death in East London in February 1980 passed with little notice. That was the way he lived: single-minded in serving his God and pursuing his discipline.

#### NOTE

1. Doke's years as a missionary in the Copper Belt are described in his memoir *Trekking in South-Central Africa 1913-1919* (Witwatersrand University Press, 1993).

L W LANHAM  
Molteno Project  
Rhodes University

# C.M. Doke: A Critical Review by a Believing Outsider

---

E.B. van Wyk

---

It is indeed a privilege and an honour to contribute this paper to commemorate the centenary of the birth of a man whom I only met once, and then very briefly, a man who influenced the study of the African languages profoundly, and whose contributions cover an astonishingly wide range, substantively and theoretically. I shall concentrate on only one aspect of his work: his model of grammatical description which introduced what could be regarded as a paradigm shift in the African languages in its rejection of the inappropriate assumptions and terminology of earlier grammatical work, and which to this day exerts an influence on the grammatical description of South African languages, especially at pre-tertiary level.

The title of this paper is somewhat paradoxical. It describes the article as a 'critical review', because I shall argue that Doke's model is not scientifically valid. My rejection of the model, which in no way implies that the substantive aspects of Doke's contributions are negligible, therefore gives me the status of the outsider to which the title alludes. But I shall also show that the foundations of Doke's approach were so sound that they became the basis not only of my own thinking, but of all future research. That is why I can claim to be a believer. And because of this the paper acquires an autobiographical element, as it will also, by implication, reflect the evolution of my own thinking. Hence my frequent use of the past tense.

My mentor in African languages, the late JA Engelbrecht, was a student of C Meinhof and D Westermann. The historical paradigm in



which I was trained had undeniable merits but lacked a clearly defined descriptive basis. The terminology used to underpin the historical structure was largely based on traditional (that is, European) grammar. Doke's *Textbook of Zulu Grammar* therefore came as a revelation when I first became acquainted with it in the early 1950s. It had very much the same effect on me which Meinhof had and which later De Saussure, Bloomfield, Trubetzkoy, De Groot, and especially Reichling, and still later Chomsky, would have: the thrill of the discovery of exciting and audacious new intellectual horizons. Here was an author who offered a coherent and explicit model of linguistic description, with two cornerstones: a well reasoned theory of conjunctive word division and a persuasive classification of parts of speech. No author on African languages before Doke was so explicit about his theoretical assumptions. I was awed and became an ardent believer.

Doke's approach was outlined, illustrated, justified, championed and applied in numerous publications. The clearest and most complete expositions are found in his *Text-Book of Zulu Grammar* and his *Bantu Linguistic Terminology* (1935). I shall refer to these two publications throughout the present work.<sup>1</sup> Quotations from the *Text-Book* will be taken from the fourth edition, published in 1945. I will use Zulu examples in the analysis which follows.

I started applying the model in the spirit of the following invitation issued by Doke in the preface to his *Outline Grammar of Bantu* (1943):

The author will be glad to receive criticisms of this outline, with a view to correcting errors, elaborating points that are not clear or adding to the information contained herein.

It soon became apparent that there were indeed shortcomings which had to be addressed.<sup>2</sup> The most obvious ones concerned the second of the two cornerstones of his approach: his classification of parts of speech. There proved to be inconsistencies and contradictions which could not be resolved. The classification simply did not stand the test of closer scrutiny. Many examples of such contradictions can be given, but I will confine myself to only one.<sup>3</sup>

Doke distinguishes six fundamental or basic parts of speech, '... taking each complete word as representing some part of speech, according to the work it does in the sentence ...' (1945:33). Four of these are sub-divided '... according to the form in which they appear ...' (1945:34), thus yielding twelve real or ultimate parts of speech. The complete system is

summarised by him as follows (cf. 1945:34):

Main/Fundamental/Basic	Real/Ultimate
I. Substantive:	(a) Noun 1 (b) Pronoun 2
II. Qualificative:	(a) Adjective 3 (b) Relative 4 (c) Enumerative 5 (d) Possessive 6
III. Predicative:	(a) Verb 7 (b) Copulative 8
IV. Descriptive:	(a) Adverb 9 (b) Ideophone 10
V. Conjunctive	11
VI. Interjective	12

The qualificative, one of the six main parts of speech, is defined as 'a word which qualifies a substantive' (1935:181; 1945:34). On closer scrutiny it is found, however, that qualificatives qualify not only substantives (that is, nouns and pronouns), for example, *umfazi omuhle* 'the beautiful woman', but also copulatives (that is, predicatives), for example, *ngumfazi omuhle* 'it is a beautiful woman', adverbs, for example, *ngezembe elikhulu* 'with a big axe', possessives (= qualificatives), for example, *abafana besikole sethu* 'the children of our school', and even vocatives (which Doke classifies under interjectives), for example, *mntwana wami!* 'my child!'.

These contradictions cannot be explained away in terms of his approach. It cannot, for instance, be argued that *omuhle* qualifies the 'element' *umfazi* in *ngumfazi* and not *ngumfazi* as such. Doke is emphatic that his classification is based on 'complete words, and not the individual parts composing words ...' (1945:33). This means that neither a qualificative nor any other part of speech can relate to individual parts of words.

It may be argued that some of the problems arising from these discrepancies could be solved by modifications to the classification. Provision could be made, for example, for a word to belong to more than one part of speech. *Ngumfazi* could then be said to be a copulative as well

as a noun. When qualified by *omuhle* it would be in its capacity as a noun and not as a copulative. However, this would affect the basic principles of Doke's classification, which require words to be classified into main parts of speech. Once multiple membership of parts of speech on the basis of syntactic function is allowed, it invites the criticism that further divisions and sub-divisions will have to be made to accommodate still finer distinctions, which, again, would lead to unmanageable complexity.

This point brings me to the next discrepancy. When Doke's definitions of the six main parts of speech are analysed, it is found that only four of these refer to 'the work they do in the sentence', that is, to their syntactic functions. The substantive, for example, is defined purely in semantic terms, as 'a word signifying anything concrete or abstract, or any concept' (1935:205; 1945:34). The definitions of the 'real parts of speech' suffer from the same deficiency. Of the ten he distinguishes, only five are defined morphologically, that is, in terms of 'the form in which they appear'. The noun, for example, is defined semantically as 'a word which signifies the name of anything concrete or abstract' (1935:152; 1945:36).

It was obvious, then, that one of the two cornerstones of the Dokean model had to be rejected. A new and completely different classification of parts of speech, based on different principles, which would avoid problems such as those mentioned above, was called for.

I tried various alternatives. I toyed, amongst other approaches, with a modified concept of case, by which words such as *ngumfazi*, *ngezembe*, *besikole* and *mfazi!* could be regarded as realising different cases of the noun. This ran into new problems. A word like *nomntwana*, for example, could not be handled in this way since it would realise different 'cases' corresponding to its different syntactic functions. It would have to be regarded as 'inclusive' in *nomntwana ufile* 'the child also died', as 'connective' in *umfazi nomntwana bafile* 'the woman and the child died' and as 'associative' in *ngikhuluma nomntwana* 'I speak to the child'. (It may be pointed out in passing that only the last of these three functions can be accommodated in Doke's system.)

It eventually became apparent that the problems encountered with parts of speech sprang not so much from the way in which they were classified as from the conjunctive method of word division, the other cornerstone of the Dokean paradigm. The main defect proved to be the implicit assumption that 'formatives' such as *\*ngu* are derivational morphemes used to derive parts of speech (such as copulatives) from other parts of speech (such as nouns). It is obvious that it is not only *umfazi* in *ngumfazi*

*omuhle* which is made predicative by the prefixation of *\*ngu-*, but the whole phrase *umfazi omuhle*. In *ngumfazi nendoda* 'it is a man and a woman', again, it is the coordinate phrase *umfazi nendoda* which is predicative. The constituents of these phrases are [*ng[umfazi omuhle]*] and [*ng[umfazi nendoda]*] respectively, not [*ngumfazi*][*omuhle*] and [*ngumfazi*][*nendoda*] as assumed by Doke. This means that the morpheme *\*ngu* has a status different from that of regular derivational morphemes.

It was therefore necessary to investigate the validity of Doke's word theory. On closer inspection this also revealed serious flaws.

In *Bantu Linguistic Terminology* and elsewhere Doke defines the word as 'that sound or group of sounds which is subject to one main stress and one only' (1935:220). The most detailed definition is found in his *Text-Book*, however. I quote the latter together with its preamble and other relevant remarks. The italics are Doke's unless otherwise indicated.

From an examination of the part played by length and stress in Zulu, the following law of word-division is elucidated: *In each word or word-group there is one and only one main stress, usually on the penultimate syllable, with secondary stresses falling at intervals. A word, then, is a mental concept signified by a part of speech which has in itself a main stress, and thus may be pronounced alone, not necessarily attached to anything else* [Author's italics] ... Words may be further analysed into formative parts, but these formatives can never stand alone; they are not 'parts of speech', but merely 'formatives in speech'. (1945:28)

This definition claims by implication that the Zulu word has four characteristics which could be regarded as criteria of word-division: (a) it is a mental concept, (b) it signifies a part of speech, (c) it has in itself a main stress (usually on the penultimate syllable), and (d) it may be pronounced alone. The claim that the Zulu word is a mental concept is totally unhelpful. Taken literally it implies that the word is a psychological phenomenon and not a linguistic unit. Taken to mean that words are the linguistic correlates or expressions or realisations of mental concepts brings us no further either, since it gives no indication of what mental concepts are. It may be assumed that a mental concept is that which is conceived by the mind, but then it can be argued justifiably that mental concepts may be expressed not only by words but also by 'formatives' such as *ngi-* (the concept 'first person singular'), and by phrases containing several words, such as *inkosi wesizwe* (the concept

'king of the nation'). It is obvious, then, that this component of the definition has to be rejected.

The second implicit claim implies that words are *grammatical units* which form the basis of grammatical analysis and description. This has to be granted, but read together with other arguments in favour of conjunctivism problems do indeed arise. These will be discussed later. For the present, however, it may be pointed out that this claim does not offer a criterion by which it can be decided which grammatical units are words and which not.

The claim that words have in themselves main stress cannot be substantiated either. Zulu, and indeed the other languages of the South-Eastern zone, do not have stress, but rather length on the penultimate syllables of words. This has been pointed out, amongst others, by Doke's ex-student, Desmond Cole (1955:xxxiii).

Amending the definition to allow for length instead of, or as alternative to, stress would not save this criterion, however. Not every word in a sentence has length on the penultimate syllable. Contrary to what Doke claims,<sup>4</sup> stress (read: length) occurs in normal speech only on words in sentence-final and pre-pausal position, and in word-list and possibly declamatory style. Penultimate length is therefore not an *actual* feature of words, but at best only a *potential* feature. The definition would therefore have to be amended to allow for potential penultimate length.

But this would not save the definition either, since it would still not apply to monosyllabic words such as the conjunction *nxa* and the demonstratives *lo*, *le* and *la*.<sup>5</sup> Neither would it apply to auxiliary verbs which have to be followed by complementary verbs and therefore cannot appear in sentence-final or pre-pausal position.

Stress as a criterion of word-division does not fail on these grounds only. The law of word-division as formulated by Doke in the preamble to his 1945 definition allows for word-groups such as *ngifun' ukuhamba* also to have one main stress only. Assuming that the law could be reformulated to accommodate potential penultimate length as a form of stress or accent, it would still not provide a criterion by which *words* could be distinguished from *word-groups*.

It would seem, then, that any attempt to define the word in terms of stress and/or length has to be abandoned. It remains to be seen whether the fourth implicit claim, that words may be pronounced alone, can save the conjunctive word concept.

Read together with Doke's remark that formatives can never stand alone, this claim implies that words may be used by themselves in and as

sentences, for example, *Hamba!* 'Go!'. However, as a criterion this also fails, since many words cannot be used in this fashion. Such words include not only conjunctions and auxiliary verbs but even regular verbs like *ngifuna* 'I want' in *ngifuna ukuhamba* 'I want to go'.

It is obvious that the definitions of *Bantu Linguistic Terminology* and *Text-Book of Zulu Grammar* have to be rejected *in toto*. It remains, then, to try to find independent proof of the correctness of conjunctive word-division as advocated by Doke, on which a different and more valid definition can be based. In *Bantu Linguistic Terminology* he provided a number of arguments not reflected in his definitions, and these may be considered for this purpose.

With regard to the verb in the Bantu languages Doke argues that the various verbal formatives have fixed positions in relation to the verb stem and that such fixed positions do not exist in English and French (1935:11). From this he concludes that 'the very immutability of the Bantu positions indicates adhesion' (1935:12). While it is probably true that the transposibility of linguistic units as illustrated by him for English is an indication of word autonomy, it would be incorrect to claim that fixed positions with respect to other elements in a sentence are *proof* that linguistic units lack word status. Applied to English and French, it would mean that articles, prepositions, conjunctions and many other words lack word status because of their fixed positions with respect to following words, which, of course, is not the case.

Doke also mentions that the distinct individuality of English words is further emphasised by the fact that they are capable of receiving emphatic stress and may take final or isolated positions in a sentence (1935:12). Again, these phenomena are possibly valid positive indications of word status, but cannot be applied negatively. No words in the South-Eastern languages can receive emphatic stress, but this does not mean that there are no words in these languages. Furthermore, even in English, to which Doke refers, there are many words which cannot be used in final or isolated positions in sentences. These include, again, articles, conjunctions, prepositions, auxiliaries, and so forth.<sup>6</sup>

Finally, Doke makes the following well-known claim (1935:14):

There is an inherent word-division in all Bantu speech, and Natives are able to divide accurately without fail, as soon as they understand what the investigator is seeking.

He illustrates this with reference to experiments conducted at Salisbury

(now Harare) and various mission stations in Zimbabwe. With the honesty of a great scholar he reports that some of his subjects did not respond immediately and that he had to resort to direct explanation. Some subjects even needed 'a few days of training' (1935:15). He also mentions that they sometimes joined more than one word together. By his own evidence, then, it is clear that their reactions were neither spontaneous nor consistent. If it was natural for mother-tongue speakers to divide conjunctively it would not have been necessary to explain to them what was needed and there would have been no inaccuracies.

The fundamental flaw in 'evidence' of this nature is that the concept 'word' as used in linguistics is a technical term. Neither in English nor in any other language should its technical meaning be confused with its non-technical, 'everyday' meanings. In order, therefore, for an unsophisticated mother-tongue speaker to react to attempts to elicit his intuitions about words requires that he be provided, explicitly or implicitly, with a word theory. And such a theory can only embody the preconceptions of the investigator. Doke admits as much in the following comment *à propos* of a Zezuru speaker at Salisbury who did not produce consistent results (1935:14):

His conception of *mazgwi* was very vague, when the term was applied in the sense of 'words'. For investigations of this type the ... subject must be either unsophisticated and unable to read, or else he must have sufficient education to be able to do a certain amount of self-analysis.

The problem would have been the same had Doke tried to determine the intuitions of his subjects about other linguistic units such as the phonemes, the morphemes or the adverbial clauses of their language. The only difference is that these terms have no counterparts in non-technical use. While such experiments or experiences may prove the ability of subjects to apply linguistic principles or concepts to language material, they do not prove the intuitive correctness of conjunctive word-division.

One other argument raised by Doke merits attention. He states (1935:14):

To-day, throughout Africa, mainly due to the exertions of the International Institute of African Languages and Cultures, phonetic principles are being applied to the revision and improvement of orthographies in many areas. The same principle,

based on the pronunciation, must be applied in the settlement of word-division. Full conjunctive word-division follows this method.

This means that word-division is primarily an orthographical concern and that it should be based exclusively on phonetic considerations. This is not reconcilable with the claim of the *Text-Book of Zulu Grammar* definition that the word constitutes a part of speech and therefore a grammatical unit. It may be possible to establish phonetic units corresponding to conjunctively written words, but such units could not justifiably be used as the basis of grammatical description, just as it would be unjustified to base grammatical analyses on phonemes, syllables, rhythm groups or some other phonetic or phonological unit.

It is significant that full conjunctive word-division originated in the orthographies of the Nguni languages. Doke readily admits that as far back as 1905 Bryant concluded on much the same grounds that words should be conjunctively written (1935:16).<sup>7</sup> The Nguni languages, perhaps more than any other African languages, are characterised by the frequent occurrence of vowel coalescence, for example, *nomfazi* (= \**na+umfazi*) and vowel elision, for example, *ngumfazi* (\**ngu+umfazi*). It seems likely that this characteristic gave rise to a number of implicit assumptions which were not reflected in any of Doke's definitions of conjunctivism or arguments in favour of it or, for that matter, in any other theory of conjunctive word division in the African languages.

These are the following:

- a. Words are basically orthographic units.
- b. The only manner in which words can be divided orthographically is by means of spaces.
- c. If linguistic elements cannot be divided orthographically by means of spaces they cannot be words.<sup>8</sup>
- d. Word boundaries always coincide with syllable boundaries. It is therefore impossible for a word to consist of, or end in, non-syllabic phonemes, or for a syllable to be spread over word boundaries.

The other cornerstone of the Dokean model therefore also crumbled, and with it the whole edifice collapsed for me. It was obvious that a new theory of the word in the Bantu languages was necessary, a theory not influenced by orthographical considerations such as the practicality of conjunctive or disjunctive division. Such a theory would be concerned

with the question: What *is* a word in the African languages? and not: How should words be *divided* orthographically?

Did it mean, however, that Doke had made no contribution to the analysis and description of the grammar of the African languages? Not at all. It is only the structure that could not withstand critical analysis; the foundations remained unshaken. And it is these foundations that exercised a lasting influence on me and on African linguistics in general.

The following words voice the principles on which Doke built his method and which I believe are as valid today as in 1935 and will be valid as long as African languages are studied (1935:2-3):

... Bantu grammatical structure is Bantu, and must not be expected to conform to European or Classical standards in every respect.

And:

Do we realise how much our accepted grammatical standards are dependent upon historical heritage? There is no real historical heritage for us in Bantu grammar today. We are therefore not bound down in any way to the past, and Bantu languages can be examined, recorded and classified according to their merits, untrammelled by what has gone before. This does not mean that we are to ignore what philology and grammar have through the centuries contributed. We find a remarkable underlying similarity in all grammatical systems, a uniformity of method in language expression and structure through all human speech; and what has been done in other languages – if done with care and precision – is of inestimable value in assisting us in real work upon Bantu.

The informed reader will recognise that in these somewhat outmoded terms Doke provided African linguistics with a sound and completely valid principle to handle the relation between language universals and language specific features, namely: Give due recognition to that which is genuinely universal, but do not force African grammar into false universal moulds. This principle placed the responsibility on future investigators to continually review their descriptive apparatus in order to do justice to both the universal features of language and the unique features of the African languages.<sup>9</sup> After Doke it was no longer possible to use inappropriate preconceived concepts and terminology based on the grammars of European or classical languages.

On these foundations did Doke erect a grammatical edifice which was, for his day, surprisingly original and bold. That it did not stand the test of time is not important; what is important is that the foundations proved to be solid. I would like to recall in this connection the words of a modern linguist, Charles Fillmore, who said that if linguists were not prepared to risk being dead wrong, linguistics would never be able to progress. Doke risked, did not succeed, but left the study of African languages infinitely the richer by providing it with solid foundations for future development.

### NOTES

1. The most important of his other publications relevant to present issues are listed in the bibliography.
2. I shall not discuss the definitions or arguments of other authors who held similar views or attempted to justify or amplify Doke's approach. The criticisms voiced here apply also to them, *mutatis mutandis*.
3. A more detailed analysis is found in my review of Cole's *Tswana Grammar* (1956).
4. 'According to the rule of 'one main stress one word' the mother-tongue speaker (author's term) speaks, whether slowly or deliberately or in quick narration' (1935: 18).
5. Doke admits by implication that monosyllabic words do not conform to his definition. Cf. 1935:17-18.
6. Non-isolatable words can, of course, be used in this manner, but only in *suppositio materialis*, where they refer to themselves and lack their normal grammatical functions, for example, *The first word in the sentence is 'the'*. *Suppositio materialis* causes morphemes, phonemes and letters also to be used as *ad hoc* words, for example, *The first morpheme in 'indispensable' is 'in-'*, *The first phoneme in 'Peter' is /p/, etc.*
7. Earlier protagonists of conjunctive word division for the Nguni languages included Appleyard (1850), Wanger (1917) and Samuelson (1925), all of whom held views similar to those of Doke.
8. Doke admits this by implication in the following statement (1935:21):

In Zulu, when coalescence takes place, it is compulsory. There is

no alternative; and the resultant *must be one word*. (Author's italics)

9. This distinction makes it possible to identify the basic defect of Doke's word theory: it is language-specific. Words, if they can be proved to exist, are likely to be universal features of language. They may have particular attributes in individual languages, but these can be established and reflected in definitions only after the words of the relevant languages have been identified, and not before. Advocating a language-specific word theory is equivalent to developing language-specific theories of the morpheme, the phoneme, the sentence, etc.

### BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Appleyard, J.W. 1850. *The Kafir Language*. King William's Town: Wesleyan Missionary Society.
- Cole, D.T. 1955. *An Introduction to Tswana Grammar*. London: Longmans, Green.
- Doke, C.M. 1931. *The Problem of Word Division in Bantu, with Special Reference to the Languages of Mashonaland*. Department of Native Affairs, Southern Rhodesia.
- 1926. *The Phonetics of the Zulu Language*. *Bantu Studies*. Special Number.
- 1927. *Text-book of Zulu Grammar*. Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press.
- 1931. *A Comparative Study in Shona Phonetics*. Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press
- 1935. *Bantu Linguistic Terminology*. London: Longmans, Green.
- 1938. *Text-book of Lamba Grammar*. Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press.
- 1943: *Outline Grammar of Bantu*. Johannesburg, University of the Witwatersrand, Department of African Languages. Roneo.
- 1944. Conjunctive writing of Bantu languages. *Rhodes-Livingstone Journal* June:10-15.
- 1945. *Text-book of Zulu Grammar* (4 edn). London: Longmans, Green.

- 1946. Language. In I. Schapera (ed.), *The Bantu-speaking Tribes of South Africa*. Cape Town: Maskew Miller, pp.309-31.
- 1949. Bantu Languages, Inflectional with a Tendency towards Agglutination. *African Studies* 9:1. Repr. in R.K. Herbert (ed.), *Foundations in Southern African Linguistics*, pp.185-203. Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1993.
- 1954. *The Southern Bantu Languages*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.
- 1955. *Zulu Syntax and Idiom*. London: Longmans, Green.
- Doke, C.M. and Mofokeng, S.M. 1957. *Text-book of Southern Sotho Grammar*. Cape Town: Longman.
- Samuelson, R.C.A. 1925. *Zulu Grammar*. Durban: Knox.
- Van Wyk, E.B. 1956. Review of D.T. Cole, *An Introduction to Tswana Grammar*. *African Studies* 15:146-54.
- Wanger, W. 1917: *Konversationsgrammatik der Zulu-Sprache*. Marianhill: St Thomas Aquinas Drückerei.

E.B. VAN WYK  
Department of African Languages  
Rand Afrikaans University

# A Change of Mood

## Towards a Re-analysis of the Dokean Classification

---

David H. Gough

---

Doke's contribution to Bantu linguistics can possibly be understood by analogy to a certain (possibly mythical) traditional people who never quite cleaned their cooking pots, but always left a little bit over. Cooking pots were handed down from generation to generation, so there was, in a sense, a continuity in the pot extending far beyond the immediate meal. Doke's model itself bears some of the hallmarks of European grammatical tradition,<sup>1</sup> and in most 'new approaches' Dokean influences continue to remain in evidence. The pot, in a way, has never been scrubbed clean.

In evaluating the impact of Dokean linguistics, it is fair to say that outside observers would be struck by the insularism that it has provided for linguistic enquiry in Southern Africa as well as its dominance as a frame of reference for such an extended period. While it is clear that such insularism has delayed the application of new models, at the same time it is important to note that Doke's model has also provided a workable frame of reference – a practical, accessible and easy to apply taxonomic framework whose productivity would have been equally striking to the outside observer.

### *MOODS: DOKE AND AFTER*

The identification and classification of moods in Bantu languages is something that has been inherited, not directly from Doke, but in fact from the earliest grammars of Southern Bantu languages (Wilkes 1988).

The 'discovery' of moods in the Bantu language in this regard stems directly from the European grammatical tradition which formed the frame of reference and classificatory schema for the early Bantu pioneers. Languages were *expected* to have moods of the Indo-European sort, just as they were expected to have 'relative pronouns' and 'cases'. The early grammarians were thus 'primed' to discover moods in the first place according to the dictates of their tradition.

Although contested by Khoali (1993), Cole's claim that Doke's model freed linguistic description from the many presuppositions of the European tradition (Cole 1971) appears to have some truth at least in the analysis of moods. Doke maintained the term 'mood', but it became a label for classifying sets of verbal inflections not included under the traditional sets of moods and therefore took on a different significance. Mood was thus extended to cover distinctly a-European usages – no longer were there only such 'traditional' moods such as subjunctive and the indicative relating, in some way to 'speaker attitude', but also the *participial* (or *situative* as Doke initially called it) and *potential* moods. This particular usage allowed the subsequent identification of such non-traditional moods as the 'relative' mood, and 'consecutive' mood, which are certainly not drawn from the stock of Indo-European moods. It is probably such usage, and the strain it caused with the more limited traditional European usage of the term which has generated the considerable debate and problems of analysis regarding moods in the languages of Southern Africa.

A survey of the literature on moods in Southern Bantu language scholarship indicates that some authors have avoided the term 'mood' entirely (speaking about 'forms' or 'categories' instead), others have denied the existence of moods altogether, and yet others have vigorously defended their existence.<sup>2</sup> For those who have maintained the term and worked more or less within the traditional framework, what has emerged has been a puzzle-solving exercise involving, for instance, the determination of specific moods in particular languages, and the identification of forms which could not appropriately be termed moods.<sup>3</sup> In the history of the classification of moods in Nguni at least, the number of postulated moods has varied from seven to three; see, for example, Davey (1973) and Van Rooyen (1984). Some landmarks in this exercise as applied to Xhosa have been (in more or less chronological order):

- the postulation of a jussive mood (Boyce 1834), a commentative mood (Jordan, undated) and a relative mood (Pahl 1967)

- the exclusion of the imperative as a mood on the basis that it is a 'non-finite form' (Louw 1963)
- the use of the term 'form' in certain instances (for example, the temporal and potential) in opposition to mood (Louw 1963).

There has also been some debate on the status of the participial – whether it a sub-mood, or a separate mood type<sup>4</sup> – as well as similar debate on the so called past-subjunctive mood, with conflicting views emerging on its separate status *vis à vis* the present subjunctive (see for example, Wilkes 1991 and Posthumus 1991). What has been striking about such debates is that they have typically been focused on one language alone with the rather peculiar result that standard descriptions of various local Bantu languages show some variation – in many instances rather unmotivated – in the classification of moods. The literature also indicates another fairly influential approach which has been the classification of moods in terms of their syntactic distribution as either 'dependent' or 'independent', as discussed in detail by Davey (1973:124ff). In current formal syntactic analysis, the wholesale importation of a variety of moods reflects a continuity of Dokean and possibly even pre-Dokean classifications, for example, Visser and Du Plessis (1992).

Recent work by Louwrens (1990) and Fourie (1991) has emphasised, quite correctly in my view, that considerable problems have been created by the vagueness of the term 'mood' and how it has been applied in past scholarship. In this regard, Louwrens follows Palmer (1986) in stressing the importance of distinguishing *mood* and *modality*. While mood refers to a particular morphosyntactic form of the verb, modality is defined in essentially semantic terms as reflecting the speakers attitude to what s/he is saying. The two most important types of modality appear to be 'deontic' modality (which corresponds to the speech act category of directives) and 'epistemic' modality (which corresponds to the speech act category of assertives). It is Louwrens's opinion that 'many of the inconsistencies which prevail in existing descriptions in Northern Sotho have been brought about by grammarians' confusion of mood and modality' (1990:11); he notes that in order to identify the moods more accurately, those verbal inflections which are modally significant 'inasmuch as they distinguish one mood from another will have to be determined' (*ibid.*). Although he restricts his discussion to Northern Sotho, Louwrens's point has obvious implications to the application of the term 'mood' in Southern Bantu generally.

It seems to me, however, that despite Louwrens's insight in this regard,



the very traditional confusion he notes may feature in his own re-analysis. While rejecting the term 'mood' for the relative and infinitive as these are not 'modally significant' (1990:16), Louwrens considers (as is the case in traditional analyses) the participial and habitual as moods as they indicate the modality of 'epistemic simultaneousness' and 'epistemic habit' respectively. He also appears to imply that the consecutive use of the subjunctive is a particular sub-type of epistemic modality. If we take the definition of mode as reflecting a 'speaker's attitude to what s/he is saying', and we are concerned with 'modally significant inflections', then it becomes problematic in this sense to speak about 'habitual mood' or 'participial mood' at all: these surely have to do more with aspectual distinctions than with speaker attitude. Such an analysis may be stretching the meaning of modality beyond practical utility. In fact, it will be claimed in this paper that something quite different from 'modality' appears to form the basis of at least some of what have been traditionally labelled as moods, at least in the Dokean sense. If a definition of mood needs to be given, the one that is followed in this paper is that a mood is simply 'a set of syntactic and semantic contrasts signalled by alternative paradigms of the verb' (Crystal 1980:230).

My own interest in moods arises from research into Xhosa narrative which indicated to me that verbal categories are organised at least partly on discourse pragmatic factors. Specifically, the concepts of *grounding* and *connexity* contribute significantly to explaining the structure of, at least, the Xhosa verbal system. Such an approach, of course, focuses on the idea that the structure of language can be described in terms outside that structure itself.

### CONNEXITY / DEPENDENCE

The notion of syntactic connexity, or, in more traditional terms, 'dependence' obviously relates to a strand from previous analyses. Analysis of discourse reveals a basic and perhaps obvious principle that the relative syntactic dependence of a clause signals its relative conceptual connection or integration to its discourse context (Gough 1986:79, see also Givón 1990:826ff for a similar perspective). In addition, the more dependent a verbal form is, the less it shows the prototypical features of verbs such tense-aspect, modality and agreement (see Gough 1986:37) which together constitute the traditional category of 'finiteness' (Givón 1990). *Finiteness* then is a scalar quality which

corresponds to the degree of dependence of a verbal form.

Before describing the concept of grounding, I would like to note that these points relating to dependence seem to explain to me the rather curious distribution of the present subjunctive in quite different contexts in Southern Bantu languages. It occurs, as we know, in the contexts of complements to non-factive verbs, in purpose clauses, hortatives and polite requests. This use readily motivates the term 'subjunctive', at least in the traditional sense. But it is also used to indicate connected actions – its so-called 'consecutive' usage, typically in the indicative present and future as well as after the imperative. It seems to me that no one has spent much time in trying to explain this, although Doke (1927) avoids the use of the term 'subjunctive' altogether for this reason, and speaks instead of the 'dependent mood' in describing the subjunctive.

Carlson (1992) has noted that this usage, while not being a feature of the 'Indo-European' subjunctive, is not unknown in the languages of Africa, outside of Bantu as narrowly defined. He cites similar uses for other Niger-Kordofanian languages, and, interestingly enough, for at least one Nilo-Saharan language.

Ignoring other 'moods' for the moment, we may follow Carlson in noting that the imperative, subjunctive and indicative form a scale from least to most finite in terms of the markings of finiteness mentioned above. The imperative has the least markings for finiteness, the subjunctive is marked at least for person (but has no aspectual or tense distinctions), while the indicative has a full house, as it were, of all the relevant markings. Given this as background, Carlson makes the significant claim that the subjunctive is used in contexts in which only limited coding of finiteness is required (1992:78).<sup>5</sup>

Why, then, is the subjunctive used in polite requests? Following Carlson, we may note that its medial position on the scale of finiteness makes it ideal candidate for this function in Bantu, generally being marked for person which thus encodes a degree of removal from the speech context. The hortative, in being a less manipulative speech act than an imperative, also involves a degree of removal from the speech context and its encoding as the subjunctive is similarly appropriate.

The subjunctive, in this light, is also suited to indicating connected events as Carlson notes. In basic terms, in connected discourse there will be an assumption of conceptual connexity or continuity unless otherwise indicated. In this respect, as long as successive clauses encode information which is conceptually connected, tense, aspect and modality markings need not be indicated, as these are, so to speak, carried over

from some previous point. This explains the occurrence of the subjunctive in examples like:

1. *Namhlanje ndiza kuya edolophini ndithenge inyama. Ngomso ndiza*  
Today I-come to-go LOC-town I-SUBJ-buy meat. Tomorrow I-come  
*kuhlala ekhaya ndiphumle.*  
to-stay LOC-home I-SUBJ-rest.

'Today I am going to go to town and buy meat. Tomorrow I am going to stay at home and rest.'

Here two connected series of events are recounted with a break in conceptual coherence corresponding to the break in dependent clauses.

Of course, the situation in at least some of the Southern Bantu languages is a bit more complex than the one Carlson describes. Other less than finite forms include the so-called participial and consecutive which also need to be accounted for. And if these both show decreased markings of finiteness, what distinguishes them internally? In order to explain this we need to examine the concept of grounding.

### *Background and Foreground Information*

The distinction between background and foreground is, of course, basic to human perception. It is also one of the most basic concepts in discourse analysis. According to Hopper and Thompson (1980:280):

Users of a language are constantly required to design their utterances in accord with their own communicative goals and with their perception of their listeners needs. Yet, in any speaking situation, some parts of what is said are more relevant than others. That part of a discourse which does not immediately and critically contribute to the speaker's goal, but which merely assists, amplifies or comments on it, is referred to as BACKGROUND. By contrast, the material that supplies the main points of the discourse is known as the FOREGROUND.

In metaphorical terms the foreground event clauses of a narrative form its skeleton – its basic structure, which advances the story itself. The event clauses are arranged in terms of temporal sequence forming an *event line*.

The background information adds flesh to this skeleton, not advancing the story but rather characterising the backdrop against which the story develops. For this reason it is also known as *durative descriptive information* (to be referred to as d/d information in the discussion below). In this regard, consider the following example:<sup>6</sup>

2.
  - (a) *Yahamba lahamba.*
  - (b) *Lithe lisahamba njalo ladibana nomvundla.*
  - (c) *Lafika ijoni labuza kumvundla ukuba khangeliwubone umvundla.*
  - (d) *Umvundla lo naw wayenxiba indevu apha phezu komlomo.*
  - (e) *Wabuza umvundla, 'Unjani lo mvundla uwufunayo?'*
  - (f) *Lathi eli joni ukuphendula ukuphendula, 'Ufana nawe.'*
  - (g) *Wathi umvundla, 'Hayi, zange ndiwubone umvundla oneendevu.'*
  - (h) *Wathi umvundla, 'Hayi, hamba, mlhawumbi uphazamile.'*
  - (i) *Hayi ke, nejoni laqonda okokuba mhlawumbi liphazamile.*
  - (j) *Lahamba, labuyela umva.*
  - (k) *Lithe lisahamba njalo, laqonda ukuba, 'Hayi...'*
- (a) He travelled and travelled.
- (b) While he was so travelling, he met a rabbit.
- (c) The soldier arrived and asked the rabbit whether it had seen a rabbit at all.
- (d) (The rabbit was wearing a moustache here above the mouth)
- (e) The rabbit asked, 'What's this rabbit like that you're looking for?'
- (f) The soldier answered, 'He looks like you.'
- (g) The rabbit said, 'I've never seen a rabbit with a beard.'
- (h) The rabbit said again, 'No, go, maybe you're mistaken.'
- (i) Anyway, the soldier too thought he was perhaps mistaken.
- (j) He travelled and went back.
- (k) While he was so travelling, he thought, 'No...'

Here we may note that each successive event clause advances the story line and that it is either temporally or causally consequential to the clause that precedes it. Changing the order of any of these clauses would change our interpretation of the events they encode. The d/d information, however, is off the event line. We may note that (d) for example, is not temporally or causally related to the events that precede or follow it. Rather it represents parenthetical background information necessary for the comprehension of the events.

In conceptual terms, the distinction between durative descriptive and foregrounded 'event' information can be seen in terms of *temporal grounding*. Such temporal grounding is parallel to the organisation of visual information. According to Eysenck (1984:33) a fundamental way in which visual information is organised is the 'segregation of the visual field into one part called the figure and another part called the ground'. In general, the figure has 'thing-like' qualities, is well-defined and bounded, while the ground in which the figure is perceived is, in contrast, continuous, less definite and boundless. An example of this is the figure of a house perceived against the background of the sky. Events can be seen as temporal figures perceived as temporally bound and discrete against a temporal background of continuous and durative situations. Such grounding which is basic to perception thus also appears to form an important organisational principle in language. Wallace (1982:214), for instance, presents the hypothesis that certain linguistic categories 'function to differentiate *linguistic* figure from *linguistic* ground' while Longacre (1981:329) notes that the figure-ground categories once distinguished solely on semantic basis are 'more and more seen to correlate with the morphosyntactics of the world's languages'. This analysis supports this particular perspective.

### TOWARDS A RE-ANALYSIS

It is the concepts of grounding and connexity as outlined above that I claim form the organisational basis of a good deal of the Xhosa verbal system. In particular I claim that the participial, consecutive and indicative moods as well as the so-called 'continuous tense' forms form a sub-system that is structured around grounding and connexity. In what follows I shall give a re-analysis of each in terms of the notions of grounding and connexity.

#### *The Consecutive Mood*

The consecutive marker is *-a-* (to be referred to here as CONS). The positive form of the consecutive is: *SC-VR-a*, for example,

*ixhego li-a-thetha*  
old-man he-CONS-talk  
*ixhego lathetha*  
'and the old man spoke'

The consecutive has been traditionally described as a 'subordinate mood type' with the function of, *inter alia*, encoding consecutive actions in the past (Davey 1973:106). Consider the following example:

#### 3. *UThemba uye evenkileni wathenga ukutya wagoduka*

Themba he-PERF-IND-go loc-shop he-CONS-buy food he-CONS-go-home  
'Themba went to the shop, bought food and went home'.

Here the first (non-consecutive) clause of the sentence is in the 'independent' indicative mood (perfect) while the second (consecutive) clause is in the dependent consecutive mood. Connection is thus not expressed through an overt conjunction such as 'and' in English but rather through a verbal inflection.

The consecutive is not marked for tense or aspect and thus codes less finiteness than other verb forms. Consider the following textual example of the consecutive:

4.

- (a) *wabetha kuyo ephondweni*  
he-CONS-hit to-it LOC-horn
- (b) *kwasuka kwaphuma ukuyta*  
it-CONS-go it-CONS-come-out food
- (c) *watya*  
He-CONS-eat
- (d) *wahlutha*  
he-CONS-full
- (e) *wagoduka*  
he-CONS-go-home
- (a) He hit it on the horn,  
(b) some food came out,  
(c) he ate,  
(d) and was satisfied,  
(e) and went home.

The consecutive according to this approach encodes two things:

connexity and foregrounded event information. Unlike the indicative past or perfect, the consecutive is marked for connexity, signalled by its less than finite form, to the clause that precedes it. Furthermore, unlike the participial which also encodes such connexity, it does not involve a focus on the internal structure of the situation it encodes. All the consecutive clauses in (4), for example, refer to temporally bounded situations that move the time of the story forward, and all can be answers to the question 'what happened then?'. With no focus on either the internal structure of situation nor its temporal orientation, the focus of the consecutive is the occurrence of the event itself.

If the consecutive signals connexity, then breaks in the conceptual relatedness of narrative should be indicated by the non-use of the consecutive. In such places the independent indicative mood should occur. This is indeed supported by the following example (here IND-PERF indicates the indicative perfect):

## 5.1

- (a) *hayi ke uhambile ke umntwana nenqwelo yakhe*  
no-then *she-travel-PERF* then child with-carriage of-her
- (b) *wayifihla ke lo mtwana inqwelo etyholweni*  
*She-CONS-it-hid* then this child carriage LOC-bush
- (c) *wafika apha emdanisweni*  
*She-CONS-arrived* here LOC-dance
- (d) *yaye inkosi idanisa nezaa ntombi zimbini*  
He-PCT chief he-PART-dance with-those girls they-two

## 5.2

- (e) *hayi okunene uyithathile le ntombi isangena emnyango*  
no truly *he-her-take-PERF* this girl she-PART-enter LOC-doorway
- (f) *wayixhwila ngoko*  
*He-CONS-her twirl* then
- (g) *wathi nanku umfazi ungenile*  
*He-CONS-say* here-is wife she-PART-enter-PERF
- (h) *wadinisa naye ngobusuku bonke*  
*He-CONS-dance* with-her with-night all

- 1a) So then, the child travelled with her carriage.  
b) Then the child hid the carriage in the bush.  
c) She arrived at the dance and entered openly.  
d) The chief was dancing with those two girls.
- 2a) So then truly, he took the girl as she entered the door.  
b) He seized her then,  
c) and said, 'This is my wife, she has entered,'  
d) and he danced with her the whole night.

In each of these cases, the (1) and (2) sections deal with units or stretches of information which are distinct from each other; in Givón's terms, there is a thematic break between these sections (1990:826). In (1) the common orientation of the clauses is the events leading up to the girl's arrival at the chief's party. The ideas in (2) are distinct from those in (1) as the orientation now switches to focus on the chief's actions. Just as there is a break in conceptual connexity, there is a matching break in syntactic connexity or dependence with the occurrence of a clause in the indicative mood.

### The Participial Mood

The form of the (present) participial is: pos: *SC-VR-a*, for example,

*ixhego li-cul-a*  
old-man he-PART-sing  
*ixhego licula*  
the old man singing

The participial is also characterised by a specific tonal contour and an absence of tense marking.

Consider the following individual examples with their associated discourse contexts:

## 6.

- (a) *baya emdanisweni elila njalo lo mntwana*  
They-CONS-go LOC-dance *she-PART-crying* like-this this child
- (b) *wahamba ethwela umthwalo*  
She-CONS-travel *she-PART-carry* load

(c) *wafika engekho*

He-CONS-arrive *she-neg-PART-there*

(a) They went to the dance, this child crying so.

(b) She travelled, carrying her load.

(c) He arrived, she not being there.

Traditionally participial clauses of the above type have been described as a mood type occurring only in subordinate clauses and encoding actions simultaneous to those in the main clause (for example, Du Plessis 1978:135).

We should note that if this were an adequate description then the information encoded in the participial would have the same status as that encoded in consecutive clauses, that is, encoding foreground events. However, it appears that the information is of a different status — encoding rather background information as defined above.

The participial clauses in the examples above, as well as participial clauses more generally, do not, I claim, code events and do not thus form part of the event line advancing the story line. They, like the consecutive, encode syntactic connexity to the clauses they follow. Unlike the consecutive, however, they are marked for 'stative' aspect, and thus, rather than representing actions, or in our terms events, they encode unbounded temporally continuous situations. It is in terms of these situations that the associated consecutive, representing bound events, are foregrounded. The situation is thus not simultaneous to the event, but forms, rather, its durative background. The bounded and momentary event is thus located within the temporally durative framework established by the participial. Thus, in (6a) above, for example, the event of the girl's going to the dance is given the temporal backdrop of the girl's crying and in (b) the girl's travelling is similarly located in the durative backdrop of her carrying a load. Neither of these clauses contributes to the movement of narrative time.

Research into the participial in other Bantu languages supports this view. Wald (1975) and Poulos (1982) argue, respectively, that in Swahili and Zulu the participial is, in both form and function, a temporal relative clause. Poulos (1982:210) states that the participial, like other relative clauses, has 'a restrictive force'; what participial clauses restrict as relative clauses is the 'dimension of time' (1982:219). This approach is supportive of the present view of the participial in terms of its backgrounding function. The situations encoded in the participial clauses

do not encode discourse events moving the narrative forward. Rather, they contribute information which grounds the events in terms of the ongoing situation they describe. Such information is not crucial to the story line but is rather supportive of it.

### THE CONTINUOUS TENSES

Form: (pos) *SC-a-(ye/be) participial*, for example:

*si-a-(ye/be) sihamba*

we-PAST-PCT we-PART travel

*sasihamba*

'we were travelling'

The form given above has been traditionally labelled the (remote) past continuous tense (PCT) which has been described as indicating 'an action which was in progress ... at some time in the past' (Davey 1973:87).

The PCT, typically a fully finite form, is a compound utilising an auxiliary verb *-be* (also realised as *-ye*) which encodes the notion of 'being'. As complement to this auxiliary, the participial indicates the temporal domain or durational situation of this being. In the illustration above the being is restricted to the temporal domain of 'travelling'. The PCT encodes, in terms of this durational basis, an unbounded situation as opposed to an event. It is important to note in this respect that the PCT does not as a whole form the durative background of a contingent event as does the participial on its own. Rather, the PCT indicates an independent 'scene'. In narrative, PCTs usually cluster together to form the initial settings of the tale which functions as an orientation to the body of the story events. Consider the following example:

7.

(a) *kwakukho umntwana ekwakisithiwa nguJon nabanye*  
It-PCT-it-present child PART-it-PCT-said COP-John with-others  
*abantwana bakokwabo*  
children of-home

(b) *ke ngoku ke lo mntwana wayengathandwa kokwabo*  
Then now then this child he-PCT-NEG-like-PASS COP-home  
*enikwa iinkonzo zombona*  
he-PART-give-PASS husks of-maize

- (a) There once was a child called John and other children at home.  
 (b) Now then, this child was not liked at home, being given maize husks.

In such settings there is no focus on the movement of narrative time as such. Rather, the durative setting orientating the audience to the story world is described before the events occurring in this backdrop are described.

The following examples illustrate the use of PCTs, not in the initial setting, but in the body of the narrative itself:

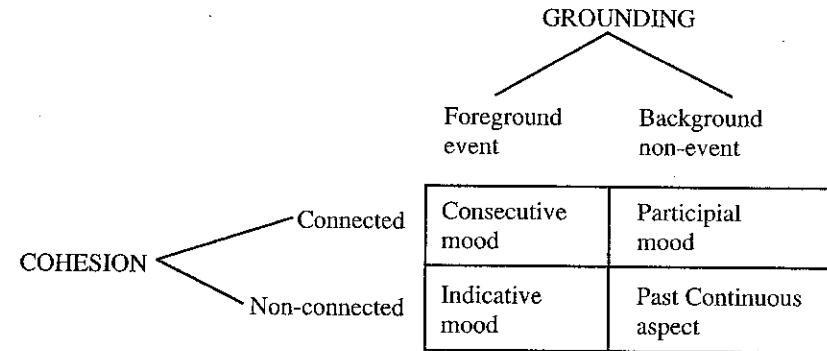
- 8.
- (a) *lafika ijoni labuza kumvundla ukuba*  
 He-PCT-arrive soldier he-PCT-ask LOC-rabbit that  
*khange uwubone na umvundla*  
 ever he-IT-see-SUBJ QUES rabbit
- (b) *umvundla nawo wayenxiba indevu apha phezu komlomo*  
 Rabbit with-it he-PCT-wear moustache here above of-mouth
- (c) *wabuza umvundla unjani lo mvundla uwufunayo*  
 He-CONS-ask rabbit it-how this rabbit you-it-want-REL
- (a) The soldier arrived and asked the rabbit whether it had seen a rabbit at all.  
 (b) (The rabbit was wearing a moustache here above the mouth)  
 (c) The rabbit asked, 'What's this rabbit like that you're looking for?'

In these examples we may see that PCT clauses are clearly off the event line, representing background information.

The PCT forms are thus backgrounding in function. They encode, not the bounded events holding only for the moment of their occurrence, but temporally unbounded situations which hold for the narrative world in general. Furthermore, unlike the participial, the PCT indicate independent scene.

### CONCLUSION

We are now in a position to see how the concepts of grounding and connexity are fundamental to the organisation of verbal system. This can be represented in the following diagram:



Traditionally, the Dokean framework uses the term 'mood' as a convenient label to refer to different categories of verbal inflections. This use is thus purely descriptive; which is in keeping with the descriptive basis of Doke's model. In this use, the label 'mood' was somewhat extended beyond its traditionally association with modality. It was applied both to such traditional modally-based distinctions as 'imperative' vs. 'indicative' on the one hand, and to the distinction between, say, the 'participial' and 'indicative' (which is not modally based) on the other. The result was a mixed bag of verbal inflections all falling under the same general rubric.

Where attempts have been made to explain the basis of the Bantu moods, reference has, however, typically reverted back to the concept of 'modality'. Such explanations are by definition problematic, given the diversity of items called 'moods'.

The framework proposed here attempts to explain the systematic basis of some instances of what have been labelled 'moods' in terms of discourse functions. It suggests that 'moods' examined have some organisational basis (which is not offered in the descriptive Dokean framework) and that this basis is expressed in discourse terms rather than modality. It is an open question whether the term 'mood' could be appropriately used in this context. Another, possibly more appropriate term, would be 'aspect'. What is clear, however, is that the concept of modality *per se* is not of direct application to the moods examined here.

Taken as a whole, the analysis suggests that, contra the Dokean approach, a distinction should be made between sets of items traditionally labelled as 'moods'. In particular, it suggests that contrasts such as those among the imperative, indicative and, to a lesser extent, subjunctive may

be fruitfully analysed in terms of modality, but that contrasts such as those among the 'consecutive', 'indicative', 'participial' and 'past continuous' tenses are best explained in different terms, specifically in terms of grounding and connexity.

I would like to end with what is perhaps a more savoury metaphor than the one given in the introduction. It seems to me that we all circle and flutter around this bright and mysterious thing we call the truth, and sometimes we scorch our wings. Perhaps we can best remember Doke in the words of the anonymous poet:

And when our candle is burnt down quite  
Cooled to a pool of wax and wick  
There will lie in their enchanted tomb  
The embalmed riches of a moth's flecks.

### NOTES

1. See Khoali (1993) for a detailed critique in this respect.
2. See Hendrikse (1981) and Fourie (1991) for references.
3. See Davey (1973:1-7) for an overview.
4. Cf. Fourie (1991) for a recent perspective.
5. Carlson (1992:81ff) notes further that across languages the imperative typically displays reduced finiteness. This can simply be explained by the fact that in face-to-face interaction the information coded by finite markings (such as tense and person) are directly specified by context which thus allows the non-finite form.
6. All textual examples in this paper are taken from narrative material collected by Gough (1986).

### BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Boyce, W.B. 1834. *A Grammar of the Kafir Language*. Grahamstown: Wesleyan University Press.
- Carlson, R. 1992. Narrative, subjunctive and finiteness. *Journal of African Languages and Linguistics* 13:59-85.
- Cole, D.T. 1971. The History of African Linguistics to 1945. In T. Sebeok (ed.), *Current Trends in Linguistics* Vol. VII. The Hague: Mouton, pp. 1-29.

- Crystal, D. 1980. *A First Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics*. Cambridge: Andre Deutsch.
- Davey, A.S. 1973. The Moods and Tenses of the Verb in Xhosa. Master's dissertation, University of South Africa, Pretoria.
- Doke, C.M. 1927. *Textbook of Zulu Grammar* (1 edn). Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press.
- 1935. *Bantu Linguistic Terminology*. Cape Town: Longmans.
- 1943 [1982]. *Outline Grammar of Bantu*. Department of African Languages, Rhodes University. Communication No. 12.
- 1961. *Textbook of Zulu Grammar*. (6 edn). Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press.
- Du Plessis, J.A. 1978. *Isixhosa 4*. Goodwood: Audiovista.
- Eyosenck, M.W. 1984. *A Handbook of Cognitive Psychology*. London: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Fourie, D.J. 1991. On the modal system of Ndonga. *South African Journal of African Languages* 11(3):88-91.
- Givón, T. 1990. *Syntax: A Functional Typological Introduction* Vol. II. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Gough, D. 1986. Xhosa Narrative: An Analysis of the Production and Linguistic Properties of Discourse with Particular Reference to Iintsoni Texts. Doctoral thesis, Rhodes University, Grahamstown.
- Hendrikse, H. 1981. *The Concept Mood and Sentence Type in Herero Grammar with Theoretical Aims*. Department of African Languages, Rhodes University. Communication No. 9.
- Hopper, P.J. and Thompson, S.A. 1980. Transitivity in grammar and discourse. *Language* 56:251-99.
- Khoali, B.T. 1993. Cole's Dokean model: Issues and implications. *South African Journal of African Languages* 13(1):29-32.
- Longacre, R. 1981. A spectrum and profile approach to discourse analysis. *Text* 1(4):337-59.
- Louw, J.A. 1963. *Handboek van Xhosa*. Johannesburg: Bonapers.
- Louwrens, L.J. 1990. Mood and modality in Northern Sotho. *South African Journal of African Languages* 10(1):10-17.
- Pahl, H.W. 1967. *IsiXhosa Sebanga Lematriki*. Johannesburg: Afrikaanse Pers.
- Palmer, F.R. 1986. *Mood and Modality*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Posthumus, L.C. 1991. Past subjunctive or consecutive mood? *South African Journal of African Languages* 10(1):91-96.
- Poulos G. 1982. *Issues in Zulu Relativization*. Department of African

- Languages, Rhodes University. Communication No. 7.
- Van Rooyen, C.S. 1984. The reassessment of the moods in Zulu. *South African Journal of African Languages*, Supplement 1.
- Visser, M. and Du Plessis, J.A. 1992. *Xhosa Syntax*. Johannesburg: Afrikaanse Pers.
- Wald, B. 1975. Variation in the System of Tense Markers of Mombassa Swahili. Doctoral thesis, Columbia University, New York.
- Wallace, S. 1982. Figure and Ground: The Interrelationships of Linguistic Categories. In P.J. Hopper (ed.), *Tense-aspect: between Semantics and Pragmatics*. Philadelphia: John Benjamins, pp. 201-223.
- Wilkes, A. 1988. Zulu Grammar and the New School Syllabuses for Zulu. In A.C. Nkabinde (ed.), *Anthology of Articles on African Linguistics and Literature*. Johannesburg: Lexicon, pp. 239-57.
- 1991. Laying to rest certain myths concerning the subjunctive past tense in Zulu. *South African Journal of African Languages* 11(2):61-66.

DAVID H. GOUGH  
*Department of Linguistics*  
*Rhodes University*

## A New Perspective on Bantu Expansion and Classification Linguistic and Archaeological Evidence Fifty Years after Doke

---

R. K. Herbert and T. N. Huffman

---

### INTRODUCTION

Striking similarities in structure and vocabulary among the Bantu languages are such that the analyst cannot fail to note their common ancestry once descriptive data are available. Indeed, the genetic relatedness of the so-called Bantu languages has been uncontroversial for more than a century. The common origin of the Southern African Bantu languages had been noted very early in the nineteenth century by Lichtenstein and others, but the credit for 'discovering' the wider unity of the Bantu languages is usually accorded to Bleek, who coined the term 'Bantu' (*Bâ-ntu*) to refer to the family in 1858 (Silverstein [1968] 1993:17-18).<sup>1</sup> Determination of this genetic connection is usually based on (a) a repertoire of inherited common lexical stock, and (b) a distinctive system of grammatical genders, or noun classes, marked by prefixation and extensive concordial agreement patterns (Guthrie 1948:11).<sup>2</sup>

Almost immediately after Bleek coined the term *Bantu*, there was a reification of this linguistic label into an ethnic one. Later, the classification of these languages effected ethnographical considerations. As Wilson and Thompson noted (1969:76), the classification of Bantu-speaking people is based upon 'a marked tendency for differences in



custom to coincide with differences in language'. The classification of individual communities into one or another language group (as opposed to the classification of groups into the larger 'zones'; cf. below) is relatively straightforward. The minor disputes usually involve a discord between linguistic classification and perceived cultural affinity, and typically, though not always, they occur in geographic boundary areas (for example, the Lovedu are said to be Sotho in their language but Venda in social organisation). The tendency to parallelism in linguistic and cultural groupings, and the possibility that such groupings have a priori historical significance have granted linguistic classifications a central status in the historical literature.

The first comprehensive classification of the Bantu languages was unquestionably that of Doke (1945). There are, by various estimates, between 300 and 800 Bantu languages, the difference arising from the well-known difficulty of differentiating language and dialect groupings. Obviously, the sheer number of related languages, spread

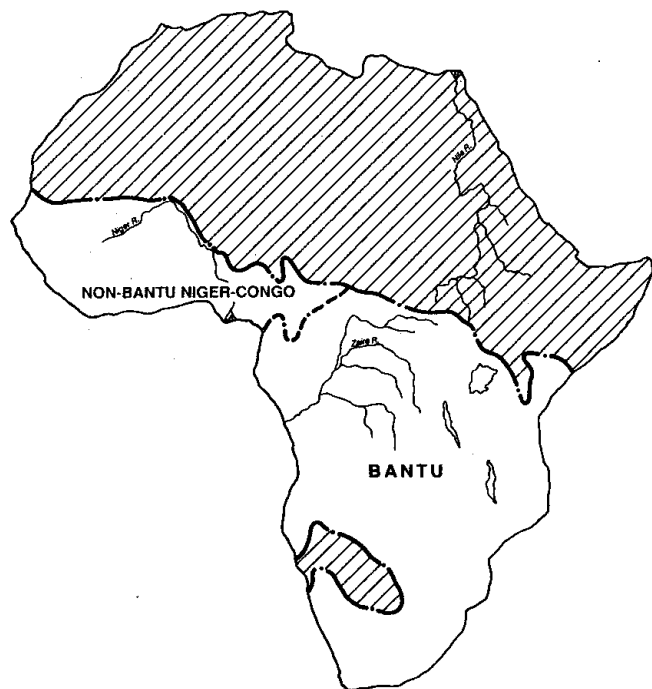


Figure 1. Present-day distribution of Niger-Congo languages, including Bantu sub-family.

over the southern half of the African continent (Figure 1), calls for a system of classification if for no other reason than to 'evolve some order out of the chaos' (Doke 1945:1). Doke's primary objective, however, was not to classify Bantu languages; rather, the classification was a by-product of his catalogue of linguistic studies prepared for the International African Institute. Consequently, there are notable gaps; in many instances data for particular languages were scanty, and Doke was guided by his intuition and 'feel' for languages. Doke also noted that, 'it is not our purpose to record all the dialects, or even all the languages, but to make reference only to the more important ...' (1945:1).<sup>3</sup> Doke seems to have lost interest in classification, and it was his student, Desmond Cole, who expanded the scheme. He imposed a numerical grid, and was responsible for its complete publication in 1961. It is a curious feature that Guthrie (1948) barely acknowledges Doke's scheme, although the two are strikingly similar in many respects. In the same fashion, Cole's later publication of Doke's classification overlooks Guthrie's (1948) full-scale classification. Perhaps because Doke had a strong descriptive bias, language classification, particularly with regard to its historical implications, never became a major activity of Doke or his followers.<sup>4</sup> It is nevertheless fitting to consider progress in this field since Doke's comprehensive classification nearly fifty years ago.

### THE BASES OF DOKE'S AND GUTHRIE'S CLASSIFICATIONS

To evaluate the progress in classification, it is useful to recognise four broad types of classificatory schemes: *genetic*, *typological*, *areal*, and *referential*. These four types address different needs and goals; consequently, their data and methodology vary (cf. Heine 1980:295-98; 1993:1-2). Only genetic classifications have historic implications.

Of the above-mentioned scholars, Doke is the most careful in not confusing referential and genetic classification.<sup>5</sup> All early schemes of Bantu, however, were referential, that is, they were admittedly ahistorical, designed solely to impose some system of reference upon the chaos presented by the sheer number of languages. Some of these schemes were conservative; for example, Bryan (1959) provided a list of eighty-three separate groups and single units, carefully avoiding any claims of closer relationships. The association of language groups into 'zones', on the

other hand, was a regular feature of the work of some scholars, most notably Doke and Guthrie.<sup>6</sup>

Doke first defined *groups* as 'aggregations of languages possessing common salient phonetic and grammatical features, and having a high degree of mutual understanding'; on the other hand, the division into *zones* was 'mainly a geographical classification', although Doke (1945:1) also defined the zone as an area 'characterised by uniform or similar linguistic phenomena' [emphasis added] (Figure 2). This terminological distinction between group and zone was borrowed by Guthrie (1948:73), who noted, 'the group is a unit with a purely linguistic significance, whereas the zone is not' (Figure 3).<sup>7</sup>

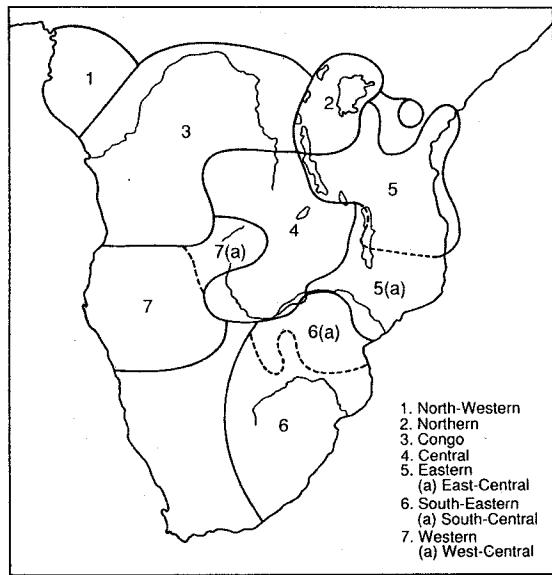


Figure 2. Doke's Bantu language zones.

The assignment of dialects and languages to particular 'groups' by Doke and Guthrie follows from the relatively shallow time depth they postulated for a period of common identity (for example, Proto-Nguni). Doke does not directly address the question of intermediate development, but Guthrie (1948:73) explicitly excludes the possibility of reconstructing intermediate stages:

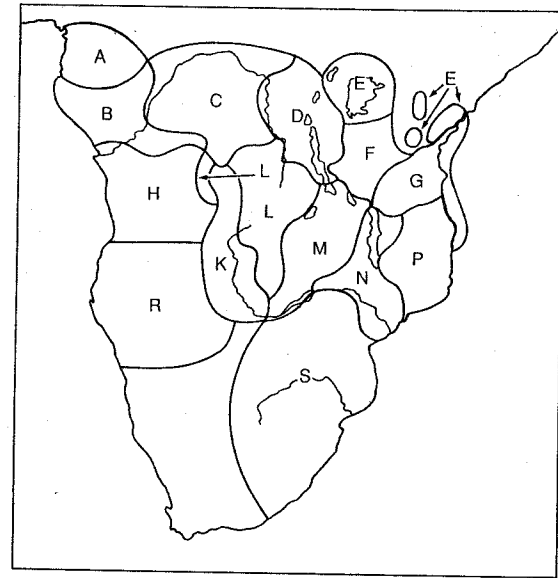


Figure 3. Guthrie's Bantu language zones.

Any who may have looked in vain for some indication of the closeness of the relationship between one group and another should bear in mind that there is no standard against which to measure such relationships ... [I]deas on this subject ... could not have a truly objective basis.

These two early scholars were careful, then, to note that the arrangement of groups into zones was – to a greater or lesser extent – a convenience of organisation and that the demarcation between zones was somewhat arbitrary. Despite these caveats, these zones have been transformed by a generation of scholars from a diversity of disciplines into groups of languages (and peoples) implicitly sharing a period of common development and therefore common (intermediate) ancestry distinct from other groups within the Bantu family. Such confusion is vaguely suggested by Doke's later work (1954, for example) where schematic representations of language relationships closely resemble 'family trees'. Guthrie himself seems to have forgotten the 'practical' basis of his early classification (Guthrie 1948:27), for in his magnum opus *Comparative*

*Bantu* (1967-1971), he used these practical zones as if they were genetic units.<sup>8</sup> All his speculation about the homeland and history of Bantu-speaking peoples is based upon this fundamental error (cf. Vansina 1979:291-92).

### DEGREES OF RELATEDNESS

Linguists have long devoted their attention to the subgrouping of languages within particular zones or arbitrary geographic areas (for example, Van Warmelo 1927) and to the reconstruction of proto vocabulary. Guthrie (1970:38) provides a family tree of sorts (Figure 4;

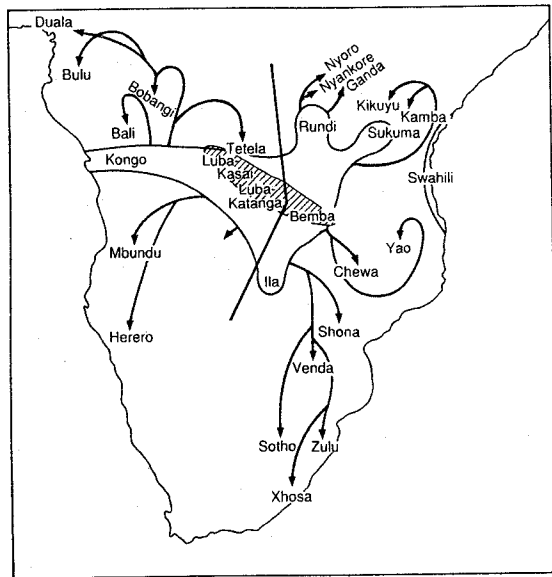


Figure 4. Guthrie's (1970) genealogical tree. Hatched area represents the central homeland.

cf. Guthrie 1971:II,27), and he postulated a Bantu nucleus in Katanga, in more or less the geographic middle of present-day Bantu-speaking populations, thus explicitly rejecting Greenberg's (1955) earlier postulate of a homeland in the Cameroons. Guthrie's nuclear area was accepted by Cope ([1971] 1993) and by a generation of London scholars, who

struggled valiantly to maintain the canon, but Greenberg's earlier hypothesis is now almost universally accepted by scholars from all disciplines, in part because it is based on a wider genetic classification.<sup>9</sup>

It is to Guthrie that we also owe the basic distinction between Eastern and Western Bantu (Figure 5). One important feature of an Eastern vs.

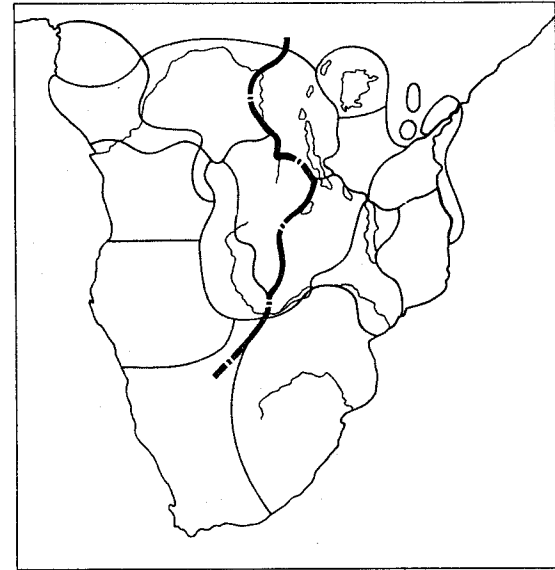


Figure 5. Guthrie's Eastern-Western Bantu division.

Western division is its historical implications: the two units are claimed to represent valid sub-groups within the family. Until recently it was generally believed that Eastern Bantu evolved out of Western Bantu somewhere along the eastern side of the tropical forest (for example, Ehret 1973, Heine 1973). In Heine's classification most languages to the east and south-east of the forest belong to an 'East Highland Group' that includes Doke's Northern, Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Zones (Figure 6). The essential point for us now is the high correspondence between Heine's East Highland Group and Guthrie's Eastern Bantu, as well as Dalby's (1975) Proto-Bantu 3. This view of Eastern and Western Bantu has been particularly influential among archaeologists and historians.

There are no good theoretical reasons to insist that Eastern Bantu was

generated out of Western Bantu. On the contrary, so-called Eastern Bantu must have evolved in the original Cameroon homeland after Western Bantu speakers had moved into the tropical forests of the Congo Basin. Archaeological research has a bearing on these points.

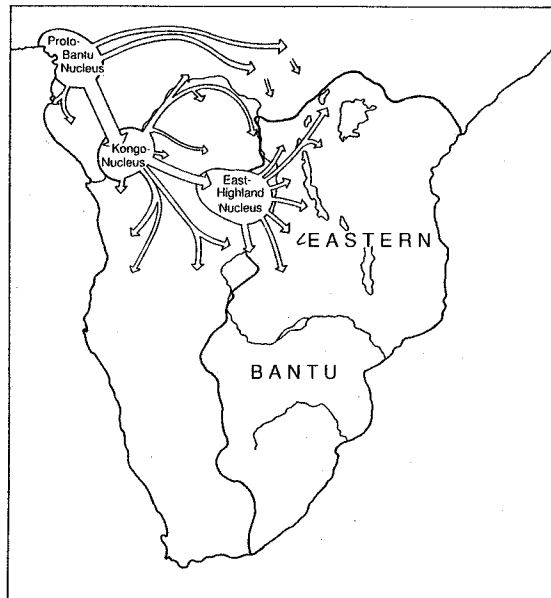


Figure 6. Heine, Hoff and Vossen's (1977) reconstructed expansion of the East Highland Group.

### ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The general correlation between Iron Age archaeological entities and the Bantu language family is well known (Huffman 1970, Phillipson 1977, Posnansky 1968), but the evidence is often misunderstood. First, at European contact only Bantu speakers had an Iron Age way of life. This lifeway did not simply comprise settled villages and the production of metal objects. For Eastern Bantu speakers, it included *inter alia* hereditary chiefs, the exchange of cattle for wives, a patrilineal ideology about procreation and a belief that ancestors influenced daily life. In Southern Africa at least, this world view generated a specific settlement

organisation known as the Central Cattle Pattern. This is cogent because the complex internal organisation of a settlement is most probably the specific product of a specific world view. As far as one can tell from the ethnographic record, the Central Cattle Pattern was associated with a world view held exclusively by Eastern Bantu speakers (see, for example, Kuper 1982). Western Bantu speakers, on the other hand, tend to be associated with a matrilineal ideology of procreation, with marriage involving brideservice to a future father-in-law, with leadership by 'big men' who achieve their position through talent and influence, and with settlement patterns based on generational organisation (Huffman 1989a).

Secondly, some Western and Eastern Bantu groups can be connected through material culture to various Iron Age entities. Material culture can reflect group identity because it incorporates an arbitrary but nevertheless integrated and repetitive code of cultural symbols. To be used and understood, this code has to be learned by a group of people speaking the same language. Ceramic style is part of this integrated and repetitive code. Archaeologists use ceramic style in particular to recognise prehistoric groups because ceramics are often highly decorated, and are the most common remains on Iron Age sites. By tracing backwards in time period by period the ceramic styles associated with a language family (for example, Sotho-Tswana), archaeologists can often determine the antiquity of that language in any one area. In Southern Africa, the ceramic styles made by Shona-speaking peoples can be traced back to the fifth century AD and the beginning of the Iron Age.

At this time most ceramic entities, or facies, in Southern Africa belonged to a single Tradition, called Kalundu. They shared the same stylistic structure (defined as the same vessel profiles, decoration positions and type of motif combinations) and they shared the same stylistic types (defined by combinations of profiles, positions and motifs [following Huffman 1980]), differing only in percentages of individual motifs in individual positions; their similarities are therefore significant. Since one branch of this Tradition is conclusively linked to Shona speakers, all other regional variants were most probably produced by early Eastern Bantu speakers as well.

A similar evidential link can be made between Swahili and the Early Iron Age Urewe Tradition in East Africa. Since Urewe and Kalundu both belong to a larger Chifumbadze Complex (Phillipson 1985), the entire Complex can be associated with Eastern Bantu.

Significantly, this Chifumbadze Complex contrasts markedly in structure and most stylistic types with the Early Iron Age Naviundu

Tradition in Central Africa. Furthermore, Naviundu can be linked to Western Bantu on geographical, cultural and chronological evidence. The structural contrast between Naviundu and Chifumbadze, along with this other evidence, demonstrates that the link between Bantu and many Early Iron groups is not based on simple coincidence. The spread of these archaeological entities is therefore a reliable record of the spread of people speaking early forms of the Bantu language (Figure 7).

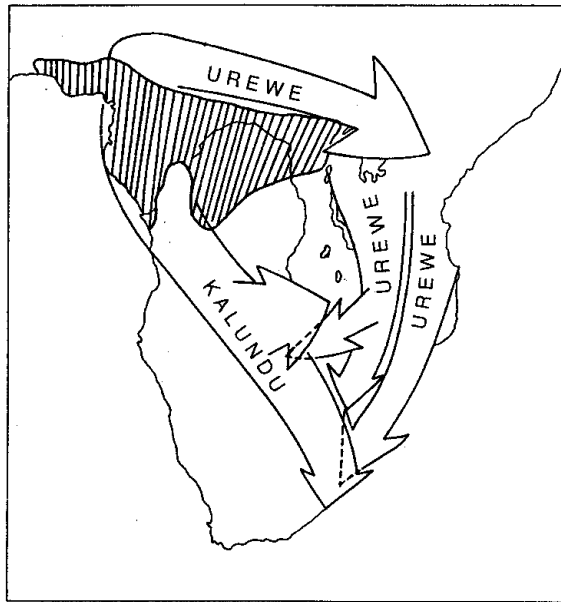


Figure 7. Early Iron Age migrations between AD 100 and AD 600. Hatched area represents the equatorial forest.

In this paper we subscribe to the idea that there is a vital relationship between language, material culture and culture, though *not* in any linguistic deterministic way. The vital relationship is there because language is the principal vehicle for thinking about the world and transmitting those thoughts to others. This approach is certainly not novel. For example, Murdock (1959:12) claimed that 'in the absence of written records, linguistic relationships provide by far the most dependable evidence of historical connection'. We would only want to

draw attention to the importance of archaeological data to demonstrate the time depth of these historical connections.

### METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Heine (1980:299) noted the sharp distinction between classification schemes of Bantu before and after 1972. The post-1972 period, initiated by Henrici (1973) and Heine (1973), was driven by diachronic concerns and sought to establish an a priori genetic classification as opposed to the referential schemes of Doke and Guthrie.

A methodological point is appropriate here: to proceed with subgrouping it is necessary to distinguish between:

- a. shared innovations,
- b. parallel innovations,
- c. common retentions and
- d. diffused features, that is between features held in common due to:
  - (i) innovations within a common period of development,
  - (ii) innovations with different linguistic geneses,
  - (iii) inheritance from a common ancestor, and
  - (iv) the influence of one group of speakers upon another.

Only the first of these has much value in establishing subgroups (see, for example, Hock 1986:578-80; cf. also Schadeberg 1980:317),<sup>10</sup> whereas the third, that is, retained features, can be used to demonstrate family relatedness, not degree of relationship. Nevertheless, it is the third of these features, in the form of inherited lexical items in an expected form, that provides the basis for Guthrie's classification and for most subsequent work in Bantu language classification. This weakness is shared with the variety of approaches classed under the heading of lexicostatistics, all of which share other common elements (Heine 1980:300):

- a. the data used are purely lexical,
- b. judgements of relatedness are based on the presence or absence of cognates,
- c. there is an *assumed* one-to-one relationship between the percentage of shared cognates and the relative degree of genetic relationship.

In addition to differences in computational methods, these approaches differ in terms of whether they rely on a random list of vocabulary (for example, Henrici 1973) or some version of a 'basic vocabulary' (for example, Heine 1973, Coupez *et al.* 1975). The approaches also differ in terms of whether they restrict data to all cognates or to only 'regular (expected pattern) cognates'. Henrici's (1973) method exhibits the common drawback of assuming that rate of vocabulary retention/loss is somehow correlated with historical development.<sup>11</sup> The kindest thing that one could say about this assumption is that it is unproven; in fact, however, it is patently false. The particular problem of borrowing within Africa is well known. It is simply easier to recognise the influence of unrelated languages, for example, the influence of Khoisan on Bantu phonetic and morphological systems, than the influence of genetically and typologically related languages, for example pre-historic Sotho influences on Nguni.

There are numerous problems with the methodology of lexicostatistics precisely because of patterns of movement and contact. These need not concern us here since one of our arguments is that lexical data are largely inappropriate for purposes of genetic sub-classification. The relative degree of relationship among cognate languages can be obscured by simple lexical comparison. The restriction of the data base to regular cognates is particularly naïve; speaker contact leads to speech influence that disturbs patterns of regular correspondence. As David (1980:639) observed, 'The assumption of independence of languages since their separation, or even that all languages are equally interdependent with all their neighbours, can clearly not be maintained.' Such contact is obviously independent of genetic relationship. Despite the attraction of lexicostatistics on account of the seemingly straightforward nature of the data, the mirroring of linguistic classification and language distribution should give the analyst pause.

One conspicuous problem with the exclusive use of lexical data for purposes of comparison and classification is well known in Austronesian linguistics, namely the effect of word taboo on vocabulary retention. Dyen (1963:63-64) was among the first to note that this factor might account for unexpectedly low cognate percentages. Since word (particularly personal name) taboo is fairly widespread among Bantu-speaking peoples, it is possible that this phenomenon has produced a significant skewing effect in lexicostatistical work. Simons (1982) surveyed word taboo throughout the Austronesian domain; in one instance, he found that 59 per cent of the Swadesh 100-word list was

potentially subject to taboo based on the use of everyday words in personal names (1982:162).<sup>12</sup> Similarly, Lithgow (1973) documented a striking 19 per cent change in basic vocabulary over a fifty-year period in Muyuw. In Dyen's study, tabooing languages scored an average 8 per cent to 13 per cent fewer cognates, which would certainly be significant in the Bantu data. In some Austronesian languages, the skewing may be as high as 15 per cent to 20 per cent on a standard 190-word list (Simons 1982:169-70).<sup>13</sup> As Simons noted, two factors might be responsible for name taboos having greater effect on vocabulary replacement than expected: (a) the small size of speech communities, and (b) social systems characterised by patterns of extensive family relationships (1982:191). Surprisingly, the potentially complicating factor of taboo and its effect on vocabulary has received no attention in the literature on Bantu lexicostatistics.

What is notable about most lexicostatistically-based classifications of Bantu languages is that they agree to a surprising extent. For present purposes, the relevant point is that although there has been considerable refinement in the classification of languages in the western part of the Bantu domain, the eastern half continues to be seen as a single valid linguistic subgroup.<sup>14</sup> This is Heine's East Highland Group, a subgroup of the Congo Zone (VIII) (Heine 1973:173; Heine *et al.* 1977:61-62) which represents the vast majority of the languages traditionally labelled as Bantu. While rejecting the foundation of Guthrie's historical scheme, Heine's classification reinforces the idea of a unitary Eastern Bantu.<sup>15</sup> (cf. also Heine 1993: 8-12)

### A NEW VIEW OF 'EASTERN BANTU'

Working independently, we began to suspect that there was something seriously wrong with the Eastern-Western division of Bantu languages, particularly with the conceptualisation of 'Eastern Bantu' in the sense propounded by Guthrie and later revised by Heine. First, in a re-examination of the Zambian Iron Age, it was found that Bemba-speaking people did not conform to the world view, social organisation and settlement pattern typical of Eastern Bantu (Huffman 1989a). Instead they were markedly 'Western'. Second, the typological diversity of the so-called Eastern languages is great enough to call their fundamental unity into question.

We then embarked on a joint project to refine the concept of Eastern

Bantu. Using Sotho-Tswana (S.30) and Nguni (S.40) as a datum for Eastern Bantu, and Kongo (H.16) and Chokwe (K.11) as a datum for Western Bantu, we compared cultural profiles (that is, world view, social organisation and settlement pattern) and grammatical elements (such as locatives, diminutives, aspectual systems) of several language groups commonly classed as Eastern. In particular, we looked at Chaga (E.62) and Kamba/Kikuyu (E.55/E.51) in the extreme north-east and Ila/Tonga (M.63/M.64) in Zambia. Quite independently, we found that Chaga conformed to the Eastern datum but that Kamba/Kikuyu and Ila/Tonga were decidedly 'un-Eastern'. The Kamba/Kikuyu, for example, claim their origins in matrilineal clans, traditionally lacked hereditary chiefs and were not 'cattle people' historically. There is, in fact, a close intersection between the diagnostic cultural profiles and the independent linguistic assignments. A longer paper will discuss the linguistic and cultural data in further detail.

In addition to our independent results, other linguistic analyses present similar reassignments. In a series of provocative articles that deserve to be more widely known, Bastin (1980, 1983) undertook a preliminary study of 'grammatical statistics', the comparison of grammatical traits within the Bantu languages. Based upon a consideration of 52 phonological, morphological and syntactic traits, Bastin submitted these data to group average computation. Examples of phonological traits include the realisations of nasal-oral consonant sequences, short-long vowel oppositions, progressive assimilation of vowels in suffixes of the type \*-id-, and so forth. In the morphological realm, there are features such as patterns of diminutive and locative formation, presence or absence of particular noun classes, for example, Cl. 11, 19, 25, and patterns of concord for the numerals 'two' to 'five'. Finally, syntactic traits included patterns of relative formation, negation, and subjunctive.

There are various methods of analysing these grammatical data, but they provide no support for a neat Guthrie-Heine Eastern division. Instead, they provide a three-way classification of Bantu languages. The first of these comprise Doke's North-Western and Congo Zones (Guthrie's zones A, B, C, part of D), that is, the north-west of the Bantu domain, which has been long recognised as the most divergent area.<sup>16</sup> The second is a co-ordinate pair of language groups. The first element of the pair comprises Doke's Central and Western Zones and part of East-Central (Guthrie's zones H, R, K, L, and M and at least some of Zone N). The second includes the Northern and most of the Eastern Zones (Guthrie's J, F, and parts of E, G, P). The third major branch of the Bantu

language tree is essentially a coastal belt from the north-east through the South-Eastern Zone. It includes all of the South-Eastern languages, that is, Doke's South-Eastern Zone (Guthrie's Zone S), and some of the Eastern and East-Central Zones (Guthrie's N, P, G and E). It includes, *inter alia*, Shambala, Swahili, Pokomo, giTonga, Tsonga, Zulu, Sotho, Venda, Makua, Sena, Nyanja, Shona, and Chaga. It is exclusively this branch that is most appropriately labelled *Eastern Bantu* (Figures 8 and 9). The term *Western Bantu* might be used to label the two other branches; however, it will not serve any useful purpose since it does not correspond to any single unitary entity. This lack of unity is not surprising: the complexity within the Western branch has generally been recognised as greater than the complexity of the Eastern branch, though part of the problem here has traditionally been lack of adequate documentation.

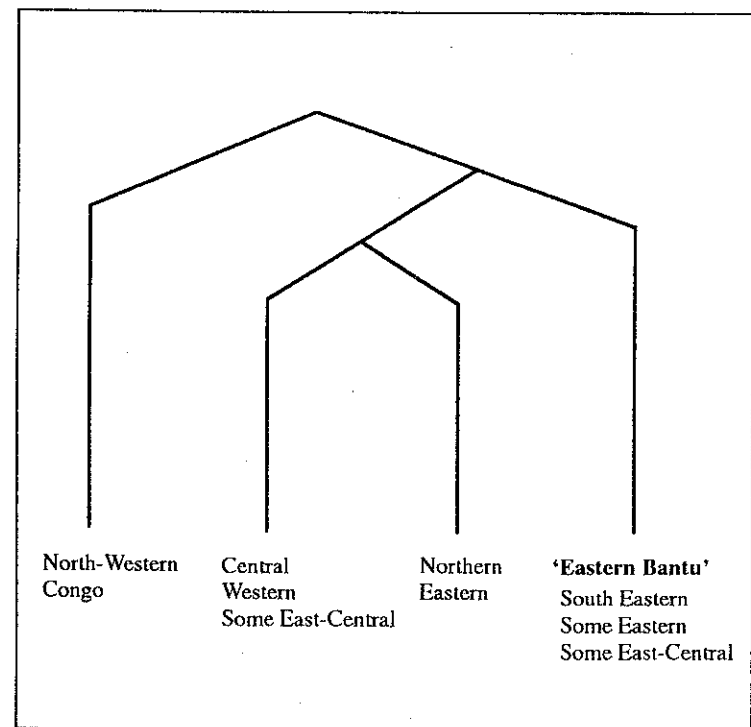


Figure 8. Proposed classification of Doke's language zones.

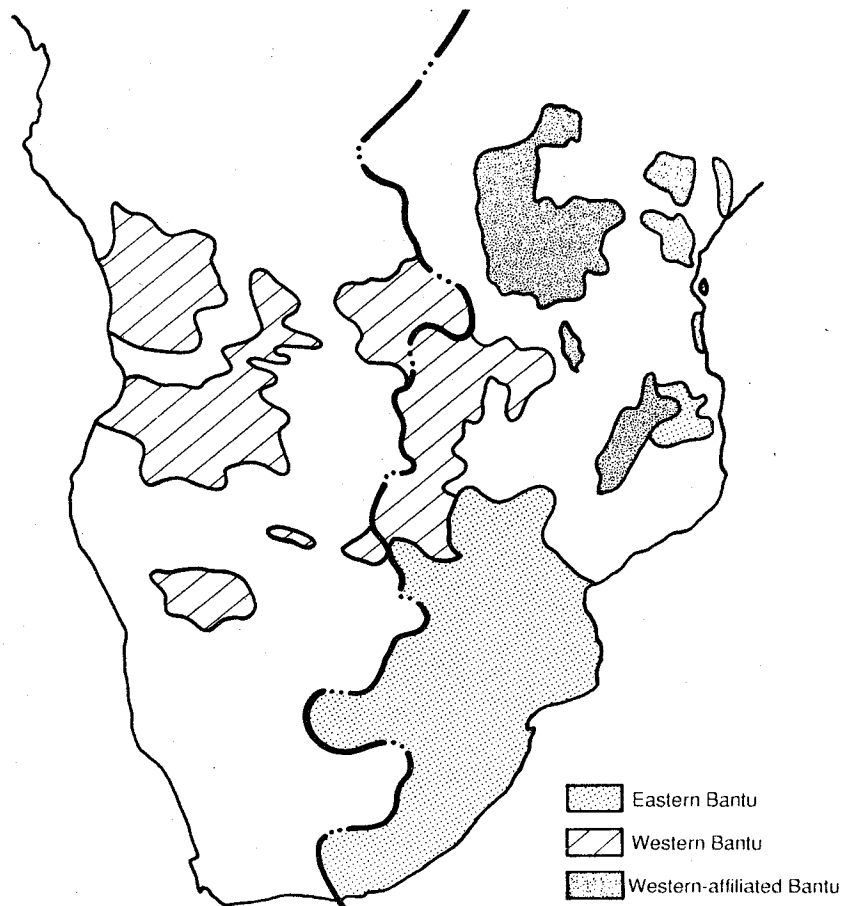


Figure 9. Proposed distribution of Eastern, Western and Western-affiliated Bantu language groups.

Based on a reanalysis of the Guthrie 28 test language data, which were also the basis for Henrici (1973), Flight (1988) offers a lexically-based classification which is on the whole compatible with our view of Eastern Bantu (Figure 10). As Flight (and others) noted, the 28 test languages are heavily weighted towards the east, but since the present interest lies in the chimeric nature of 'Eastern Bantu' they suffice for

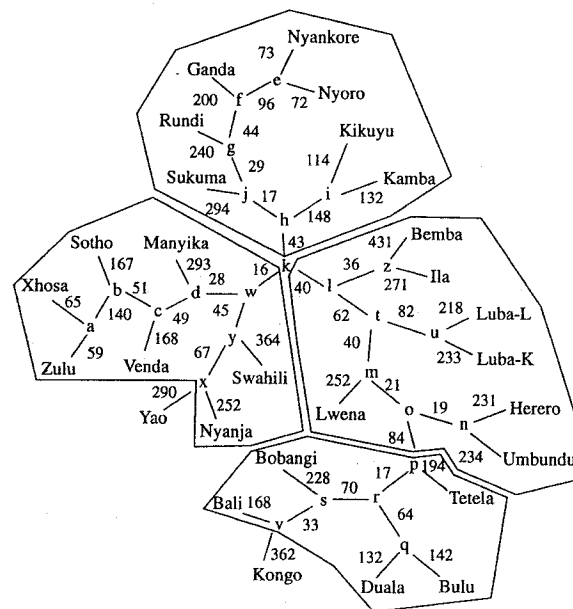


Figure 10. Classification of 28 test languages according to Flight (1988). Apart from the placement of Yao and Kongo, the results parallel the proposed classification.

present purposes. In particular, note that Swahili is among the 'closest relatives' for the southern languages; it is more closely related to the southern languages than to languages such as Kamba, Kikuyu, Bemba and the Interlacustrine languages.

### WIDER IMPLICATIONS

In conclusion, it is appropriate to briefly sketch a view of a more recent Bantu expansion that is concordant with the classification proposed here. At about AD 1000, there was a major migration from the Western Bantu heartland across Central Africa, forming what anthropologists know as 'the matrilineal belt' (for example, Richards 1939). Later, between AD 1200 and 1300 there was a migration from East Africa in two streams, termed Moloko and Blackburn on account of distinct ceramic traditions



that represent, respectively, the Sotho and Nguni peoples (Figure 11). It is thus not surprising to find that the closest linguistic relatives of Southern Bantu languages are in the extreme north-east, namely, Swahili, Pokomo and Shambala.

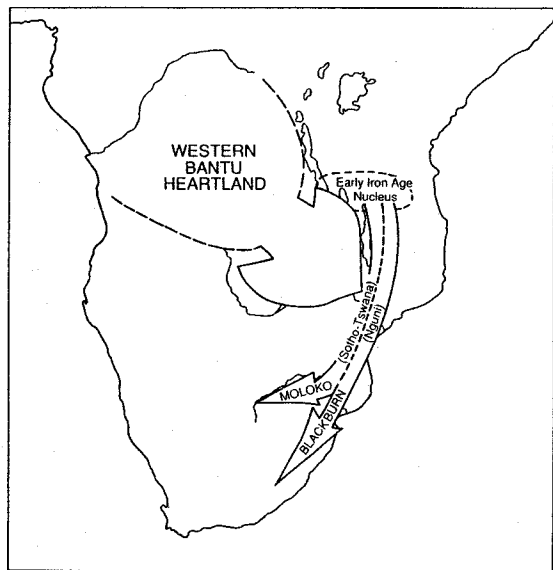


Figure 11. Late Iron Age migrations between AD 1000 and AD 1200. NB: Early Iron Age nucleus shown only for the Moloko and Blackburn ceramic groups.

Obviously, we have only been able to sketch the outlines of the reclassification of Bantu languages. The evidence is conclusive that the traditional view of an Eastern-Western dichotomy is untenable. We have not been concerned with terminology here; we are concerned with ancestry. Indeed, we propose to retain the traditional name 'Eastern Bantu'. The domain of Eastern Bantu, however, is considerably narrower than previously thought. Future research must look to enlarge the data base for grammatical classification and refine statistical methods of analysis. The promise of this new approach, as we hope to have demonstrated in this paper, is that there is a closer intersection of the classifications provided by linguistics, anthropology, and archaeology.

## NOTES

1. The term *Bantu* has distinctly unfortunate overtones in South Africa, where it was once used an official population designator by the Nationalist government. The term is used today only in its linguistic scope. See Doke ([1960] 1993) and Vansina (1979/80) for complementary reviews of the history of comparative Bantu linguistics.
2. Guthrie proposed four defining criteria, but three of these are broadly typological and not recognised as having any validity for genetic classification; his criterion of cognate vocabulary is the only exception to this criticism (Watters 1989:403).
3. Nevertheless, the African Music Society in 1949 adopted Doke's scheme in their cross-classification of music according to instrument, type and language.
4. Indeed, Cope described Doke's classification as 'the least of his contributions to Bantu linguistics' (1993:150).
5. Vansina describes the difference between the two approaches by noting that 'Guthrie was "practical", that is, a little more arbitrary than Doke but with more descriptive data' (Vansina 1979:291).
6. Both classification schemes are wrong in a number of details, but as Cope ([1971] 1993) noted, there is a surprising degree of correspondence between Doke's outline and the better-known classification of Guthrie. Cope's paper, which deserves to be more widely known and cited, offers important critiques of both scholars' approaches. Further, Cope was one of the first scholars to bring an important problem to light, namely the poor intersection of relations among Bantu language subgroups postulated by linguists, anthropologists, and archaeologists. Unfortunately, Cope accepted Guthrie's ideas on the origins of the Bantu-speaking peoples, and his discussion of Bantu expansion (1993:164-167) must therefore be disregarded.
7. Doke (1945) provides the most complete statement of 'characteristics' for the various language zones. It is important to note that these characteristics are extracted from the grouped languages *following* their assignment into zones. It is obvious, then, that these features can have no value in describing or inferring relationships among groups. Among the salient features of the South-Central zone are (Doke 1945:97):
  1. a bridging between the Central zone and the South-Eastern, with certain resemblance to East-Central,

2. monosyllabic noun prefixes with latent initial vowel,
  3. ideophones,
  4. peculiar phonetic phenomena including implosives, affricates and 'whistling fricatives'.
8. Similarly, Ehret (1973) put forward a view of Bantu history and expansion wherein the historical groups of people are based upon Guthrie's language zones, that is, he treated referential units as genetic ones.
  9. Some scholars tried to blend Greenberg's and Guthrie's opposing views into a unified scheme, according to which the original homeland was, as Greenberg claimed, in the Cameroons, but the 'original Bantu' moved from there to Shaba (Stage I), where they fragmented and expanded 'from coast to coast' (Stage II) (for example, Oliver 1966). The history of this synthesis of opposing viewpoints into a unified framework, termed 'The London Paradigm', is insightfully discussed by Vansina (1980:297-300).
  10. Shared borrowings are, however, excluded from consideration here. Most historical linguists would reject or at best grudgingly accept as a weak heuristic the claim that 'areal relationship, for example, in the form of shared loanwords, may be indicative of a common genealogical development and thus of genetic relationship patterns' (Heine 1980:297). One has only to consider classical Greek loans in modern European languages (Indo-European and otherwise) to see the flaws in this approach. Yet, this is precisely the approach used by Ehret to validate his 'proto-Eastern Bantu' (1973:3). The plausibility of many of Ehret's comparisons has been challenged by Polomé (1975:171) and others.
  11. This idea has obvious links to, but must be distinguished from, glottochronology in its strict sense.
  12. The majority of Bantu language groups also form personal names from everyday vocabulary. The best known example of name taboo among Bantu language speakers is the *hlonipha* language of avoidance practised by Nguni women. Although such an extensive system of taboo seems not to be found outside of Southern Africa, name taboos (parents-in-law, chiefs, recently dead, wild animals) are widespread.
  13. As Schadeberg (1980:317) noted with regard to Heine's classification, the cohesion of branches and groups is not particularly strong. For example, the percentage of cognate words in the 100-word list among languages of the different primary branches varies from 20 per cent to 32 per cent; the range for languages of the

- different sub-branches of the vast Congo branch is from 26 per cent to 44 per cent. The confounding effect of word taboo, comparable to that in Austronesian, would therefore be significant.
14. This generalisation is less true for Henrici's (1973) classification, which postulates the Southern Languages (Doke's South-Eastern Zone; Guthrie's Zone S) as a branch co-ordinate with all Bantu languages other than those in the extreme north-west of the domain. Cf. also Coupez *et al.* (1975:156).
  15. A rough sketch of some relations within this group is provided by Coupez *et al.* (1975:151-54). They compared 57 languages, all of which belonged to Heine's Congo Branch, but Doke's East-Central Zone (Guthrie's Zones N and P) are unrepresented in their data. None the less, they subclassify these languages into fourteen subgroups, three of which comprise Heine's East Highland Group. However, the only notable split is between Doke's South-Eastern Zone and the other 'Eastern' languages. Given the extensive influence of Khoisan languages within this zone and the high prominence of name taboo, the special status of this zone is not surprising in any lexicostatistically-based classification.
  16. The striking divergences between this area and the rest of Bantu have often been noted (for example, Henrici 1973). Bennett and Sterk (1977) hypothesised that Zones A, B, C and (part of) D, which they name the Equatorial Group, are more directly related to Ekoid and Mban-Nkam languages than they are to the remaining 'Bantu languages' (Zambesi Bantu, in their terms), whose closest linguistic relative is Tiv. This position is explicitly rejected by Schadeberg (1986), who argues for a view of 'Guthrian Bantu' as a valid subgroup of Bantoid, which is itself a subgroup of Benue-Congo. The position of the North-Western languages within the larger family is not directly relevant to present concerns, and it is not pursued further here.

## REFERENCES

- Bastin, Y. 1980. Statistique grammaticale et innovations en bantoue. In *L'expansion bantoue*, ed. by L. Bouquiaux, II, 387-400. Paris: CNRS.
- 1983. Essai de classification de quatre-vingts langues bantoues par la statistique grammaticale. *Africana Linguistica IX* (Annales du Musée Royal de l'Afrique Centrale, Tervuren, Sciences Humanies, No. 110), 10-108.

- Bennett, P.R. and J.P. Sterk. 1977. South Central Niger-Congo. A reclassification. *Studies in African Linguistics* 8:241-273.
- Bryan, M.A. 1959. *The Bantu Languages of Africa*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Cole, D.T. [1961] 1993. Doke's classification of Bantu languages. In *Foundations in Southern African Linguistics*, ed. by R.K. Herbert, 131-147. Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press.
- Cope, A.T. [1971] 1993. A consolidated classification of the Bantu languages. In *Foundations in Southern African Linguistics*, ed. by R.K. Herbert, 149-172. Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press.
- Coupez, A., E. Evrard and J. Vansina. 1975. Classification d'un échantillon de langues bantoues d'après la lexicostatistique. *Africana Linguistica VI* (Annales du Musée Royal de l'Afrique Centrale, Tervuren, Sciences Humaines, No. 88), 131-158.
- Dalby, D. 1975. The prehistorical implications of Guthrie's Comparative Bantu. *Journal of African History* 16:481-501.
- David, N. 1980. Early Bantu expansion in the context of Central African prehistory: 4000 - 1 B.C. In *L'expansion bantoue*, ed. by L. Bouquiaux, III, 609-644. Paris: CNRS.
- Doke, C.M. 1945. *Bantu: Modern Grammatical, Phonetical, and Lexicographical Studies since 1860*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Doke, C.M. 1954. *The Southern Bantu Languages*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Doke, C.M. [1960] 1993. The growth of comparative Bantu philology. In *Foundations in Southern African Linguistics*, ed. by R.K. Herbert, 71-96. Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press.
- Dyen, I. 1963. Lexicostatistically determined borrowing and taboo. *Language* 30:60-66.
- Ehret, C. 1967. Cattle-keeping and milking in Eastern and Southern African history. *Journal of African History* 8:1-17.
- Ehret, C. 1973. Patterns of Bantu and Central Sudanic settlement in Central and Southern Africa (ca. 1000 B.C. - 500 A.D.). *Transafrican Journal of History* 3:1-71.
- Flight, C. 1988. Bantu trees and some wider ramifications. *African Languages and Cultures* 1:25-43.
- Greenberg, J.H. 1955. *Studies in African Linguistic Classification*. New Haven: Compass Publishing.

- Guthrie, M. 1948. *The Classification of the Bantu Languages*. London: Oxford University Press.
- 1967-71. *Comparative Bantu*, 4 vols. Farnborough: Gregg International Press.
- 1970. Contributions from comparative Bantu studies to the prehistory of Africa. In *Language and History in Africa*, ed. by D. Dalby, 20-49. London: Frank Cass & Co.
- Heine, B. 1973. Zur genetische Gliederung der Bantusprachen. *Afrika und Übersee* 56:164-185.
- 1980. Methods in comparative Bantu linguistics. In *L'expansion bantoue*, ed. by L. Bouquiaux, II, 295-308. Paris: CNRS.
- 1993. *Language as a Tool in Recapturing the African Past*. Raymond Dart Lecture 28. Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press for the Institute for the Study of Man in Africa.
- Heine, B., H. Hoff, and R. Vossen. 1977. Neuere Ergebnisse zur Territorialgeschichte der Bantu. In *Zur Sprachgeschichte und Ethnohistorie in Afrika*, ed. by W.J.G. Möhlig, F. Rottland, and B. Heine, 57-72. Berlin: Dietrich Reimer.
- Henrici, A. 1973. Numerical classification of Bantu languages. *African Language Studies* 14:82-104.
- Herbert, R.K. 1989. Southern Bantu unity: myth or reality? African Language Association of Southern Africa, Pretoria.
- Hock, H.H. 1986. *Principles of Historical Linguistics*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Huffman, T.N. 1970. The Early Iron Age and the spread of the Bantu. *South African Archaeological Bulletin* 25:3-21.
- 1980. Ceramics, classification and Iron Age entities. *African Studies* 39:123-174.
- 1989a. *Iron Age Migrations: the Ceramic Sequence in Southern Zambia; Excavations at Gundu and Ndonde*. Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press.
- 1989b. Ceramics, settlements and Late Iron Age migrations. *The African Archaeological Review* 7:155-182.
- Kuper, A. 1982. *Wives for Cattle*. London: Routledge.
- Lithgow, D. 1973. Language change on Woodlark Island. *Oceania* 44:101-108.
- Murdock, G.P. 1959. *Africa: Its Peoples and their Culture History*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Oliver, R. 1966. The problem of Bantu expansion. *Journal of African History* 7:361-376.

- Phillipson, D.W. 1977. *The Later Prehistory of Eastern and Southern Africa*. London: Heinemann.
- Polomé, E.C. 1975. The reconstruction of Proto-Bantu culture from the lexicon. In *Patterns in Language, Culture, and Society: Sub-Saharan Africa*, ed. by R.K. Herbert, 164-173. Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University Working Papers in Linguistics 19.
- Posnansky, M. 1968. Bantu genesis – archaeological reflexions. *Journal of African History* 9:1-11.
- Richards, A. 1939. *Land, Labour and Diet in Northern Rhodesia*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Schadeberg, T.C. 1980. Situation actuelle de la classification des langues bantoues (au sens étroit) du Cameroun. In *L'Expansion bantoue*, ed. by L. Bouquiaux, II, 309-320. Paris: CNRS.
- 1986. The lexicostatistic base of Bennett & Sterk's reclassification of Niger-Congo with particular reference to the cohesion of Bantu. *Studies in African Linguistics* 17:69-83.
- Silverstein, R.O. [1968] 1993. A note on the term 'Bantu' as first used by W.H.I. Bleek. In *Foundations in Southern African Linguistics*, ed. by R.K. Herbert, 17-18. Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press.
- Simons, G.F. 1982. Word taboo and comparative Austronesian linguistics. In *Papers from the Third International Conference on Austronesian Linguistics*, ed. by A. Halim, L. Carrington, and S.A. Wurm, vol. 3:157-226. *Pacific Linguistics*, C-76.
- Vansina, J. 1979/1980. Bantu in the crystal ball. *History in Africa* 6:287-333 and 7:293-325.
- Van Warmelo, N.J. 1927. *Die Gliederung der südafrikanischen Bantusprachen*. *Zeitschrift für Eingeborenen Sprachen* XVIII.
- Watters, J.R. 1989. Bantoid overview. In *The Niger-Congo Languages*, ed. by J. Bender-Samuël, 400-420. Washington, D.C.: University Press of America.
- Wilson, M. and L. Thompson (eds.) 1969. *The Oxford History of South Africa*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

R.K. HERBERT

*Department of African Languages  
University of the Witwatersrand*

T.N. HUFFMAN

*Department of Archaeology  
University of the Witwatersrand*

## C.M. Doke and the Development of Bantu Literature

---

Nhlanhla P. Maake

---

### INTRODUCTION

The centenary commemoration of the birth of C.M. Doke comes at a portentous moment. It has come at a time when we are preparing for a new millennium, a time when signs of revolutionary change in South Africa, for better or for worse, are looming in the horizon. These changes will have far-reaching repercussions for Bantu languages and literatures as well as for other forms of artistic expression in general.<sup>1</sup> It is on this account that the present state of play needs to be assessed, in terms of the past, the present, and the foreseeable future.

Literature written in Bantu languages has inherited an unfortunate legacy imposed upon it by the Nationalist Government's policies of the past, so that the reaction to the language policy turned the literature into an embattled field of discourse, resulting, in turn, in the association of Bantu languages with all that was negative in the post-1948 era. Since then, literature written in the Bantu languages has always been marginalised, as for instance at the symposium on 'Book Publishing in South Africa for the 1990s', held at the South African Library in Cape Town on 22-23 November 1990. Virtually nothing was said in that context about publishing in the Bantu languages. The conference thus denied the existence of Bantu languages by their omission.

A brief survey of literature written in Bantu languages in South Africa reveals a state which is far from granting us the comfort of complacency.

It is a literature which has travelled a long way, and yet it still has a long way to go. While the missionary presses such as Morija and Mazenod in Lesotho, Lovedale in the Cape, and Marianhill in Natal, have become synonymous with South African Bantu literature, very few individuals can claim a place in having influenced the growth of literature. Among these few we can count Clement Martyn Doke. In this brief contribution, I shall provide an overview of his contribution in the development of Bantu literature in South African languages.

There are basically four recognisable ways in which Doke made his mark:

1. His early collections of what he referred to as wisdom-lore.
2. His encouraging reviews of newly published works in journals such as *Bantu Studies* (later *African Studies*) of which he was editor from 1931 to 1953, and *South African Outlook*.
3. His consistent review of developments in the field of literature *qua* literature.
4. His consistency in encouraging translations of classical works from other languages.

My main purpose here is to place Doke as a landmark in the development of Bantu literature, so that his era can be compared with the present, and perhaps the future.

### DOKE'S CONTRIBUTION

Between 1935 and 1953 Doke was editor of the Bantu Treasury Series of poetry and drama published by the Witwatersrand University Press in Johannesburg. In that capacity, his most direct contribution to the growth of Bantu literature came in the form of eleven publications. In Southern Sotho the greatest essayist and dramatist, Mofokeng, and the poet and dramatist, Mocoancoeng, were published by the Witwatersrand University Press. In Setswana, Plaatje's Shakespearean translations, in Zulu, B.W. Vilakazi's poetry, *Inkondlo kaZulu* (Zulu Songs) and *Amal' Ezulu* (Zulu Horizons), J.J.R. Jolobe's Xhosa poems, *Umyezo* (An Orchard), and essays *Amavo* (Traditions), Mqhayi's Xhosa poems, *Inzuzo* (Gain) in 1943, L.D. Raditladi's Tswana drama, *Motswasele II*, and Robert Shabaan's Kiswahili essays, *Kielezo cha Insha*, to name but a few who have survived the test of time, were also published in this series.

Plaatje's translations, no doubt inspired by Doke (notwithstanding their difference of opinion as to which works were most suitable for translation), were followed by many other translations of English classics into various Bantu languages. Among these, we can name the following: a Sotho translation by H.H. Lekhethoa of Booker T. Washington's *Up from Slavery* was followed by a Venda version, *Ku Hluvuka* (1953) by S.T. Baloyi; *Macbeth* was translated into Xhosa by B.B. Mdledle, *u-Macbeth* (1957); *Julius Caesar* was translated into Xhosa (1956), Venda (1957), and Northern Sotho by Mdledle, Baloyi and C.N. Phatudi, respectively; Ntsane translated *The Merchant of Venice* (1961); and *Twelfth Night* appeared in Zulu (1961). Not only Shakespeare's works attracted translators. *King Solomon's Mines*, *Nada the Lily*, *Robinson Crusoe*, *Treasure Island*, *Prisoner of Zenda* and *Cry the Beloved Country* were all translated in one or the other of the Bantu languages.

Doke's editorship of the Bantu Treasury Series, and his advocacy of translating works into one or other of the Bantu languages opened the way for other publishers to take an interest in Bantu literature. The period after 1953 can arguably be termed 'the Doke era', for his concern for the growth of literature in Bantu languages had a far-reaching impact. This becomes even more evident when it is seen in the context of the Bantu Education Act, which made many scholars desert Bantu languages as a form of protest against the Bantu Education Act's abuse of these languages. These scholars expressed the view that the languages were divisive, and they resorted to English as a unifying language, as Mphahlele later argued (1973).

Of note among Doke's persistent support for translations from English into Bantu languages is his long letter to the editor of *The South African Outlook*, in the column headed 'Our Reader's Views'. Doke made a detailed survey of translations from Western European languages into Chinese. He observed, quoting a Chinese reviewer, that:

An examination of the translations from English authors shows that the novelists are represented by George Eliot, Fielding, Defoe (including *Moll Flanders*), Kingsley, Swift, Goldsmith, the Brönte sisters (*Wuthering Heights* and *Villette*), Scott, Conrad, Mrs. Gaskell and Dickens (*Old Curiosity Shop*, *David Copperfield*, *Oliver Twist*, *Dombey and Son*, *Nicholas Nickleby*, *A Tale of Two Cities*, *Christmas Carol*, *Hard Times*)... The poets are represented by Spenser (*Faerie Queene*), Browning, Burns, Byron, Shelley, Wordsworth, Ernest Dowson. Five Shakespearean plays (*Merchant*

of *Venice, As You Like It, Twelfth Nights, Henry VI, and Romeo and Juliet...*) have been translated by separate translators. The drama is represented by Galsworthy (seven of his plays), Pinero, Sheridan (*School for Scandal*) and Shaw (*Mrs Warren's Profession*). (Doke 1942:155-56)

After considering further translations from other European languages, Doke concluded his letter by writing, 'I thought the above lists might be of help when it comes to choosing suitable text-books for translation.'

Though the range of translations available in Bantu languages at present varies from the sublime to the ridiculous in terms of translation skills and adaptation of texts, some of these works have undeniably given life-blood to the growth of Bantu literature. It is therefore regrettable that the Language Boards and publishing houses are now *de facto* rejecting the translation of literary works. Students of Bantu literature in South Africa should be encouraged to do research on translated works so that they can evaluate and assess their contribution, and then come to a conclusion as to whether this Dokean legacy was justifiably forsaken. *A priori*, one understands that the ideal is to encourage more original writing in Bantu languages, but the danger is that the blind pursuit of this ideal may result in the publication of works of a very low standard in the pursuit of so-called purity.

In 1932 Doke was convenor of the Inter-University Committee for African Studies which had been set up to look into 'the state of Bantu languages in the Union of South Africa, and possibilities of further research'. Doke wrote a report of this meeting, in which he recorded a number of suggestions which opened the way for further developments in Bantu literature. On Xhosa folklore he noted the scarcity of material, and he suggested that 'a definite publication on Xhosa Folk-lore is a real need'; he also recognised Mqhayi as an important writer. Xhosa was acknowledged as the leading language for the development of biographical and historical works. Doke also noted the need for translation of works from other languages, suggesting that 'a Xhosa committee should make a careful selection of English works suitable for translation' and that:

The same literature committee should examine MSS submitted for publication, with a view (i) to recommending them to publishers (such as Lovedale), (ii) to seeing that they are revised so as to secure correct agreed orthography, and (iii) to exploring the

possibilities of securing funds from philanthropic sources to be spent in subsidising the publication of approved works. (Doke 1933:12)

This passage clearly indicates that Doke was fully committed not only to the increase of publication but also to an attainment of high standards, with correct orthography, and to the creation of channels for publication.

Southern Sotho and Xhosa were identified as leading languages in terms of what had been published at the time, while gaps in the production of Zulu literature, which had only produced its first novel in 1930, were identified. Doke noted that, 'Folk-lore in Zulu has been very fortunate in the work done by H. Callaway ... It would be of great value if Native writers could be encouraged to do more writing of the type done by Mbata and Mdhladhla' (Doke 1933:14). The dearth of 'proverb-lore' and school-books was also noted: 'Zulu is singularly defective in works of imagination, and an effort should be made to arouse interest in this direction among Native teachers.' Among practical suggestions made by Doke was that Mofolo's *Chaka* should be translated into Zulu: 'It is rather a great shame that up to this day this text has been translated into Afrikaans, English, French, German, but not in any of the South African Bantu languages.' The suggestion mentioned above with regard to the translation of English texts into Xhosa was applied to Zulu. Other languages also received attention, with a keen observation on shortcomings in the literature available at the time. At present, there is a need for modern scholars to examine, from time to time, the direction in which Bantu literature is developing.

Following some of the observations made by the Inter-University Committee, a number of studies of folklore, based upon Doke's own preliminary work, were undertaken by scholars such as Vilakazi and Mofokeng who worked directly with Doke. Thus Doke created a legacy of scholarship in the study of Bantu folklore, which had now advanced considerably. The period between 1931 and 1953, when Doke was actively involved in committees which investigated the grammar and literature of Bantu languages, is a period during which some of the greatest writers of these languages emerged. In Doke's reviews new works were not denied praise and encouragement where and when it was due. Unfortunately at present none of the journals mainly concerned with Bantu languages and literature publish regular reviews of literary works. This was formerly a feature of *Bantu Studies* (later *African Studies*) under Doke's own editorship, *LIMI*, and the *Journal of South African*

*Languages* (now the *African Journal of African Languages*) in its early stages in the 1980s, but the practice has been abandoned.

It is also interesting to note that after 1953 a number of Afrikaner publishing houses took an interest in publishing Bantu language literature. It is at this time that the literature becomes a focus for divergent interests, some motivated only by economic gain, others by political allegiance to the post-1948 status quo. Comparing some of the works which were produced under Doke's editorship, and also by publishing houses such as Shuter and Shooter and Oxford University Press, or the missionaries who continued to publish in Bantu languages, one notices certain new tendencies which seem to betray ideological leanings. The Afrikaner publishing establishment singles itself out in this regard (Maake 1992). We leave it as a challenge to students of Bantu literature to study the context and content of works produced by these publishing houses, in order to measure the influence of these tendencies. Doke's involvement in the publishing of Bantu literature is clearly outlined in his own reviews, critiques, reports and surveys.

In pursuit of the above interest, the student of Bantu literature could undertake, for example, a diachronic study of a series of books or genres produced by a given publisher, or a synchronic study of works published by different publishers, in order to investigate whether there is any trend which seems to be in keeping with the Nationalist Government's policy of censorship, or any religious or political dogma. The student may also study prize-winning novels, taking note of competition rules, in order to assess how these have influenced the production of literary works. The student could also collect rejected manuscripts and correspondence between publishers and writers to acquire a more explicit picture of publishers' expectations. This, together with other methods of research, could open the way to a better understanding of the forces at play in the forging of our literatures.

Although Doke's concern transcended those of publishers who are only interested in school readership, he was certainly concerned with the publication of books for schools. In the latter regard, he also produced school primers. It remains a challenge for students of Bantu language and literature to assess the merit of his Xhosa, Zulu and Ndebele Readers, published by Longmans. There is no need to mention at this point that those produced by educationists such as Engelbrecht and Thejane for Southern Sotho, were perfect examples of a policy which was indifferent to the growth of our literature. The renaissance of interest in producing literature meant purely for school readership in the 1950s coincided with

or resulted in the emergence of a number of publishing companies which had some direct or indirect links with government policy. And this development marks a turning point in Bantu literature.

The literature which was produced during and after the implementation of the Bantu Education Act has received ample attention, and there can be no moral justification for the role which some publishing companies played in its dissemination. Some of them are still leading publishers of Bantu literature in South Africa. It is sad to note that some of them are still dominating the field, and they seem destined to continue to do so into the new millennium. It is in view of this situation that one cannot help but be grateful for the role Doke played in inspiring translations and original writings in Bantu languages, a role which has hitherto not been properly recognised, especially in the debate about the domination and control of this literature by the missionaries at the turn of the century and in the first decades of the twentieth century, and from and beyond the Doke era.

From one perspective it may seem that some of the best works which contributed to the growth of Bantu language literature were those translated from English. However, in post-colonial or neo-colonial (whichever perspective one wishes to take) discourse, this may be seen as an imperialist imposition upon the languages, in the sense that this literature carried the baggage of its source culture. On the other hand, it may be argued that great works of art may be indigenised into the target culture, and that their literary merits remain intact even in their new culture. It is in the former context that Doke's motives, though guided by a genuine desire to see Bantu literature flourish, may be seen as misguided, if not imperialistic.

It cannot be denied that Doke was also instrumental in encouraging publications of a high standard in Bantu languages. This is clearly indicated by his sensitive recognition of good works and his most encouraging reviews. Though he was essentially a grammarian, his language studies often digressed into sharp observations on Bantu literature. In a discussion of aspects of Bantu languages, Doke made a general observation of the 'oral bases' of Bantu literature:

The oral bases of Bantu literature include the following phenomena: (a) methods of word-building such as lead to daily enrichment of a literary language by means of inflexion, compounding, praise terminology, and the use of ideophones; (b) the remarkably rich and powerful proverb lore of the Bantu, and their riddles; (c) the universal song phrases, developing in certain

areas into the praises (e.g. *izibongo* of the Nguni and *dithoko* of the Sotho); and (d) the wonderfully rich field of folk-tales, for which the Bantu are richly renowned, and which merge into Bantu legendary history and form the basis for Bantu fiction on the one hand and Bantu history on the other. (Doke 1948:287)

This is also a challenge open to students of Bantu literature to study Doke's reviews and those of other critics of his time, together with the works themselves, to see how the reviews have influenced the direction of this literature.

### POST-DOKE ERA

The saga of the influence of Bantu Education on the growth of Bantu literature has dominated the discourse on this literature, and saying any more on that topic will not throw any new light on this subject. The hope is that this commemoration, together with other promises of change, will mark a new era in our literature. However, a sad reminder of the post-Dokean legacy on Bantu literature was brought to our attention by Dorothy Driver who remarked that:

The economics of publishing, including the ethics of textbook prescription, needs to be thoroughly investigated: one of the largest suppliers of black schools is [De Jager-] HAUM (Hollandsche Afrikaanse Uitgewers Maatschappij), owned by Hervormde Kerk, which funds the Conservative Party. (Driver 1991:163)

While the need for such investigation is clearly evident, certain tendencies, namely that the prescription of school literature, cannot be matched with the aims found in Doke's ideals. Except for a few good works, the literature which has dominated the school syllabus since the beginning of the 1960s is not something we can boast of. Some good writers emerged only in the early 1980s, among these I would cite the prize-winning novelist I.M. Moephuli (*Peo Ena e Jetswe ke Wena!*) and C.T. Msimang (*Buzani KuMkabayi*), with due respect to those writers whose works we cannot quote here. These two novels were, ironically, published by De-Jager-HAUM. One writer worth mentioning is L. Molefe whose classic *Isizwe Esisha* has all the hallmarks of a great work.

It is tempting to believe that the Doke approach of translating from classics of other languages into Bantu languages, which has been forsaken by some Language Boards, should continue to be part of our literary production, at least until such a time as we have enough works to match the best in other languages. It is for this reason that I am indeed grateful that we have had men such as C.M. Doke, whose contributions in directing and stimulating the growth of Bantu literature will remain monuments in the long road which our literature has travelled.

An interesting development is the re-emergence of publishing companies like Oxford University Press, Macmillan, Longman (Maskew Miller Longman); the continuity sustained by Shuter and Shooter, Witwatersrand University Press in collaboration with Hodder and Stoughton on publishing in Bantu languages, the birth of new publishers like Bard Publishers, the interest in African languages from publishers like Skotaville, and many others, are promising signs for the future. In addition there is an increase in the literary competitions which have been established in the last five years. We hope that there will be fair competition with publishers which dominate the school syllabus, J.L. van Schaik, Educum, De Jager-HAUM, and Via Afrika.

### NOTE

1. The word 'Bantu' is used in this paper instead of 'Sintu'. Our insistence on the re-adoption of this term derives from an attempt to retrieve its original meaning and to strip off the connotations which it gained from the beginning of the Nationalist Party rule and the Bantustan system.

### BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Andrzejewsky, B.W., S. Pilaszewics, and W. Tyloch (eds). 1985. *Literature in African Languages: Theoretical Issues and Sample Surveys*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ashton, H. (transl.) 1930. *Traveller to the East* by T.M. Mofolo. Basutoland: Morija.
- Baloyi, S.J. 1959. *Julius Caesar*. Johannesburg: Swiss Mission in South Africa.



- Boxwell, J. (transl.). 1959. *Jeqe, the Bodyservant of Shaka* by J.L. Dube. Lovedale: Lovedale Press.
- Cele, F. 1960. *UPrester John*. Johannesburg: Afrikaanse Pers.
- Colenso, J.W. 1883. *Ukuhamba Kwesihambi*. Marianhill: Marianhill Press.
- Doke, C.M. 1933. A preliminary investigation into the state of the native languages of South Africa, with suggestions as to research and the development of literature. *Bantu Studies* 7:1-39.
- 1935a. The future of Bantu literature. *African Observer* 6:18-22.
- 1935b. Vernacular literature in South African native schools. *Africa* 8:183-209.
- 1939. Lamba folk tales annotated. *Bantu Studies* 13:85-111.
- 1942. The native languages of South Africa. *African Studies* 1:135-41.
- 1944. An unusual Bantu tale of the Little-Hare series. *African Studies* 3:31-36.
- 1948. The basis of Bantu literature. *Africa* 18:284-301.
- Driver, D. 1991. South Africa. *Journal of Commonwealth Literature* 26:159-227.
- Dube, J.L. 1930. *Insila kaShaka*. Marianhill: Marianhill Mission Press.
- Gérard, A.S. 1971. *Four African Literatures*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- 1972. Towards a history of South African literatures. *Commonwealth Literature and the World*. Brussels: Didier.
- 1981. *African Language Literatures*. London: Longman.
- 1982. The linguists' unacknowledged progeny. *South African Journal of African Languages* 2(3):1-12.
- Giesekke, E.D. 1960. *Lwendo la Muendi*. Johannesburg: Afrikaanse Pers.
- Guma, S.M. 1968. Southern Sotho literature today. *Africa Digest* 15:25-29.
- Jabavu, D.D.T. 1921. *Bantu Literature: Classification and Reviews*. Lovedale: Lovedale Press.
- Jolobe, J.J.R. 1936 [1957]. *Umyezo* (3 edn). Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press.
- Jordan, A.C. 1973. *Towards an African Literature*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Khaketla, B.M. (transl.) 1963. *Merafo ya Morena Salemane* by H. Rider Haggard. Johannesburg: Afrikaanse Pers.
- Kunene, D.P. 1967. *The Works of Thomas Mofolo: Summaries and*

- Critiques*. University of California, Los Angeles. Occasional Paper No. 2.
- (transl.) 1981. *Chaka* by T.M. Mofolo. London: Heinemann.
- Kunene, D.P. and Kirsch, R.A. 1967. *The Beginnings of South African Vernacular Literature*. Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Laurence, G.F. 1959. A Catalogue, Bantu Authors' Conference. Atteridgeville, 7-9 July.
- Lekhethoa, H.H. 1946. *Tokoloho Bokhobeng*. Basutoland: Morija.
- Letele, G.L. 1944. Some recent publications in languages of the Sotho group. *African Studies* 3:161-71.
- Maake, N.P. 1992. A survey of trends in the development of African language literature in South Africa, with specific reference to written Southern Sotho literature, c. 1900-1970s. *African Languages and Cultures* 5:157-88.
- Mabille, A. (transl.). 1896. *Leeto la Mokriste* by J. Bunyan. Basutoland: Morija.
- Mahloane, I.E.L. n.d. *Romeo le Juliet*. Basutoland: n.p.
- Maile, M.L. 1956. The secular press and the Bantu, with special reference to the effects of, and the necessity for, Non-Christian and Christian literature. *Christian Literature for the Bantu of Southern Africa*, pp.120-26. Johannesburg: n.p.
- Mdledle, B.B. 1959. *UJulius Caesar*. Johannesburg: Afrikaanse Pers.
- Mofolo, R.M. 1926. *Chaka*. Basutoland: Morija.
- Mokgokong, P.C. 1963. South African Bantu literature. *Bantu Education Journal* 9(2):125-28.
- Mothoa, C.M. 1963. Tendencies in Bantu literature. *Bantu Education Journal* 9:371-75.
- Mphahlele, E. 1973. *Voices in the Whirlwind*. London: Macmillan.
- Mqhayi, S.E.K. 1914. *Ityala la Mawele*. Lovedale: Lovedale Press.
- Ntsane, K.E. 1961. *Mohwebi wa Venice*. Johannesburg: Afrikaanse Pers.
- Ntuli, D.B.Z. 1969. A brief survey of modern literature in the South African Bantu languages. *LIMI* 6(June):28-36.
- Nyembezi, C.L.S. 1957. *Lafa Elihle Kakhulu*. Pietermaritzburg: Shuter and Shooter.
- 1959. Problems of the author. Bantu Authors' Conference, Atteridgeville, 18-32.
- Phatudi, N.C. 1965. *Julease Kesare*. Johannesburg: Educum.
- Plaatje, S.T. 1930. *Diphoshophosho*. Basutoland: Morija.
- 1937. *Dintshontsho tsa Bo-Julius Kesare*. Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press.

- Raditladi, L.D. 1967. *Macbeth*. Johannesburg: Bona Press.
- Rammala, R. 1966. *Leeto la Mokriste*. Pretoria: Unie-boekhandel.
- Scott, P.E. (ed.). 1976. *Mqhayi in Translation*. Grahamstown: Rhodes University, Department of African Languages. Communication No. 6.
- Seboni, M.O.M. 1952. *Kgosi Henry wa Bone*. Johannesburg: Afrikaanse Pers.
- 1961. *Morekisi wa Venisi*. Lovedale: Lovedale Press.
- 1969. *Kgumahadi* by H. Rider Haggard. Johannesburg: Educum.
- Semmerlink, J. 1959. A Catalogue: Bantu Authors' Conference, Atteridgeville, 71-76.
- Shange, S. 1961. *Isithunjwa saseZenda* by A. Hope. Johannesburg: Afrikaanse Pers.
- Shilote, F.M. and Nkondo, C.N. 1982. *Macbeth*. Braamfontein: Sasavona.
- Sinxo, G.B. 1960. *URobinson Crusoe*. Cape Town: Maskew Miller.
- Soga, J.H. 1937. *Uhambo Lomhambi* (Part II). Lovedale: Lovedale Press.
- Soga, T. 1866. *Uhambo Lomhambi* (Part I). Lovedale: Lovedale Press.
- Swanepoel, C.F. 1974. *Tjhaka*. Cape Town: Tafelberg.
- Taylor, J.D. 1956. Vernacular literature in South Africa. *Christianity and the Natives of South Africa*, pp.131-44. Lovedale: Lovedale Press.
- Vilakazi, B.W. 1932. Some aspects of Zulu literature. *Africa South* 3(1):270-74.
- Vilakazi, B.W. 1935. *Inkondlo kaZulu*. Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press.
- 1960. *Amal'Ezulu* (In new orthography). Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press.
- Willan, B. 1984a. Sol T. Plaatje and Tswana Literature. In T. Couzens and L. White (eds), *Literature and Society in South Africa*. Pinelands: Maskew Miller Longman, pp.81-100.
- 1984b. *Sol T. Plaatje: South African Nationalist*. London: Heinemann.

NHLANHLA P. MAAKE  
 School of Oriental and African Studies  
 University of London

## C.M. Doke's Contribution to Translation Studies

---

Derek Fivaz

---

In this overview of C.M. Doke's work in the field of translation, I would like to draw attention to one of the main driving forces evident throughout his life. Without attempting to understand this force, we would simply be viewing this man and his life's achievements in terms of our own paradigm, and through our own lenses.

Tribute has been paid on several other occasions to Doke's very remarkable contributions to scholarship.<sup>1</sup> The bulk of his scholarly work is clearly in the fields of Bantu linguistics, folklore and literature,<sup>2</sup> and his work in these fields has not only attracted considerable attention: many have had a powerful formative influence in their fields. Of all of his multi-faceted scholarly contributions, it is his translation work that is the area most overlooked, overshadowed as it is by his many massive scholarly tomes, scarcely of much interest to the scholarly world. Of what interest is his Lamba translation of Ruth in 1922, or the Xhosa hymnal in 1932, or a catechism in Zulu in 1935, or Lamba Bible stories in 1940, or even the complete Lamba Bible in 1959, to mention but a few of Doke's work on translation? My main thesis is that it is Doke's translation work and the interests that lie behind it that provide, more than anything else, the key to understanding much of his motivation and life's work. If I am correct, his work on translation gives a clue to the man.

Desmond Cole, in the citation written for Doke when the latter was awarded an honorary doctorate by the University of the Witwatersrand in 1972, alluded to the prejudices and biases of our society, which tend to reflect little interest in certain of Doke's contributions. In this regard he

mentioned specifically Doke's translation of the Bible into Lamba, together with his translations of catechisms, hymnals, and ministers' manuals into several Bantu languages. He commented that:

... all these constitute in themselves an outstanding achievement for any one man's lifetime. However, these were secondary activities. In his professional field his contribution is unrivalled. (Cole 1972:25-26)

From what I know of Doke I doubt that he would have viewed his translation tasks as 'secondary activities', although they do pale somewhat in terms of their published volume compared with his dictionaries, grammars, and other scholarly linguistic and ethnological works. I would like to substantiate the view I have outlined that these translation works are a window into the soul of this extraordinary scholar.

The only occasion on record (to my knowledge) when Doke demonstrated exuberant elation was on the publication of his translation of the New Testament into Lamba. He himself describes how on receipt of the newly published volumes, together with a gift of a new pair of pyjamas from his mother, he donned the pyjamas and raced around the mission compound followed by some sixty excited schoolboys. He wrote: 'They only saw the new pyjamas! It was the completion of the New Testament that gave me the elation' (Doke 1956:11). The year was 1918, and we can perhaps understand the excitement of the young man of twenty-five on receiving in published form the Word of God, the fruit of his labour in translation. We can chuckle at the picture of the reserved and somewhat austere man of later years in his pyjamas racing around a compound on a bicycle. But, and we must not miss this, this demonstration of exuberance is linked not to some great academic achievement, but to the completion of the New Testament translation.

This story is particularly significant. The motivation from and commitment to the Christian message is evident throughout Doke's life.<sup>3</sup> His work on Bantu linguistics, folklore, literature and all else *started* with his going to Lambaland in 1914 for the communication of the Christian gospel. He left Lambaland in 1921 only because of severe attacks of malaria (Fortune 1972:ix), but he continued throughout his life to work for various Christian causes. These included serving as Editor of the Baptist denomination's newspaper for some twenty-five years, acting for a few years as the first principal of its newly-founded theological college, writing several papers on Christian topics, and, in the last ten years of his life, writing no fewer than eleven major papers on Christian theological

topics. Regarding his research and writing, he began on Christian subjects, continued these throughout his very busy working life, and ended with major work in the same area – the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments and their message. His entry into the scholarly field was through this route, and he remained constant to that commitment throughout his life.<sup>4</sup>

But we return to Doke's works on translation. His earliest published work (1917) was a scripture primer in Lamba, followed a year later by the Gospel of Mark. He completed the New Testament in only seven years or somewhat less. This was no mean achievement, considering that it involved learning an undescribed language and culture, and mastering its grammar and vocabulary sufficiently to be able to undertake the highly specialised work of Bible translation. Today, with all the sophisticated textual and computer aids for the translator, as well as much greater insight into linguistic analysis and cultural understanding, the average time for a translation of the New Testament from scratch is some fifteen years.<sup>5</sup>

While most of the young Doke's early work was concerned with producing or translating materials into Lamba, his scholarly interest in Bantu linguistics began to surface when he left Lambaland for his year of study at London University and his taking up an appointment as lecturer at the University of the Witwatersrand in 1922. But even on the boat to England in 1921, he was busy translating Genesis and Exodus (published in 1929). In 1922/23, he was busy with three further books of the Old Testament (Jonah, Ruth and Samuel). There was then a gap of some years, and in 1938 the Psalms appeared in print together with the New Testament previously published. In 1941 further portions of the Old Testament appeared, and in 1946, 1949, and 1950 various Old Testament books that he had translated were published. The task was finally completed in 1956, and the complete Bible in Lamba was published in 1959. Most of this work was his own translation, only portions being revisions of the initial draft translations of certain Old Testament books produced either by the Reverend E. Holmgren of the Swedish Baptist Mission<sup>6</sup> (Isaiah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi) or by his sister, Olive Carey Doke (Esther and Job).

All this was no mean achievement. This is especially the case when one remembers that Doke had only seven years among the Lamba people before leaving Lambaland for health reasons. Most of these translations were produced, it would seem, without the direct contribution of Lamba speakers. Today this kind of approach by a non-mother-tongue speaker, without continuous interaction with and extensive checking by speakers of

the language, would be considered a very dubious basis from which to undertake a major translation task. Doke himself expressed his concern about continuing with the Bible translation, having been so long away from the field.<sup>7</sup> A brief visit in 1950 refreshed his knowledge of the language after an absence of thirty years, and he was encouraged to continue.

His procedure in this latter phase of translating the Old Testament into Lamba was to send his handwritten translations for checking by Lamba leaders and then for typing by his sister, Olive, who was living and working in Lambaland. He comments that

...we [Doke and his sister] have been in weekly correspondence on all sorts of difficulties, getting me needed information, discussing renderings, and coming to decisions on uniform principles. (Doke 1956:12)

This reflects the highly meticulous approach Doke took to all his work, heightened no doubt by the consciousness of his responsibility as translator of the Word of God.

I wish to draw attention to the ongoing nature of his translation work, paralleling all his other, better known contributions throughout his fifty years of publishing activity. How he managed to fit in all this work, not only on the Lamba scriptures, but also in editing hymnals in Xhosa, Zulu and Sotho, along with catechisms and ministers' manuals, while he was simultaneously producing all his major grammars and dictionaries in Zulu, Sotho or Lamba, Bushman phonetics, Shona dialectology, as well as other topics, quite defies the imagination.

To give some idea of his multifaceted productivity, Doke's works dealing with translation are listed below, alongside his other scholarly works, with year of publication or completion (the latter for those not published and which are marked by an asterisk). Titles are in simplified citation form. It should be borne in mind that in many cases the date of publication followed the date when the actual research was done by a year or more.<sup>8</sup>

SECULAR ACADEMIC WORKS	TRANSLATION/TRANSLATION RELATED
1917	Lamba Scripture Primer, 22 pp.
1918	Lamba reading book, 16 pp. Gospel of Mark in Lamba
1919	Three articles on Lambaland

- 1921 Article on the infinitive in Bantu New Testament in Lamba
- 1922 *The Grammar of the Lamba Language*, 157 pp. Jonah, Ruth and Samuel in Lamba
- 1923 Articles: Phonetics of Zulu  
Lamba social control  
Zulu clicks
- 1924 Articles: Qhung phonetics  
Bantu languages  
The Bushmen  
Bantu philology
- 1926 *The Phonetics of the Zulu Language*, 130 pp.  
Articles: Lamba folklore  
Philology
- 1927 Articles on the Lamba, Baila, folklore  
*Text Book of Zulu Grammar*, 341 pp.  
*A Grammar of the Sotho Language* (ed.), 209 pp.  
*Lamba Folk-lore*, 570 pp.
- 1928 Articles: Ila phonetics  
Languages of South Africa  
Lamba cosmology  
Orthographies of South African langs.  
Bantu grammar classification
- 1929 Articles: Pronunciation of Bemba Genesis and Exodus in Lamba  
Word-division in Bantu
- 1930 Article: Lamba aphorisms
- 1931 *Unification of Shona Dialects*, 156 pp.  
*A Comparative Study of Shona Phonetics*, 298 pp.  
*The Lambas* (ethnology), 408 pp.
- 1932 *Graded Zulu Exercises*, 56 pp. Xhosa Baptist hymnal (ed.)
- 1933 Articles: Literature in S. Bantu Article: Bantu Bible translation  
Phonetics of Zulu  
Aushi vocabulary  
Earliest Shona vocabulary

- \*Dialect standardisation  
*English-Lamba Vocabulary*, 134 pp.<sup>9</sup>
- 1934 Article: Lamba literature
- 1935 Articles: Vernacular textbooks      Baptist catechism S.Sotho (ed.)  
Early Bantu literature      Baptist catechism Zulu (ed.)
- 1936 Articles: Bantu literature  
Bushman phonetics  
Bushman culture
- 1937 Articles: Zulu language pioneers  
S.Bantu languages  
\*Lamba-English dictionary, 1957 pp.<sup>10</sup>
- 1938 Article: Earliest Bantu records      Methodist prayer/hymn Zulu  
*Lamba Grammar*, 484 pp.      Psalms in Lamba  
Baptist catechism in Xhosa
- 1939 Articles: Language in S.A.      Methodist Zulu catechism (ed.)  
Lamba folk tales
- 1940 Articles: Bantu lexicography  
Bantu language pioneers
- 1941 Lamba Bible stories
- 1942 Article: Native languages of S.A.
- 1943 Article: Bantu philology      First Aid (ed.) in English,  
Zulu  
*Outline Grammar of Bantu*, 56 pp.      Xhosa, Sotho<sup>11</sup>
- 1944 Articles: Conjunctive writing  
Folk tales  
Bantu linguistics
- 1945 Bantu bibliographical studies,      Baptist ministers' manual  
119 pp.      Sotho  
Baptist ministers' manual  
Zulu  
Abridged Baptist hymnal  
Xhosa  
Abridged Baptist hymnal Zulu

- 1946 Longmans Zulu readers      Baptist ministers' manual  
Xhosa
- 1947 Longmans Zulu and Ndebele readers  
Articles: Bantu wisdom-lore  
Vilakazi's contributions
- 1948 Articles: Bantu, a language family  
Basis of Bantu literature  
Linguistic research programme  
*Zulu-English Dictionary*, 903 pp.
- 1949 Longmans Ndebele readers      Lamba Old Testament stories,  
2 edn.
- 1950 Longmans Zulu and Ndebele readers      Baptist hymnal Xhosa  
Articles: Bantu languages: typology      Old Testament books in Lamba  
Schreuder's contribution      Baptist hymnal Sotho  
Bantu (encyclopedia article)
- 1953 *Zulu-English Dictionary*, 2 edn.  
918 pp.
- 1954 *The Southern Bantu Languages*,      Article: Hope  
262 pp.
- 1955 Article: Xhosa religion (ed.)  
*Zulu Syntax and Idiom*, 234 pp.
- 1956 Article: Compass points in Bantu
- 1957 S.Sotho grammar, 491 pp.      Article: Bible transl.  
difficulties  
Article: Tribute to Dr Mofokeng
- 1958 *English-Zulu Dictionary*, 572 pp.      Article: Scripture translation  
*Zulu-English Vocabulary*, 342 pp.  
\*South-Central African tales, 110 pp.  
Article: Dr Edwin Smith
- 1959 Articles: Bantu language pioneers      Lamba Bible  
Early Bantu literature      Lamba Bible dictionary  
R.D. Macminn's ling. work  
Lamba folklore  
\*Lamba tales of the Little Hare, 60 pp.

- 1960 Articles: Earliest Bantu records  
Bantu philology
- 1961 Articles: *History of Bantu Linguistics*, 129 pp.  
H.W. Woodward's ling. work
- 1963 *English-Lamba Vocabulary* (rev.), 179 pp.  
*Graded Lamba Grammar and Exercises*, 261 pp.
- 1964 Bible translation into Afr.  
languages
- 1966 Article: Holy Spirit in Bantu
- 1967 Ministers' manual in Lamba
- 1968 Lamba biography
- 1972 *Lamba-English Dictionary* (rev.), 2 525 pp.

Doke had not yet completed the Lamba Bible translation when he retired from the University of the Witwatersrand in 1953, but despite continuing ill health, he was still committed to giving the complete Bible to the Lamba people. We see this in a letter to the Principal of the University just prior to his retirement where Doke stated that:

It is my hope, on retiring, to go to the Coast (probably in Natal) and continue, if possible, with research work and with the Bible translation into Lamba. There are several research projects, already stated here, which would have to await completion till then.<sup>12</sup>

In an attachment to this letter, Doke lists as one of his current activities as serving on a committee currently busy with the translation of the Bible into Zulu. All this took place while he was still pressing on with the abridgement of his Zulu-English/English-Zulu dictionaries, and on the eve of his retirement! His completion of the Bible translation into Lamba in 1956/1957 (published in 1959) was obviously one of the high points of his life. But the many hundreds, perhaps even thousands, of hours of labour involved in this work are scarcely likely to attract the attention of scholars.

Doke reflected on the difficulties and challenges in Bible translation in several articles published over several years on translation, the first in 1933 entitled 'Bible translation among the Bantu', then 'The concept of

hope among the Bantu' in 1954, followed by 'Some difficulties in Bible translation into a Bantu language' in 1957, 'Scripture translation into Bantu languages' in 1958, and 'The translation of "The Holy Spirit" in Bantu languages' in 1966. Following the fashion of his day, Doke states that he was in full agreement with the practice of preferring 'to err on the side of the literal translation, while preserving, as far as possible, Lamba idiom, rather than to attempt anything like the method followed by James Moffatt in his translation into English' (Doke 1956:12).<sup>13</sup>

This 'source orientation' approach to the text no doubt meant that Doke's Lamba translation could scarcely 'speak to the heart' in the way that a more 'dynamic equivalent' translation does. But evaluation of the translations Doke produced will best be done by Lamba speakers acquainted with translation theory and practice. More or less literal translations of the type explicitly endorsed by Doke were the type produced for many African languages at the time, and Doke in this was only following accepted norms. Bible translations today tend to be more of the 'dynamic equivalent' type, that is, they attempt to reproduce the impact of the original text, as far as possible, in the target language and culture, and so are more 'target language' orientated in grammatical form, idiom and cultural context.<sup>14</sup>

Doke's articles on specific difficulties in Bible translation into a Bantu language are illustrated mainly from Lamba. They deal, *inter alia*, with differences in the grammatical structure of Lamba (exemplifying Bantu languages) and Indo-European (New Testament Greek) or Hebrew, including such issues as differences of gender and verb tense systems, and honorifics. He deals also with problems concerning typical kinds of lexical difficulties involved in translation. Doke's article (1966) on the translation of 'The Holy Spirit' into Bantu languages reflects special interest in this problem, and he quotes from several languages as he grapples with the problem of how best to reflect the personal properties needed for adequate translation of this term. The problem is that the most obvious Bantu language noun equivalent usually belongs to an intrinsically non-personal noun class.

Quite apart from his success or otherwise in handling the many hundreds of technicalities and difficulties which had to be assessed and decided in the various translations he undertook, Doke's contribution to the thousands of lives affected by his translated texts is incalculable. This was, I suggest, the heart-beat of this very reserved scholar. He commented in later years on his feelings in being able to deliver some translated portions of the Lamba Bible while on a visit to Lambaland in 1950:

What a joy it was to visit once again Paul the Leper, and to hand him a copy of this book. I shall never forget how he took the volume between the stumps of his poor, maimed fingerless hands, and seemed to smooth it caressingly, as he said 'Here is a feast of new things from God for me.' (Doke 1956:11-12)

In closing, this overview of Doke's contribution to the translation field<sup>15</sup> is intended not so much as a critical evaluation as a drawing of attention to the magnitude of what he undertook, and his reasons for doing so. Even his immense work on dictionaries in Lamba and Zulu, as well as his grammatical descriptions of several languages, relate directly to this task. Here, I submit, and especially in his translation of the Bible, with all his related work on hymn books, ministers' manuals and the like, is an essential part of understanding this complex man. He was not only an outstanding scholar. He was a man dedicated to the Word of God and the enlightenment of his fellow man. His life's work attests this dedication.

### NOTES

1. Some general overviews of Doke's life and work are found in Cole (1972), Fortune (1972) and Oosthuizen (1972).
2. The term 'Bantu' is used in this paper in the sense that Doke used it, and in which it is used internationally by linguists, namely to refer to the large family of languages distributed south of a line running roughly from Kenya to the Cameroons. The southern and south-central members of this family were Doke's particular fields of study.
3. An interesting note on his self-effacing humility is shown in his declining any presentation from the University of the Witwatersrand upon his retirement after a distinguished thirty-year period of service. A letter from the Principal, H.R. Raikes, to Doke dated 2 September 1953 (in my possession) responds to Doke's wish to decline any presentation. Raikes suggests that perhaps Doke would be willing to accept a cheque to be presented privately. This letter is annotated and initialled in Doke's hand 'Prefer no steps be taken'. A subsequent letter from the Principal of 22 September notes this wish with much regret and states that 'we shall of course abide strictly by your wishes'.
4. It can be argued that Doke's work in Bantu linguistics was *servant to*

his overriding commitment to the communication of the Gospel and especially Bible translation. He communicated widely with missionaries in the field, and specifically produced his *Outline Grammar of Bantu* in 1943 with wider missionary needs in mind. See also Note 10 below on his extensive Lamba-English dictionary.

5. This is the experience of Wycliffe Bible Translators, the largest single Bible translation agency in the world, whose members are currently working on scripture translation in more than 800 languages throughout the world.
6. Doke commented in a letter (a copy is in my possession) dated 7 April 1953 to Mr E.H. Creasey, who was evidently helping with the typing of the manuscript of the Lamba Old Testament: 'I have at last finished the Isaiah revision. It is really a new translation, and except for the fact that Holmgren had put so much into it, I would rather have translated it myself.' This suggests quite some frustration on Doke's part with the draft from which he was working.
7. 'Before going to Lambaland on that occasion [his visit to Lambaland in 1950 as President of the Baptist Union], I had come to the conclusion that I could do no more Lamba translation: I was getting too 'rusty' after 30 years away from the country and the people.' (Doke 1956:12)
8. This list is extracted from 'C.M. Doke: list of publications and manuscripts' in *African Studies*, vol. 30 (1971). A few non-linguistic articles on Christian topics are not included in my abbreviated list, nor have the several substantial documents on Christian doctrinal topics in manuscript form which Doke produced between 1962 and 1970.
9. The *English-Lamba Vocabulary* of 1933 was produced as early as 1916. A copy of the original manuscript is in my possession. Doke must have prepared this early dictionary as an aid to his own learning of the language and to assist in the translation of the Bible into Lamba which he commenced shortly thereafter. The vocabulary already has the form of his later and more sophisticated dictionaries. Synonyms and related forms are listed for each entry, and the perfect tense form of each verb is given. This is a surprisingly 'mature' kind of dictionary, produced just two years after Doke started work on Lamba.
10. Doke's *Lamba-English Dictionary* of 1937 was obviously prepared with the needs of the Lambaland missionaries in mind. Only six copies in typescript were produced, the original plus five carbon

copies. Doke told me personally that he did not have this published because the work was not quite up to his scholarly standard. He did, however, re-issue this work in 1972, again in six typescript copies, but in the then-current Lamba orthography. He could not be prevailed upon to have the copies made in xerox form, so the many diacritic and special phonetic characters were laboriously hand-written in each of the six copies. It should be noted that this, the last of his scholarly undertakings, completed when he was seventy-one years old, was done specifically for the needs of the new generation of Lambaland missionaries (from Australia), who had requested further copies. His daughter, Erika, had to brush up on her typing to produce the manuscript, and the Secretary in the Department of African Languages at Rhodes University, Patricia Scott, assisted with part of the typing.

11. These First Aid manuals for St. John's Ambulance in 1943 seem to be the only secular translated work which Doke edited.
12. Personal letter from Doke to the Principal of the University of the Witwatersrand, dated 26th November 1951. A copy is in my possession.
13. In the same context, Doke cites the first translator of the Xhosa Bible, John Appleyard, with approval and quotes him as follows: 'the translator ... can only give the words of Scripture, but not their theological interpretation. The very fact that on certain passages commentators are in disagreement, renders it all the more necessary for the translator to keep close to his original, so that the reader may be able to weigh the interpretations of others, and judge for himself'. Doke's comment on this view is, 'With this we are in full agreement ...'
14. Examples are *Good News for Modern Man*, also known as *Today's English Version*, or the Afrikaans equivalent, *Blye Boodskap*, both produced by the South African Bible Society in several editions and printings. Recently produced translations of the Bible into the various African languages of South Africa are also of this type.
15. Doke also contributed significantly to many secular translations produced for the various southern Bantu languages by actively encouraging mother-tongue speakers to produce such translations. This aspect of his contributions to the translation field has not been treated in this article, but it is discussed in N.P. Maake's 'C.M. Doke's contribution to Bantu literature' elsewhere in this volume.

### BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Cole, D.T. 1972. Citation delivered on the award of the degree of Doctor of Laws (*h.c.*). Golden Jubilee Graduation Ceremony, University of the Witwatersrand, pp.25-26.
- Doke, C.M. 1933. Bible translation among the Bantu. *The Bible in the World* (July-August), 107-109, 123-24.
- 1943. *Outline Grammar of Bantu*. Department of African Languages, University of the Witwatersrand. Roneo.
- 1954. The concept of Hope among the Bantu. *The Bible Translator* 5:9-19.
- 1956. The sword of the preacher in the mission field. An address to the Baptist Assembly (East London) on the translation of the Bible into African languages. Reprinted from *South African Outlook*, May, June and July 1964.
- 1957. Some difficulties in Bible translation into a Bantu language. *Scientia* (June-July), 1-6.
- 1958. Scripture translation into Bantu languages. *African Studies* 17:82-99.
- 1966. The translation of 'The Holy Spirit' in Bantu languages. *The Bible Translator* 17:32-38.
- Fortune, G. 1972. Clement Martyn Doke: A Biographical and Bibliographical Sketch. *Catalogue of the C.M. Doke Collection on African Languages in the Library of the University of Rhodesia*. Boston: G.K. Hall, pp.v-xix.
- Oosthuizen, G.C. 1972. The linguistic genius of the Carey descendants. *Fort Hare Papers* 5(4):305-11.

DEREK FIVAZ  
Professor Emeritus of African Languages  
Rhodes University



# The Contribution of C.M. Doke to Written Shona

---

George Fortune

---

In discussing the contribution made by Clement Doke to the development of Shona in its written mode, it will be useful to commence with a look at his work and experience in African linguistics before 1929, when he accepted the invitation to advise the government of Southern Rhodesia on the formation of a common written medium for the Shona dialects.<sup>1</sup> Doke was then thirty-six years old. Seven years of his early manhood, from 1914 to 1921, had been devoted to missionary work among the Lamba people of north-western Rhodesia (now Zambia). His work was initially that of a schoolmaster but, as his grasp of the language grew, it developed more and more in the direction of Bible translation for which his superiors recognised he had a distinct flair.<sup>2</sup> He spent 1919 in Johannesburg on furlough as an M.A. student at an extension of the Transvaal University College. His thesis, *The Grammar of the Lamba Language*, was the result of his field experience and bore the marks of the philology available to him in his early undergraduate work in modern and classical languages.

Doke's experience so far, the prolonged and intimate exposure to the Lamba language and oral literature, and the more academic translation and descriptive work, made him both suitable for, and receptive to, an opening which occurred in 1921, after his return to Johannesburg from the mission field. The remarkable and brilliant Jan Hofmeyr, about to become the first principal of the new University of the Witwatersrand, was just then planning to provide for the introduction of Bantu Studies into the curriculum. He was aware of Doke's linguistic work in Bantu languages through his connection with Transvaal University College in

Johannesburg and through his common membership, with Doke, of the Baptist Church. As a result, he encouraged Doke to fit himself for appointment as a lecturer in the subject by means of a session, 1921-22, at the University of London. This suggestion was taken up by the new recruit and carried out entirely at his own expense. At London he was registered at three of the University's Schools, evidence of the broad conception he had of his subject, which was also that of his future Principal. The first was the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), where he was a student of Alice Werner and read for the School's Diploma in Comparative Bantu. The second was University College where he worked under Daniel Jones in order to acquire proficiency and a certificate in phonetics. The third was the London School of Economics where he was a student of C.G. Seligman. The choice of a major language for his dissertation at SOAS was decided, not by Doke's own current interests and former experience acquired in south-central Africa, but by Werner's ability to examine him. She had some knowledge of Zulu, acquired by working with Harriet Colenso, and, furthermore, there was a suitable Zulu-speaking informant available in the person of the Reverend John Dube who was in London at the time. Hence, though Doke had come with original material in Lamba and Luba, keen to exploit and develop his research into these languages, the choice was Zulu, and the topic 'A Dissertation on the Phonetics of the Zulu Language'. Duly qualified by his work in London, Doke returned to South Africa in August 1922. He was appointed Senior Lecturer in Bantu Philology as from the beginning of 1923 and proceeded to offer courses in Zulu, Phonetics and Ethnology.

Doke had only acquired competence in Zulu as a result of his work in London. The difference between the phonology of Zulu and that of Lamba, with which he was more familiar, had struck him forcibly, and encouraged, I believe, a penchant for phonetics as an approach to linguistic description and as a research field. Once appointed, he expanded his SOAS dissertation into a doctoral thesis, published as a special number of *Bantu Studies* in 1926 under the title *The Phonetics of the Zulu Language*. The problems raised by the analysis and description of the clicks in Zulu led him to investigate these types of sound in what he sensed had been their source, namely the Bushman languages of South West Africa, as they were then known. So in 1925, just two years after his appointment, and with his thesis completed, he undertook a research trip by oxwagon from Grootfontein, one of the termini of the railway from Swakopmund. His course lay along the Omuramba

Wamatako, a river or river course tributary to the Kunene. It involved a trek of some three hundred miles but he was successful in being able to meet both Berg Dama and Bush people. From among the latter he induced one of the men to stay with him for some time as an informant. The results of his work were published in December of the same year as 'An Outline of the Phonetics of the Language of the Qhung Bushmen of the North-West Kalahari' in *Bantu Studies*. He confessed that the Bushmen fascinated him more than any other African group, though the Lamba remained his own people, especially dear to him until the end of his life. The publication of his *Lamba Folk-Lore* witnessed to his wide and deep interest in the cultural life of these people (Doke 1927a).

The publication, also in 1927, of the *Text Book of Zulu Grammar* again emphasised the phonetician in Doke. For the underlying grammatical scheme, according to which the language was described and analysed, rested frankly on the incidence of a single phonological feature defined by Doke as stress, but later identified by Cole as length. As a result of observing how native speakers employed the criterion of penultimate 'stress' in slow speech, Doke claimed to have found the basic 'parts of speech' which reflected the structural categories peculiar to Bantu syntax. His approach may be neatly summarised by quoting four sentences from a pamphlet which he was to write in 1929 in defence of his proposals for conjunctive writing in Shona:

1. There is an inherent word-division in all Bantu speech.
2. Stress is the word builder in Bantu. In each word or wordgroup in Bantu there is one, and only one, main stress.
3. Each complete word *will be taken* [author's emphasis] to constitute some 'part of speech' according to the work which it does in the sentence.
4. Then these fundamental parts of speech ... may be further subdivided according to the form in which they appear.

In view of the foregoing I think it is true to say that Doke's interests during his early academic years, prior to the Shona enterprise, lay chiefly in the field of phonetic research. Possibly this was because he considered that the objective approach to the analysis and description of Bantu languages according to their own intrinsic categories and structure, on which he laid much importance, should rest on a rigorously scientific foundation. Within the whole field of philology, it was phonetics alone which could claim to supply this. Be this as it may, a further indication of

Doke's preoccupation with phonetics during the two years before the Shona assignment can be seen in the publication of three papers on Central African phonetics (Doke 1927c, 1928, 1929). In the latter study on Bemba, he collaborated with the Reverend B.H. Barnes, C.R., who was to be the moving spirit in the small language committee with which Doke was to work during the Shona enterprise.

This enterprise, namely Doke's research into the relationships between the Shona dialects and his proposals for a single writing system to serve those who spoke them, was led up to and rendered possible by two developments during 1928.<sup>3</sup> These developments had been gradually forming over a number of years but were only articulated then. The first was the acceptance by the government of Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) of its responsibilities towards African education through the creation of a Department of Native Development (DND) which was to work in co-operation with the missionary societies who had hitherto been the pioneers in this task. The language question had presented itself since it was accepted that the medium of instruction was to be the pupils' own mother tongue in the early years of schooling. Hence it was clearly necessary to supply suitable textbooks in the languages concerned. It was the following sentence in the speech of the Colonial Secretary, outlining the government's intention, which convinced the missionary societies and, in particular, their organ, the Southern Rhodesia Missionary Conference (SRMC), that action on the question of a common literary language, so long desired but so long delayed, must be taken. Unanimity on this issue was the second of the developments to which reference has been made above. The decisive sentence ran,

Without such textbooks no great advance can be made in Native Education, and I am hopeful that, *with Government assistance*, the missionary bodies of Southern Rhodesia will put their heads together to get a common language suitable to the needs of the different Mashona tribes so that larger and less expensive editions of higher class textbooks can be printed' [author's emphasis] (SRMC 1928, Item 23, p. 12).

Mrs C.S. Louw of the Dutch Reformed Mission at Morgenster, whose speech to the 1928 SRMC carried this information, added that the government had decided to give liberal grants in aid of the printing costs of editions of not less than five thousand copies of school textbooks in

the vernacular under certain conditions. One of these conditions was that there were to be only two versions recognised, one for Matabeleland and one for Mashonaland, and that the languages used were to be those decided upon by the SRMC.

The credit for the new direction must go to the Colonial Secretary of the time, Mr Leggatt. He not only brought about a new attitude towards African development in the Legislative Assembly, but also, by his practical good sense and promise of financial help in the production of books, secured a measure of agreement among concerned missionaries never witnessed before. The choice of the common written language was left to the SRMC whose members duly put their heads together the day after hearing of the government's proposals. Their response, still influenced by partisan feeling, as well as by uncertainty as to how to meet the condition of a single written language, was finally worded thus:

This Conference finds itself unable to decide at present between the alternative of standardising two dialects for Mashonaland, viz. Chizezuru and Chikaranga, or of standardising a unified language built on all four existing dialects. We therefore prefer to reserve our opinion until expert advice has been obtained. We would respectfully request the Government to approach the International Institute for African Languages and Cultures with a view to obtaining a suitable expert to investigate and advise upon the matter. (SRMC 1928)

This, the result of lengthy discussion, was the substantive motion of the Conference and was carried unanimously. Thereupon the Director of the DND appointed a committee of missionaries he considered knowledgeable and representative of the three main areas concerned to collaborate with the expert to be chosen. They were the Reverend B.H. Barnes, C.R., Chairman, who was to speak in particular for the two eastern groups of dialects, loosely termed Manyika and Ndau, Mrs C.S. Louw of Morgenster for the south-eastern dialects grouped as Karanga, and the Reverend A. Burbridge, S.J. for the central dialects grouped as Zezuru. Doke was the International Institute's nominee and, when he was apprised of this and of the scope of the work of the committee with which he was to work, immediately sent Barnes a preliminary questionnaire. The answers to this would suggest useful lines of enquiry. The most useful contribution of the committee consisted of the compiling of comparative vocabularies which 'made abundantly clear

the great extent of agreement as to vocabulary among the Shona dialects' (Doke 1931:9). In an interim report to the Director of Native Development on the progress of their preparatory work, the Chairman, somewhat prematurely perhaps, prescribed proposals which would guide Doke's research:

1. That under Dr Doke's expert guidance we definitely set about unifying the orthography.
2. That for the present we advise the Government to give what aid they may deem necessary to Chizezuru and Karanga publications in the agreed common orthography.
3. That a final solution be sought, not in the selection of any one or two dialects, but by taking steps to secure the mingling of all the dialects on equal terms, thus leaving ultimate unification to the natural selection of the people using the dialects. (Interim Report of Language Committee, 3-4. Burbridge Papers, No. 1)

The comparative vocabularies had by this time, late in 1928, 'suggested very forcibly that the 'languages', even as represented in the different locally produced vocabularies, were not four different languages at all, but really only dialects of one language. A great deal of the apparent unlikeness clearly followed from the curiously diverse ways of representing some of the sounds' (Interim Report, 3). Instead of this curious diversity, a single orthography would reveal the underlying unity. Such was clearly the expectation of the committee, or at least of its chairman. But could a single orthography meet the requirements of all the dialects in regard to their written representation? One of the questions in Doke's preliminary questionnaire was, 'Wherein do the dialects differ in phonetics?' (Doke 1931:7,9). To this the Committee could provide no complete answer and, as Doke wrote later in his *Report*, this question formed the centre of his year's work and, one may add, the area of his greatest interest.

Another and more basic question to which no certain answer could be given was 'How many allied 'Mashonaland' dialects are there?' Doke eventually claimed to have discovered the existence of at least fifty-one sub-dialects. From these he selected thirty-seven for purposes of comparison by means of lists of words written in International Phonetic Alphabetic script. These he grouped into six dialect groups or clusters, the familiar four (Zezuru, Karanga, Manyika, Ndaou) to which he added

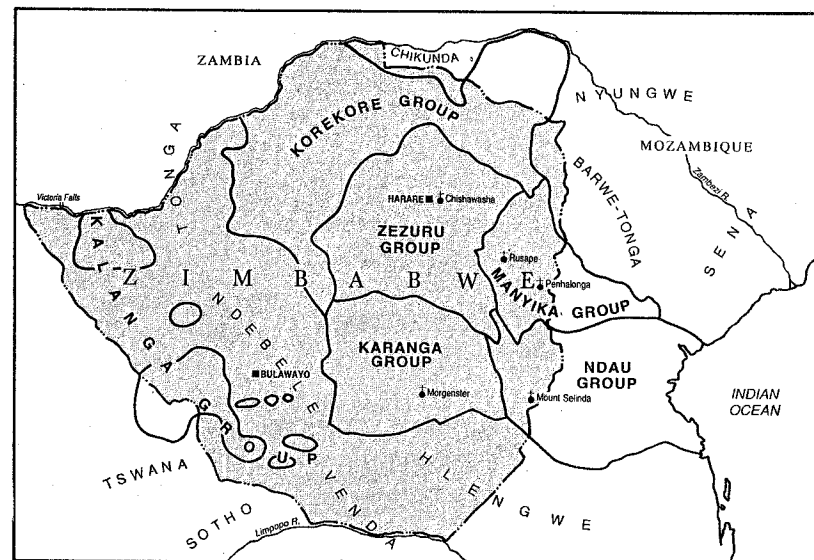


Figure 1. Shona language groups in Zimbabwe and mission stations mentioned in the text. (Source: Doke 1931).

Korekore to cover the northern dialects, and Kalanga, those of the south-west and west. His identification of subdialects or local varieties was fairly objective as he was aided, not only by his own instrumental research, but also by the existence of local names reflecting the sense and experience of the people speaking these languages and who could distinguish their own speech from other neighbouring forms. In his grouping of the sub-dialects into clusters, however, Doke seems to have accepted without question the classification current in the SRMC. He speaks of the 'four known main dialects' of Zezuru, Karanga, Manyika and Ndaou, groupings which have been found to be linguistically highly imprecise and approximate (Doke 1931:7).<sup>4</sup>

In his preliminary report to his Director, Barnes mentioned the committee's intention to consult the Reverend Francisque Marconnès of Chishawasha on 'these language questions on which he has spent so many years of careful and devoted work'. He also mentioned, in his capacity of representing Ndaou as well as Manyika, the consultation he had held with the missionaries of the American Board who, working in the fringe dialects of Ndaou, desired to be included in any scheme of unification. At this meeting suggestions as to new symbols were put

forward by Dr W.L. Thompson, an old campaigner in the cause of a unified and unambiguous orthography for Shona (Interim Report, p. 5). Marconnès and Thompson represented two extremes between which the committee and Doke himself were to move. Marconnès saw no need for any symbols other than those of the 'old alphabet so that the ordinary student would not be frightened nor the mechanical equipment of the small printer and ordinary typist overtaxed' (Marconnès 1931:1).<sup>5</sup> Thompson had been for many years, in fact since 1909 when the question of a uniform system of spelling Shona had first surfaced, a strong advocate of the IPA for all the languages of Southern Africa. 'New sounds should have new characters' and, if the IPA symbols were not available, one should not hesitate to turn to other distinctive means such as the use of numerals to represent them. Thus he advocated the use of the numerals <6, 8, 2, 9> for the sounds to be represented in Doke's unified orthography as <š, ž, ts, dz> (Thompson 1927:67).<sup>6</sup>

Other views were being canvassed by C.S. Louw, the 'Karanga member' of the committee, and she contributed to its files suggestions for a practical orthography from authorities who included Professors D. Westermann, C. Meinhof and D. Jones. Thus the committee was faced with a range of divergent views and aware of a number of possibilities. Barnes stated, 'The only point on which the committee was certainly of one mind in the difficult question of orthography is in desiring to do away with diacritics and to make the necessary changes as few and simple as possible' (Interim Report, p. 5). The use of diacritics had been a feature of the publications of the mission presses of Mount Selinda (for Ndau), Morgenster (for Karanga) and Chishawasha (for Zezuru). For example, the sounds for which Thompson had proposed the use of numerals had been spelt <s, z, ts, dz> in Louw (1905).

As a result of his research into the dialects of Shona, and their relationship to one another, Doke was confident enough to be able to make a number of recommendations which, if followed, would lead to the creation of 'one unified literary language' (Doke 1931:77, Recommendation 2). This present account is concerned mainly with Recommendations 6 and 7 which define the form of the proposed orthography (Doke 1931:82-99). Recommendation 6 called for the use of the conjunctive method of word division. The case for it had already been separately and fully argued in the pamphlet previously mentioned and followed the same lines as Doke had applied in his *Textbook of Zulu Grammar*. There were few objections to this Recommendation in subsequent discussions. Recommendation 7 called for the adoption of

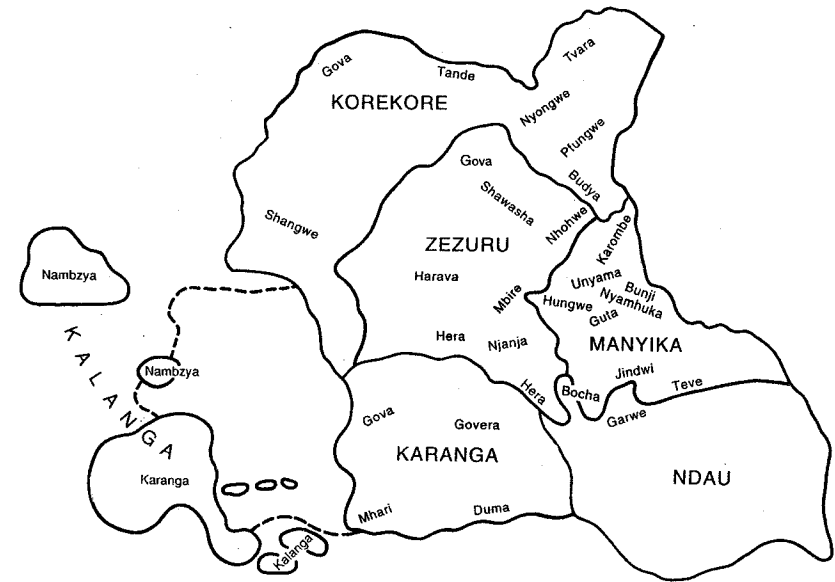


Figure 2. Shona language groups and representative subdialects. (Source: Doke 1931).

the Africa Alphabet of the International Institute of African Languages and Cultures (IAI) as presented in its first Memorandum entitled *Practical Orthography of African Languages*. In it, the IAI recommended that African languages should be written on a Romanic basis but added that 'special consonant letters' should be used to supplement the ordinary Roman letters (IAI 1927:3-4). The Memorandum obviously implied that African phonologies should have orthographies tailored to suit their needs and which represented them at first hand. But the reason given for special symbols was the practical one that diacritics, which necessarily come into play to adapt Roman letters to African values, are unsatisfactory on pedagogical, psychological and typographical grounds (IAI 1927:5).

I turn now to a short account of the orthography which Doke recommended. The brackets <and> are used to indicate the letters and letter combinations which were eventually prescribed as the 'new orthography'. Shona phonology could be provided for only partially by the Africa Alphabet. Doke seems to have drawn on the IPA for his symbolisation of the voiced implosives, bilabial <ɓ> and alveolar <ɗ>,

and for that of the labialised alveolar fricatives, voiceless <ɕ> and breathy voiced <ɟ>, though, in IPA, these latter stand for retroflex fricatives, not labialised ones. The remainder of the special symbols which he recommended for the unified orthography, namely <v, ʃ, ʒ, ŋ>, are to be found in the Institute's table of symbols.

With the addition of these eight special symbols, the alphabet of single letters recommended for unified Shona comprised the following, amounting to 32:

< a b b̥ c d d̥ e f g h i j k m n ŋ o p r r̥ s s̥ ʃ t u v v̥ w x y z z̥ ɕ ɟ >

In addition, it was necessary to list all the digraphs and trigraphs for the compound consonantal onsets that could occur, and which were symbolised by combinations of single letters such as the affricates <pf, bv, ts, dz> sanctioned by the Africa Alphabet. In keeping with these, Doke recommended <tɕ, dʒ> for the alveolar labialised affricates. For the prepalatal affricates [tʃ, dʒ] he recommended the single letters <c, j>, and <ny> for [ɲ] as suggested by the IAI. In all, 45 digraphs and trigraphs were recommended to provide for all the compound consonantal onsets. They are as follow:

- the affricates <pf, ts, bv, dz, tɕ, dʒ>
- the nasal-oral combinations <mb, nd, ŋg, nj, mv, nz, nɟ>
- the voiceless aspirated stops <ph, th, kh> found in Ndaou and Manyika
- the breathy voiced nasals <mh, nh>
- the numerous dialectal diaphones by which the consonants in the verb radicals meaning 'fear', 'eat' and 'relieve the bowels' are symbolised, namely <ty, dy, nny>
- the lengthened <nn> which occurs in the single adjectival stem *-nna* 'four' but only in Karanga and Kalanga
- the combinations of single and compound consonants followed by [w], <px, bg, mŋ, mbg, mx, tw, dw, nw, kw, gw, ŋgw> etc.

These consonant+*w* combinations are very numerous, and Doke was inconsistent in the symbolisation he advocated which was partly phonetic and partly phonemic. It was semi-phonetic in the case of combinations of bilabials with /w/, and phonemic in the case of all others. The IAI's Memorandum, under the heading of 'General Principles', stresses the importance of the recognition of phonemes in establishing an orthography (IAI 1927:9-10). It is strange that Doke makes no mention or explicit use of this important principle in his recommendations, in particular in his treatment of the consonant+*w*

combinations which call for such an application. He seems to have been led to follow his phonetic bent by his fascination with what he misleadingly called 'velarisation' (Doke 1931:53-57).<sup>7</sup> The term is a misnomer because the combinations of consonants + *w* in their several dialectal varieties are not velarised in the sense that they involve a change from non-velar to velar. What happens is that /w/, already velar, is realised in such combinations as a remarkable series of velar allophones (stops, fricatives, approximants), depending on dialect and phonetic environment. Instead of recognising the phonemic unity underlying all the different realisations of /w/ in these combinations, Doke chose to give special prominence to those occurring after bilabials, hence <px, bg, mŋ, mbg> for /pw, bw, mw, mbw/. But he symbolised them as <w> in all other contexts, for example, <tw, sw, kw, gw> etc.<sup>8</sup>

In the combinations which appear to have resulted from the influence of the palatal approximant /y/, namely <ty, dy, nny>, Doke's choice of symbols followed, perhaps unconsciously, phonemic principles, and they have consequently endured through all the changes in orthography which have followed, and in spite of representing the greatest range of dialectal diaphones (Doke 1931:87). Evidently Doke was too much of a pragmatic phonetician to accept the theory of the phoneme though he applied the test of minimal pairs, normally used to discover the existence of distinct phonemes, to justify the use of distinct letters. For example, <ɓ> is distinguished from <b>, <p> from <ph>, and high, mid and low tones from one another by comparing minimal pairs (Doke 1931:45, 67, 74).

Doke completed his work well within the year 1929, but before the final version was prepared the Director of the DND, Heli Jowitt, wished to secure the imprimatur of the IAI. In a letter to its Secretary General, Major Hans Vischer, he asked for its decision to be cabled. He wrote, 'The reason underlying the above suggestion is the urgency of a decision in view of the fact that Dr. Doke's final report will not be submitted to Government and will not go to press until we hear from you.' Other reasons Jowitt had for requesting a prompt reply were that the printing of his own annual report would otherwise be delayed and controlling regulations relative to the subsidising of vernacular publications needed to be drafted.<sup>9</sup> In the event, as Doke mentioned in his introductory remarks to the *Report*, his recommendations regarding the alphabet and the orthography received the endorsement of the IAI (Doke 1931:2). They were not presented to the Legislative Assembly, however, at least in printed form, until 1931. Prior to this formal step it was necessary to put the proposals to the body which had requested them, namely the

SRMC. This Jowitt did in 1930 by circulating to members of the Conference Doke's eleven recommendations with the proposed alphabet which had been printed in the DND *Annual Report* of the previous year. Discussion on the orthography was preceded by a stout defence by Jowitt of the use of African languages as against the use of English in schools. At that time less than two per cent of pupils were in standards above Standard 2, and ninety per cent were in infant classes. 'It was obvious that the vernacular must remain. It was definitely rich enough to be attractive as a literature, and educationally it was inevitable.'<sup>10</sup>

On the orthography the Conference expressed gratitude and appreciation to Doke, to the Language Committee, to the Colonial Secretary and the Director of the DND for their work, understanding and financial assistance. But it was less than enthusiastic about the Recommendations as they stood. The most influential members, John White of Epworth and A.A. Louw, Jr. of Morgenster, were for a gradual transition from the 'old regime' of separate orthographies to the new with its fearsome battery of unfamiliar letters, 'a veritable Chinese puzzle'. They were in favour of only a modified conjunctive method and a reduction in the number of new symbols (SRMC Minutes 1930).

Obviously, a good deal of persuasion and explanation was going to be necessary to induce users of the old systems to accept and apply the new in the different fields where it was now required. These would be mainly school textbooks, but there were also the questions of missionary and religious literature, government language examinations and the preparation of a new dictionary which Barnes saw as the most important aid towards unification. 'Unify the orthography and pool the vocabularies' was his slogan. In an article contributed to the *Native Affairs Department Annual* (NADA), Barnes (1934) traced the immediate steps taken to implement the change. At the 1930 meeting of the Advisory Board for Native Development, John White had sought to temper the new developments to the existing educational and missionary situation. Declaring that there was a good deal of misunderstanding in regard to the Shona language, he urged that effective steps should be taken, in the form of an enlarged committee, 'to assist as far as possible, the communities represented in writing and using the language'. So government was requested, at a suitable period after the receipt and circulation of Doke's *Report*, to convene a language committee. This committee was to consist of Doke himself, the three members who had earlier worked with him, two members of the Native Affairs

Department, two members of the NDD, and two from the SRMC chosen by its Executive Committee. Their task was to advise government concerning the early adoption *or modification* of Doke's recommendations regarding the Shona language (author's emphasis).<sup>11</sup> This request, worded by Jowitt as Director of the DND, left the question open as a gesture of the doubters anxious to keep the discussion practical and close to the ground. However, when this enlarged committee met in the following year, it approved Doke's recommendations *in toto* save that <sh> and <zh> were substituted for <ʃ> and <ʒ>, this being the only modification that Doke was prepared to accept (Barnes 1934:32).<sup>12</sup> So the new recommendations were submitted to government and accepted as the official orthography on 3 September 1931. Subsequent revisions of the Doke alphabet in 1955 and 1967 were to make great use of suitable digraphs formed by combinations of roman letters to symbolise single phonemes instead of the special symbols. Their use has proved a viable and effective alternative to the use of single letters, either 'phonetic' or marked by diacritics. This device was not considered by the enlarged committee, however, save in the cases of <ny> (in the original Doke alphabet) and the substituted <sh> and <zh>. To do so would be contrary to the principle of 'one sound, one symbol', and its corollary, 'one symbol, one sound'.

As regards the situation in 1934, the date of Barnes's 'Progress' article, the writer considered that things were going reasonably well. True there was as yet no one in Mashonaland who thought of himself as a member of a 'Shona' people, or as speaking a language called 'Shona'. Individual clans and their dialects had their own names but, with the introduction of a common single system for writing them all, recognition of their relationship, already seminally present, would grow, and a single literary form would develop. The aim of the committee had been to remove the obstacles to this natural development. As Barnes put it, anxious to stress the value and promise latent in Doke's work, 'I suppose that few, if any, of the Bantu languages have had the advantage of such close and careful expert study at such an early stage' (Barnes 1934:35).

Among the steps taken to implement the new system had been the provision of readers in the new orthography from three mission presses now equipped with the new founts. Another was the provision of courses for teachers in training. Barnes himself had published his *Vocabulary of the Dialects of Mashonaland in the New Orthography* in 1932, and a Shona grammar was with the publishers. This was *A Shona Grammar, Zezuru Dialect* by the Reverend J. O'Neil, S.J. with notes on Karanga

and Manyika by the Reverend A.A. Louw, Jr. and the Reverend B.H. Barnes, C.R.

Progress in the use of the new orthography could be reasonably assured in institutions either controlled or aided by the DND. Its adoption in other spheres, such as the sister, but by no means sisterly, Department of Native Affairs, the post office, the police and the press was, to say the least, in doubt. As regards the NAD, Barnes hinted delicately that particularly its younger members should show some gratitude to their government for providing such help towards the adequate mastery of Shona which their work, lying among the Native people, seemed to demand. 'I should not dare to suggest to the older officials that they must learn the new tricks and perform them themselves. But I do suggest that they need not be afraid to encourage the younger men who are coming on to study the sounds of the native speech and to endeavour, both in speaking and in writing, to reproduce them as accurately as can be done' (Barnes 1934:35). An indication of the extent to which the NAD considered it necessary to conform in regard to written Shona can be gathered from an inspection of the papers of the annual Civil Service Native Language Examinations. Appointments and promotion within the NAD depended on passing this examination. The papers from 1912-1922, in which the language is called Chiswina, and from 1924-1934 in which the term is Chishona, are all set in the varying idiosyncratic and approximate spellings in use by Native Commissioners and their clerks. They are not exemplary either in matters of grammar.<sup>13</sup>

The attitude of the NAD was well expressed in a letter of 22 January 1935 from the Minister for Native Affairs, Dr Godfrey Huggins, in reply to one from Father Barnes urging adoption by the NAD of the new orthography. Huggins was to become Prime Minister later in the same year. He replied that there was no question of introducing the new orthography into the Department. 'The very numerous young officials in that Department have passed their Native Language Examination already, and they have far too much to do to expect them to pass another one ... After I took office about fifteen months ago, the first missionary who came to see me was violently opposed to the new orthography, and asked me what I was going to do about it. I told him I knew nothing about it, and from the number of people I have discussed the matter with since, I should say that about 50 per cent are in favour and 50 per cent are against it. Meanwhile it is the official language of the Native Development Department and will continue to be so.'<sup>14</sup>

Another obvious area in which the adoption of the new orthography was desirable was the press catering for the African reading public. Its attitude at this time is recalled in an editorial of the *Bantu Mirror* of 22 February 1944, contemplating the start of a paper in Salisbury. 'The question of orthography is almost certain to be raised by some who think that the New Orthography should be adopted. It will therefore be wise to recall the discussions which led to the decision that, whatever others might do, the Native Newspapers would stick to the characters or symbols found in the English alphabet.'

The division of opinion to which Huggins referred caused the country to have two Shona orthographies, side by side, from 1931 to 1955. The opposition to, and criticism of, Doke's proposals, politely voiced in the SRMC and discreetly reported in its Minutes, was much more outspoken outside. 'There are few subjects on which mere opinions can differ so fundamentally as on the correct representation of the sounds we think we hear,' wrote Barnes (1934:32). He could have added that a threat to the way we spell our language rouses feelings such as few other issues provoke. For an example of the criticism voiced, and the feelings expressed, we have a pamphlet published about this time by the missionary, A.S. Cripps, well-known for his devotion to the Shona people. It is entitled, somewhat tendentiously, *Language-Making in Mashonaland*. Cripps had taken up the challenge posed by the new orthography following on the death of John White. The pamphlet is dedicated to the memory of 'John White of Mashonaland' and the author, conscious of his mission, quotes the following words from *The Pilgrim's Progress*: 'My Sword I give to him that shall succeed me in my Pilgrimage.' The views expressed by the contributors, 'Four Europeans and Four Africans', give a fair sample of the feelings of many about the change. H.M.G. Jackson, Sometime Chief Native Commissioner of Southern Rhodesia, contributed the Preface. He applauded the aim of Doke's work but deplored the means, namely 'the use of exotic symbols' which 'impose the strain of mastering dual systems upon people who are unable to bear it' (Cripps n.d.:vi).

Similarly, Canon Edgar Lloyd of Rusape voiced the more sensible objections arising out of 'the invention of new symbols to express certain peculiar sounds in the language'. It was 'both quite unnecessary and also a gratuitous looking for trouble ... Surely an agreed combination of the letters of the present civilised alphabet could have been devised, and would have been found more generally acceptable, as an agreed convention. This would have allowed much good work done by the



committee to commend itself, and would have withstood the test applied by general readers who are, after all, the main people to be considered' (Cripps n.d.:21).

Another criticism voiced in the pamphlet concerned the lack of any African representative on the Language Committee responsible for launching the new orthography. At the 1932 SRMC, the Reverend M.J. Rusike, a prominent member of the Methodist Church, had put forward a motion in favour of such representation, but it was withdrawn in favour of the following: 'That the Director of Native Development be requested to ensure adequate consultation with Native assistants in the functioning of the Language Committee' (SRMC Minutes, 1932). In Barnes's view, 'the Native population of the next generation or two' were to be the court of final appeal who would, after due trial, pass the verdict on the orthographic reform (1934:35).

John White's last contribution was a letter, printed in Cripps's pamphlet, pleading for a continued supply of the old literature for those who had become used to it and would know no other. Dated 22 March 1933, it was a reasonable appeal on behalf of the people for whom he had done so much in an apostolate lasting nearly forty years. 'Let there be no attempt to coerce the people in this way to adopt the new regime. Time must decide the issue between the two schools' (Cripps n.d.:v).

For the rest, much heat and little light were engendered by the implication that a White Man's Native Language was being foisted on the unfortunate people of Mashonaland who were now being robbed of this last remaining vestige of their culture. 'Are our Tribes to be dispossessed of their own Speech as well as of their own Land?', cried Cripps. And M.J. Rusike asserted, using one of the orthographies being replaced, namely that used in John White's translation of the New Testament, published as early as 1907, '*Barungu bari kuita rurimi rutswa rwa bano timanikidza kuti titaure*' (The Europeans are making up a new language which they will force us to speak) (Cripps n.d.:5, 16).

As the thirties wore on and gave way to the forties, the supporters of the new orthography and their influence gradually faded from the scene. By 1938 both Barnes and C.S. Louw had died. Their places on the DND's Language Committee were taken by the Reverend Morely Wright (for Manyika) and the Reverend Harald von Sicard (for Karanga). Jowitt was succeeded by J. Farquhar in the new capacity of Director of Native Education. Farquhar was against the use of African languages as subjects or as media of instruction above the very earliest classes. He wrote that English should be the language of education.

Unified Shona was a creation from above and from without. It was the work of phoneticians eager to apply the rules of the IPA, not the result of an indigenous development. There was a strong desire to reintroduce the roman alphabet to simplify printing, reading and writing (Farquhar 1946:13).

In the same year, a former colleague of Father Barnes, the Reverend Father Baker, C.R., moved in the SRMC that a return be made to the recognised twenty-six symbols of the Roman alphabet and that the system of conjunctive writing should be modified. The Department of Native Education was asked to ignore for the future Recommendations 6 and 7 of the *Doke Report*, and to instruct the official Language Committee accordingly. No vote was taken on this motion but, after strong views had been expressed on both sides, the whole question was referred to a committee to be appointed by the executive with the further recommendation that Africans be included as members (SRMC Minutes, 1946). Increasingly the Conference was being won over to this view, though a last attempt in a contrary direction was made in 1950 by the SRMC to maintain the *Doke* orthography in education and to persuade government and the press to adopt it too, 'one common orthography being a fundamental prerequisite for the growth and development of Shona as a literary language'. An argument put forward at this Conference which strongly influenced the passing of the resolution was the fact that the complete Shona Bible, printed in the New Orthography, had just come out. In the main it was the work of the Reverend A.A. Louw, Jr. and it was an outstanding literary achievement (SRMC Minutes, 1950). Moreover, its printing and publication had cost Morgenster a good deal of money.

The replies from African Newspapers Ltd and the Secretary for Native Affairs were reported to the 1952 Conference and proved uncooperative. The latter wrote, 'I have to advise that, while sympathising with the position in which the Missions find themselves with regard to the publication of material in the new orthography, there appears to be little support for the project outside educational circles. Many issues are involved and it is proposed to reinstate the Language Committee or an Advisory Literature Committee in order that future policy may have the careful attention it obviously deserves' (SRMC Minutes, 1952).

Meanwhile, with literacy becoming more and more widespread, and dependence upon written Shona ever greater in the conduct of everyday life, the existence of two official, and several unofficial, forms of writing the language was becoming more and more anomalous and embarrassing.

In December 1953 the NAD took the initiative and appointed an Interim Literature Committee to tackle the problem. Its membership was impressive: it was chaired by the Chief Native Commissioner, and had as prominent members the Chief Information Officer and the Publications Officer of the NAD's Information Services Branch. Also included were the Director and two Inspectors of the NED, and representatives from the African press and the SRMC. This committee decided to test public opinion on the issue before it, and the Information Services Branch, in consultation with the Director of the NED, were requested to conduct the enquiry. Two questionnaires were sent out, Questionnaire A for general distribution and Questionnaire B for the printing and publishing trade. Essentially, opinion was desired on two points:

- Should there be a single standard orthography for the Shona dialects?
- If so, should it be the 1931 orthography, or a modified form of this containing just one or two special symbols considered necessary, or, finally, one using only the letters of the English alphabet?

The persons and bodies addressed were asked to give reasons for their choices as otherwise they would not be taken into account.

The memorandum accompanying the questionnaires ably described the confused and frustrating situation that had called for the enquiry. Among its more telling points were the following:

It would appear that the need to use six phonetic symbols has hitherto hindered the universal adoption of the 'New Orthography'. Conservatism, the need to equip presses and typewriters specially, the desire for economy and the lurking suspicion that it is possible to produce a practical Shona alphabet using only the letters of the English alphabet, have all played their part in producing the present somewhat absurd 'multiple Shona orthography' situation.

All Shona readers read the vernacular newspapers without apparent difficulty. The majority of Shona-speaking Africans are required, in practice, to be able to read Shona in at least two systems of spelling, one imposed for school use and the other provided by the African press. The situation is definitely not conducive to the production of a strong, well-based Shona literature with a wide circulation. The Government has therefore decided to institute an enquiry into the matter of Shona orthography in the hope that one Shona orthography may be

adopted by all. (Interim Literature Committee of the NAD: Questionnaire on Shona Orthography, 29 Dec. 1953)

The enquiry, calling as it did for both opinions and reasons motivating them, was a brilliantly executed exercise, completed in just four months. It yielded a most interesting picture of an orthography and its writers and readers in transition. The documents covering the operation should be part of the library of any sociolinguist today. The provisional conclusions on the evidence provided by the two questionnaires was fairly summarised by the Publications Officer, D.P. Abraham, in the following two paragraphs:

The 'New Orthography' is in many respects more scientific in form than other systems of spelling Chishona used hitherto, but a majority of European and African opinion, individual and institutional, appears to favour the use of a Roman alphabet Shona orthography on the grounds of simplicity and economy. The economic standpoint, that to produce literature as cheap as possible for Africans it is necessary to adhere to the Roman alphabet for Chishona, is supported by the Government and African newspaper presses, and by most of the notable publishing houses who submitted replies, as well as by three major mission presses.

The position is arrived at, therefore, that it becomes necessary to resolve a situation that for many years has proved a linguistic and educational embarrassment to the Mashona, and has hindered the plentiful production of books on all subjects to meet their requirements. The weight of opinion favours abandonment of the 'New Orthography'. If this course is taken, it will be necessary to formulate a single standard orthography using only the letters of the Roman alphabet, to be adopted as the officially recognised Shona orthography. (Report on a Preliminary Enquiry into Shona Orthography, 1 May 1954).

The results of the enquiry showed that 65 per cent of the replies to Questionnaire A, and 77 per cent of those to Questionnaire B, were in favour of a roman alphabet Shona orthography. Professor Doke provided the only vote for the New Orthography from the several academic interests canvassed.

The results of the enquiry provided the agenda for the third meeting of

the Interim Literature Committee, held on 19 May 1954. Its first resolution, proposed and seconded by two of the SRMC representatives, the Reverend S.K. Jackson and the Reverend Father Bradshaw, C.R., was carried by six votes to two. It recommended that a standard Roman alphabet orthography be accepted for Chishona for all official purposes. The two dissenting votes were those of the NED inspectors who stressed the difficulties that would arise in abolishing a system used for over twenty years in the schools.

This done, consideration was given to the means whereby this recommendation could be put into effect. It was then decided to request government to 'appoint a committee to devise a method of writing the sounds of the Shona dialects with the letters of the Roman alphabet, with due regard to the system at present in use in the schools, and bearing in mind the problems of word-division and the need for urgency'. As regards the membership of the proposed committee, it was decided that it should be small, be informed in regard to linguistics and the Shona dialects, and be able to command the confidence of the interests concerned. Its representations should also be open to review before final acceptance. Two other issues were ventilated and are interesting in view of later developments. The first raised the possibility that the proposed committee might form the foundation of a permanent Shona Language Committee, competent to deal with the problems of the developing written language. The second alluded to the need for a publication fund to promote the writing and publication of literature in Shona (Interim Literature Committee, Minutes of the Third Meeting, 19 May 1954).

The initiative of the NAD had been encouraged, and even anticipated, by the views and work of influential members of the SRMC. Members active in the cause of the growth of Shona literature, such as the Reverend A.A. Louw, Jr. and the Reverend S.K. Jackson, were investigating ways in which a more practical orthography might be devised. Academic opinion from authorities in the field of African language study, such as G.P. Lestrade of the University of Cape Town, A.N. Tucker of the School of Oriental and African Studies, and N.J. van Warmelo of the NAD (South Africa), was sought. C.M. Doke was again approached for his opinion by the chairman of the Shona Orthography Committee of the DRC, the Reverend C.J.J. Brand, as early as 1950. He replied: 'I am not prepared to give way to any change in the conjunctive writing. In regard to special symbols I feel it might be possible to substitute *sf* for *ş*, and *zv* for *z* ... The other symbols for the bilabial fricatives and velar nasal, as well as the use of *c*, (not *ch*), are

essential to the orthographic settlement.<sup>15</sup>

Thus digraphs for single phonemes, spurious constructs hateful to the phonetician, were gradually being accepted as substitutes for the ideally unambiguous creations of the IPA. <sh> and <zh> had been allowed in the New Orthography instead of /ʃ/ and /ʒ/ in 1931, and Marconnés's long-standing suggestion of <sv> and <zv> for /s/ and /z/ was being increasingly favoured. The need to replace <ş> and <z> in particular evoked some strange suggestions. A.N. Tucker proposed <fs> and <vz> on philological grounds suggested by Ur-Bantu sound shifts. His colleague, Hazel Carter, suggested the use of cedillas with <s> and <z> to stand for labialisation.<sup>16</sup> A.A. Louw, Jr. would reluctantly accept <sw> and <zw> 'in spite of the fact that this would be another inconsistency which would bring us into difficulties with velarization combinations which we have accepted'<sup>17</sup> In 1950 S.K. Jackson had put forward the capital letter <C> to stand for /z/, and <ç> for /s/.<sup>18</sup> In the same year, the present writer, upon being approached by Jackson for his opinion on the matter, advocated the use of <sv> and <zv>, the convention being that the use of *v*, common to both digraphs, would indicate the common phenomenon of labialisation. I added, 'May I also express the hope that *all* the special symbols will be scrapped, thus giving Shona some hope of surviving as a written language. As I see it, to leave even one special symbol in the orthography is to cut down the output of the press by about 50 per cent.'<sup>19</sup>

On the implications for the text of the Shona Bible, Jackson had this to say, 'We all feel deeply the presence of the Shona Bible in Southern Rhodesia. It was an important factor in the resolution by the SRMC [in 1950] to adhere to the 'New Orthography'. If, however, the production of literature for a people is hampered by an unrealistic orthography, it is not fair to point to the Bible as a reason why the unfavourable conditions should remain for ever. There is no doubt in my mind that very soon the Bible in Shona should be revised ... When the Bible is to be revised, there is no reason why the orthography cannot be changed as well' (S.K. Jackson, Memorandum).

A.A. Louw, Jr., the translator of the Bible, also wrote about this time, 'In spite of the fact that I have written the whole Bible in the new orthography, I am by no means wedded to it, and would welcome a simplification.' As a member of the official 1931 committee which had approved the New Orthography he had in fact pleaded for a simpler orthography 'but did not succeed in convincing my fellow members on the committee, especially Dr Doke'.<sup>20</sup>

At this time Doke was in the process of withdrawing from academic life and was no longer disposed to contribute any further. He was, however, urgently called upon to do so by the Reverend Harald von Sicard, a member of the SRMC who had been appointed to represent Karanga on the dormant official Shona Language Committee after the death of C.S. Louw in 1938. He wrote, 'Do you know that the Rev. Jackson of Morgenster is attacking our Shona orthography? No doubt, Government would back him. I never expected the objections to come from there. In a memorandum he says he does not know of any other Bantu language with six new symbols. Do you? Personally I think his suggestion is based on purely local Rhodesian considerations without viewing the question from a wider African angle. I would greatly appreciate it if you could assist me in fighting his "new" orthography.'<sup>21</sup> Von Sicard was greatly interested in Shona oral literature and traditional history. He had used the 1931 orthography extensively in rendering Shona texts, as in his large collection of Shona folktales, and was understandably disturbed.

Doke passed the matter to the present writer to deal with in a moving letter which expressed a degree of trust greatly appreciated. He wrote, 'My present state of health is not conducive to enter a controversy of this type, and as I am in the midst of packing and the worries of removal on retiring, I feel that you, who have made a special study of Shona, would be the right man to deal with the present situation.'<sup>22</sup>

'The present situation' was being very ably dealt with by the Publications Officer of the Information Services Branch. The committee recommended by the Interim Literature Committee had been approved by government as the Shona Orthography Committee and it met on 4 July 1954. The chairman it selected was the Reverend S.K. Jackson, and its convenor and secretary was D.P. Abraham, the Publications Officer. There was a representative from the NED, two prominent Africans, Adv. H. W. Chitepo and M.M. Hove, Federal M.P. and former editor of *The Bantu Mirror*, and two linguists, the Reverend Michael Hannan, S.J., examiner in Shona for the Cambridge Examination Certificate, and the present writer.

The minutes of the four-day meeting, which were compiled by D.P. Abraham, are an impressive testimony to the range and thoroughness of the work done. It contained in particular an exhaustive list of the phonemes, allophones and diaphones of Shona, exemplified and described with a refinement of detail never attempted before or since, which Abraham had prepared in advance. However, the orthography

devised by the committee, known subsequently as the 1955 Spelling, failed to preserve the distinctions which Doke had recognised and, indeed, discovered. In particular, the symbols <b> and <d> were to stand for both the voiced implosive and the breathy voiced explosive stops [ɓ, ɓ̤] and [ɗ, ɗ̤]. The letter <v> was to stand for both the voiced labiodental/bilabial approximant and the breathy voiced fricative [ɓ, ɓ̤]. Finally, the digraph <ng> was to stand for both the velar nasal and its combination with the voiced velar stop [ŋ, ŋg]. Some of the committee urged that the phonemic character of the spelling could be preserved by a judicious use of <h> in digraphs such as <bh, dh, vh> which would contrast with <b, d, v>, but this was rejected, in particular by the African members. Their reasons were that the orthography was being designed primarily for Shona speakers and readers who would know from the contexts in which the ambiguous letters would occur what values to give them. They also thought that what they considered the excessive use of <h> would make the written language look 'funny'.<sup>23</sup> The committee then compiled *A Guide to Standard Shona Spelling* (Shona Language Committee 1955) which was published the following year, after its recommendations had been approved.

In the event, however, most of what Doke had contributed to Shona was carried over into the 1955 spelling. Almost all of his recommendations regarding word-division were retained, the only departure being a decision to separate forms based on the very common verb equivalent /-NA/ 'be with; have' into two words. For example, *ndiné nzára* 'I have hunger, am hungry'. This practice parallels forms based on the similarly defective verb radical /-RI/ 'be'. For example, *ndirí múnhu* 'I am a person'. The change to the Roman alphabet was soon shown to be beneficial in the rapid appearance of publications of all kinds and the growth of an authentic written literature, in continuity with its oral roots, but profiting also from the influence of the literary genres of English. In this the Publications Bureau which Doke had called for was chiefly instrumental. The word division which he had prescribed was one in which the supple and subtle syntax of Shona could appear and be easily appreciated. Most of all, Doke's timely, informed and energetic work saved Shona from the divisive fragmentation which still afflicts the orthographies of the Nguni, Sotho and Tsonga dialects. He laid the foundation for the emergence of a single Shona-literate community with a common literature, even now 'an asset to the literatures of the world'.

## NOTES

1. The details of Doke's missionary stint and his early academic career which are mentioned here were related by him to the writer during a visit to Kwesu, Doke's home in Alice, in 1963.
2. See the paper by Fivaz in this volume.
3. In describing the stages and significant moments in the evolution of the Shona orthography, the following sources have been drawn upon: (i) Reports of the proceedings of the Southern Rhodesia Missionary Conference, (ii) Papers relevant to the orthography question filed by the Reverend A. Burbridge, S.J. in his capacity as the representative of the Zezuru dialects on the Department of Native Development's Language Committee, 1929 and following years, (iii) Doke's *Report on the Unification of the Shona Dialects*, presented to the [Southern Rhodesian] Legislative Assembly, 1931 [S.R. 25-1931], (iv) Minutes of the Interim Literature Committee, the Orthography Committee, and the Shona Language Committee, all of the Native Affairs Department, Southern Rhodesia, (v) Letters and memoranda sent to the writer in connection with his work on the Committees mentioned under (iv) above.
4. In particular, the clusters identified as Manyika and Ndaу included linguistically very diverse dialects. Thus the dialects of the eastern highlands need to be distinguished as forming a separate group for which the name of 'Nyanga' is suggested. Further, some unpublished work in 1980 presented to the writer by R. Chiadzwa, a Garwe speaker, revealed another group drawn from both Doke's Ndaу and Manyika clusters. It comprises Garwe, Jindwi and Bocha. Also on the dialects of Doke's Ndaу cluster, Mkanganwi (1972) has queried the basis for classifying Coastal Ndaу or 'Shanga' with the 'peak' Ndaу of Chimanimani.  
The uncritical recognition of the 'four known main dialects' has led in time to this classification being transferred into fields other than linguistics, such as ethnology, history, sociology and even politics, to imply the existence of definite social groups so named. Doke himself asserted that he was not concerned with ethnic affinities. See Doke (1931:28); and Chimhundu (1992).
5. In Doke's Foreword to this work, published as a Special Number of *Bantu Studies* (Supplement 5) because of the invaluable material it contained, he recalled numerous conversations with Father Marconnès on the principles of Bantu word-division which,

- however, failed to bring them into agreement. Doke considered Marconnès not strong on the side of analytical and descriptive phonetics (Marconnès 1931:ix-x).
6. Thompson and a Ndaу-speaking friend, Simbine Nkomo, had collaborated as informants with Professor Daniel Jones in the preparation of a pamphlet *The Pronunciation and Orthography of the Chindau Language* published by the University of London Press in 1911.
  7. 'One of the main features of the Shona dialects is the occurrence of velarization due to the action of the semivowel w' (Doke 1931:53). One reason for Doke's giving this feature the emphasis and the misleading interpretation he did may have been a perception of an analogy between Shona and Nguni in this respect. In Nguni, bilabials occurring before w become palatals in morphophonemic changes. For example, *-boph-* + *-w-* → *-botshw-* 'be tied'. In Shona, however, the changes are phonetic: they do not affect the "bilabial consonants but only the following w, e.g. *-rap* + *-w-* → *-rap* χ- 'be healed'.
  8. Apart from coming across the treatment of the phoneme in the IAT's Memorandum, Doke must surely have encountered the concept when he was a student of Daniel Jones who was using it in his teaching as early as 1915 (see Jones 1967, Appendix 1).
  9. Letter of 4 October 1929. Burbridge Papers, No. 2.
  10. SRMC Minutes, 1930, Appendix XI. Department of Native Development, Southern Rhodesia. 'Dr. Doke's Recommendations for Language Unification, 1930.' Burbridge Papers, No. 3.
  11. Advisory Board for Native Development, Minutes of 1930 Meeting. Burbridge Papers No. 4.
  12. This modification, however, was not incorporated in Doke's *Report* which was presented the same year.
  13. The practice of the NAD did not change in this respect even after the Roman alphabetic replacement. In a memo presented to the Shona Language Committee in 1961, the Chairman commented, 'Not only has the new official orthography not been introduced into the language examinations sponsored by the Department of Native Affairs, but candidates for this examination are actually penalised if they have studied the new official orthography in preparation for the examination.'
  14. Letter in the archives of St Augustine's, Penhalonga, and made available to me by courtesy of the Reverend Father Maurice Bradshaw, C.R.

15. Letter from C.M. Doke quoted in a circular addressed by the Reverend C.J.J. Brand to the DRC Shona Orthography Committee, 29 March 1950.
16. Memorandum sent to G. Fortune on 4 Feb. 1954.
17. Letter to G. Fortune of 18 Dec. 1953.
18. In C.J.J. Brand's Circular of 29 March 1950.
19. S. K. Jackson, Memorandum on Shona Orthography, 23 Sept. 1953.
20. Letter to G. Fortune, 18 Dec. 1953.
21. Letter to C.M. Doke, Nov. 1953.
22. Letter to G. Fortune, 4 Nov. 1953.
23. NAD Shona Orthography Committee, Minutes of the First Meeting, 14-17 July 1954. The need for the distinctions was felt thereafter, however, and, in a further revision in 1967, the digraphs <bh, dh, vh> and <n'> (for [ŋ]) were accepted into the system of Standard Shona which is still in use at the present time.

### BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Barnes, B.H. 1932. *Vocabulary of the Dialects of Mashonaland in the New Orthography* London: The Sheldon Press.
- 1934. The progress of the new Shona orthography. *Native Affairs Department Annual*, pp. 33-35.
- Chimhundu, H. 1992. Early missionaries and the ethnolinguistic factor during the 'invention of tribalism' in Zimbabwe. *Journal of African History* 33:87-109.
- Cripps, A.S. (ed.) n.d. (c 1934). *Language-Making in Mashonaland*. Privately published.
- Doke, C.M. 1927a. *Lamba Folk-Lore*. The American Folklore Society, Memoir XX.
- 1927b. *Text Book of Zulu Grammar*. London: Longmans.
- 1927c. A study in Lamba phonetics. *Bantu Studies* 3:5-47.
- 1928. An outline of Ila phonetics. *Bantu Studies* 3:127-53.
- (In collaboration with B.H. Barnes). 1929. The pronunciation of the Bemba language. *Bantu Studies* 3:423-56.
- 1931. *Report on the Unification of the Shona Dialects*. Government Blue Book, Government of Southern Rhodesia.
- Farquhar, J. 1946. A mass literacy campaign for Southern Rhodesia. *Native Affairs Department Annual* 1946.

- International Institute of African Languages and Cultures. 1927. *Practical Orthography of African Languages*. Memorandum 1. London.
- Jones, D. 1967. The History and Meaning of the Term 'Phoneme'. Appendix 1 of *The Phoneme, its Nature and Use*. Cambridge: W. Heffer and Sons.
- Louw, C.S. 1905. *Manual of the Chikaranga Language*. Bulawayo: Philpott & Collins.
- Marconnès, F. 1931. *A Grammar of Central Karanga*. Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press.
- Mkangwani, K. 1972. The relationship of Coastal Ndaui to the Shona dialects of the interior. *African Studies* 31:111-38.
- O'Neil, J. 1935. *A Shona Grammar, Zezuru Dialect*. London: Longmans, Green.
- Shona Language Committee. 1955. *A Guide to Standard Shona Spelling: Chirairidzo chomunyorero wavepo wechiShona*. Chishawasha: The Mission Press.
- Southern Rhodesia Missionary Conference. 1928. *Report*.
- Thompson, W.L. 1927. A Uniform Phonetic Alphabet for the Native Languages of Rhodesia. *Native Affairs Department Annual* 5.

GEORGE FORTUNE  
Professor Emeritus of African Languages  
University of Zimbabwe

# C.M. Doke's Contribution to Shona Linguistic Studies Dialects, Phonetics and Grammar

---

N.C. Dembetembe

---

Doke contributed to Shona in more ways than one. Not only did he play a major role in its linguistic studies but also in its development as a literary language. This paper will be concerned with the former aspect only — with his contribution to Shona studies. His contribution to Shona as a literary language is the subject of another paper in this volume.

The main study of Shona by Doke is his scientific investigation into the dialects of Mashonaland (Doke 1931a). Although he did not write a grammar of Shona *per se*, he nevertheless contributed in this sphere in an indirect way through the influence that his grammatical model had on the linguists who subsequently wrote grammar books of Shona. Doke's work marked a milestone in Shona studies. In saying this one is not disparaging the work that was carried out by grammarians who came before him or who were his contemporaries, most of whom had little, if any, formal training in linguistics. They contributed in their own way mostly by collecting useful data and making some worthwhile observations. Some publications in this regard which preceded Doke's work include: *An Outline of a Grammar of the Mashona Language* by Hartmann (1893), *A Hand-book of Chikaranga* by Springer (1905), *A Manual of the Chikaranga Language* by Louw (1915), while those of his contemporaries include: *A Grammar of Central Karanga* by Marconnès (1931) and *A Shona Grammar: Zezuru Dialect* by O'Neil (1935). Nearly all of them were missionaries to whom the conduct of linguistic investigation was a secondary task, if not a mere hobby. Each one of

them was usually confined to one dialect area or another because of his missionary work. Some of the work, however, was purported to cover the entire Shona group although in actual fact it did not. None the less, none of them carried out work in the phonetics of Shona which could serve as a basis of this study.

### PHONETICS, PHONOLOGY AND DIALECTS

Doke's work, *A Comparative Study in Shona Phonetics* (1931b), was truly monumental. Surprising as it may sound, this work was a by-product of a task which he had been invited to perform by the then government of Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), namely to advise it on a common orthography for the dialects of Mashonaland. His report on that task forms part of the subject matter of another paper in this volume as already mentioned. In his work Doke made a comparative analysis of the main dialects spoken in Mashonaland. His study gave greater weight to phonetics and phonological processes which occurred in these dialects than to morphological and syntactic aspects.

Through his study Doke was able to show not only the geographical distribution and extent of each of the main dialects of Shona, but also the language situation in and around Southern Rhodesia. This was probably the first time that both linguists and non-linguists as well as administrators had a good picture of the language situation in the country. His statistical tables, which were liberally provided in his Report (1931a), showed that the dialects of Mashonaland formed the largest language group with 799 619 speakers out of a total population of 1 024 479 — 78 per cent. The Ndebele speakers, who numbered 132 610 or 12.9 per cent of the population (Doke 1931a:26), were the second largest group. On the periphery of his map are such languages as Chikunda in the north-east of the country, Barwe-Tonga in the east, Hlengwe (Shangaan) and Venda in the south, and Tonga in the west of the country in the Zambezi valley. Most of these languages were, and still are, minority languages whose main bodies are to be found in the neighbouring countries.

According to Doke's survey the main dialects of Mashonaland which he identified were Korekore, Zezuru, Manyika, Karanga, Ndau and Kalanga (see map on p. 111). Briefly, the Korekore are found in the northern districts stretching in a horse-shoe pattern from around Gokwe through Urungwe, Guruve (then Sipolilo) to Mount Darwin and the

Mozambican border. The Manyika are in the eastern districts, from Nyanga in the north through Mutare to Marange and Mutambara in the south. The Ndau occupy the south-eastern part of the country, with the Karanga in the vast territory of Masvingo Province, and the Zezuru in the central districts in a radius approximately a hundred and ten kilometres around Harare. These dialect groups are still occupying more or less the same areas which they occupied at the turn of this century. However, owing to a variety of factors, —urbanisation, education, for example — these dialects either have already been or are in the process of being weakened to a greater or lesser extent. In terms of the distribution of the Shona dialects in particular, and the language situation generally in Zimbabwe today, Doke's work and the accompanying map remain the key points of reference. In other words, in terms of geographical distribution no work on the scale of Doke's effort has been carried out since the publication of his Report (1931a) and his book (1931b).

In his study of the dialects of Mashonaland Doke soon discovered that they shared a great deal in common from the viewpoint of their phonology, vocabulary, morphology and syntax. The salient features by which these dialects were found to be bound together into one language included:

- (a) an underlying unity of vocabulary;
- (b) a sharing of particular phonetic features, such as a five-vowel system, employment of implosives (though not in western Kalanga) and 'whistling fricatives';
- (c) a sharing of particular grammatical features, such as monosyllabic noun prefixes, a significant super-addition of prefixes to nouns, a uniform tense system, decimal numeration, vocalisation of initial consonants of stems in class 5 nouns, and locative formation (Doke 1931b:7).

Doke concentrated on phonetics and collected a wealth of vocabulary items. On the basis of their vocabulary and phonetic differences he was able to identify six main Shona dialects (the ones which were mentioned above). He was also quick to realise that there existed buffer dialects between some of these major dialects, for example, Hungwe which shares the characteristics of both Zezuru and Manyika, Buja which lies between Manyika and Korekore, and Garwe between Manyika and Ndau. Furthermore, in each dialect Doke recognised sub-dialects which differed among themselves to a greater or lesser extent.



A *Comparative Study in Shona Phonetics* demonstrated that Doke was endowed with a rare natural ability to study human sounds. His observation of the data with which he worked and his recording, analysis and description of them were on the whole quite accurate. Of course, we may argue or differ with the nature of his scientific method. Nevertheless, when we consider the instruments which Doke used then, that he was not a speaker of Shona, and that he conducted his investigation into Shona in a space of only one year — 1929 — we cannot but help conclude that he performed a sterling job. In this work Doke provided, within the confines of his model, a phonetic description of each of the dialects as well as the processes of what he called velarisation, nasalisation, vowel coalescence and elision.

In his treatment of the consonants, Doke grouped them into plain consonants and velarised consonants. Plain consonants are those 'composed of one phone element or a homorganic combination of elements' (p.34), while velarised consonants are those which are 'non-homorganic combinations which are due to the action of /w/' (p.34). With regard to plain consonants, he was able to distinguish in Shona between:

- (a) the explosive stops [b , d ] and the implosive stops [ɓ , ɗ ];
- (b) the alveolar fricatives [s, z] and what he called the alveolar-labialised fricatives, also sometimes referred to as the 'whistling' fricatives [ʃ , ʒ ];
- (c) the denti-labial fricative [v] and the bilabial fricative [β] (for which he incorrectly used the symbol [ɸ]);
- (d) the alveolar nasal [n] and the velar nasal [ŋ]; and
- (e) the voiced nasals [m, n] and the breathy-voiced nasals [ṃ, ṅ].

He also identified laterals in those dialects in which they occurred and his transcription of them is commendable. Mention of the sounds in (a) to (e) above is pertinent because those who ventured into Shona studies before Doke tended either to confuse them or to distort them completely. With regard to the articulatory and auditory description of the other individual as well as compound consonants and vowels, it is unnecessary to repeat what Doke said. It is worth noting, however, that in his description some special sounds were accompanied by kymographs, palatograms and/or diagrams which illustrated places of articulation, and sometimes also by photographs of the subjects showing positions of the lips during the articulation of a given sound, for example, [s] and [ʃ] (Doke 1931b: 294).

Velarisation, which is said to be due to the influence of the velar semi-vowel /w/, is claimed by Doke to be one of the main features of the Shona dialects and a peculiarity of this cluster of Bantu languages, though not entirely restricted to it alone. Concerning velarisation Doke says:

Velarisation is brought about by an abnormal raising of the back of the tongue towards the soft palate (velum), instead of the usual slight raising effected in pronouncing the velar semi-vowel, w. This abnormal raising may take the place of the semi-vowel, or in certain cases precede the semi-vowel (p.109).

Examples of velarisation are:

Words	Zezuru	Karanga	
pwere	[pkere]	[pxere]	(children)
mabwe	[mabge]	[mabve]	(stones)
kuswera	[kuskwera]	[kusxwera]	(spend the day)

This interpretation of the so-called /w/ clusters was adopted by Fortune in both his *An Analytical Grammar of Shona* (1955) and in the earlier, though not in the latest, edition of *Shona Grammatical Constructions*, Volume 1 (1985). However, Pongweni (1989) claims that Doke's interpretation of the influence of /w/ is not plausible, and, considering the definitions of the *phoneme* and the *allophone*, I tend to agree with him. Doke's interpretation makes allophones of sounds which elsewhere in the language are contrastive, for example, in [pkere] above, [k] is said to be an allophone of /w/, which it is not. In the following minimal pairs, /k/ and /w/ clearly show contrast:

/-kora/ (intoxicate)	vs	/-wora/ (decompose)
/-kara/ (be gluttonous)	vs	/-wara/ (spread out)

For a more comprehensive treatment of the argument against Doke's interpretation of velarisation see Pongweni (1989:28-31).

A second respect in which one takes issue with Doke concerns his interpretation of the voiced bilabial and alveolar stops. He says '... the common *b* and *d* sounds, when not associated with a homorganic nasal, are implosive. In the homorganic compounds *mb* and *nd* the second element is always explosive ... in the affricates *bv* and *dz* the explosive is

also found' (p. 49). Doke seems to imply in this case that the voiced implosive *b* and the breathy-voiced explosive *b̥* are allophones of one phoneme, so are *d* and *d̥*. But elsewhere the members of these pairs of sounds show contrast which confirms their phoneme status, for example,

*b*ara (a bullet) vs *b̥*ara (a wheelbarrow)  
*d*ora (an edible caterpillar) vs *d̥*ora (a dollar)

Doke speaks of *h* being 'preceded by nasals' in *mh* and *nh* (p.93), as in: *mfiuka* (animal) (cl. 9/10) and *nfiunzi* (flies) (cl. 9/10). These so-called sequences are but single sounds which are accompanied by breathy voice, the one being bilabial *m̥* and the other alveolar *n̥* (see Pongweni 1989:31).

The shortcomings outlined above and others in Doke's work are a consequence of the way he conceived of his approach to the study of the sound system of a language. Reviewing Doke's *Southern Bantu Languages*, Gleason (1956:569) criticised Doke's pattern, mentioning, among other things, 'its weak development of phonemics'. Pongweni, also pointing out some shortcomings in Doke's *A Comparative Study in Shona Phonetics*, says that they stem from 'his failure to back up largely accurate observations with an explicitly articulated phoneme theory ...', and he goes on further to say, 'Doke should have found or devised some categories capable of bringing home some order to his otherwise tantalising multiplicity' (1989:31). The question which arises from these criticisms and which remains unanswered is whether or not Doke was aware of the phoneme theory at the time that he wrote these works, for nowhere in them does he seem to have mentioned it.

With regard to tone in Shona, Doke revealed one of his greatest weaknesses. He seems, firstly, to have been unable to distinguish between the significant levels of tone, and, secondly, to tone-mark his Shona examples in a correct and meaningful way. According to him, Shona operated on a three-level tone system. None of the linguists who came after him subscribed to his system. They all identify only two levels of tone: a relative high tone and a relative low tone, and this is the system that is widely accepted in Shona studies today.

In the same work Doke discusses stress and length. Regarding stress he says, 'Stress exists in Shona, as in all other Bantu languages ... In Bantu, stress is the word builder. The stressed syllable gathers around itself the unstressed syllables and unites them into a word' (Doke 1931b:205). As is now known, Doke mistook stress for penultimate length.

## GRAMMATICAL STRUCTURE

Doke's direct contribution to Shona grammatical studies is found in Recommendation 4 in his Report which has already been referred to. The recommendation reads, 'That a unified grammar be standardized on the basis of Karanga and Zezuru.' The justification of this recommendation rested on the fact that the total population of the speakers of these two dialects was more than half the total number of Shona speakers in the country at that time. He gave the noun class system as an example of the treatment of an aspect of grammar. He proposed that the noun classes be treated in the unified language using the singular-plural linkage system:

Class I	mu-	ua-
Ia	---	ua-
II	mu-	mi-
III	ci-	zi-
IV	i-	dzi-
V	ri-	ma-
VI	ka-	tu- (Northern)
	ṣi-	u- (Southern)
VII	ru-	dzi-, ma-
VIII	u-, vu-, hu-	
IX	ku- (Locative and Infinitive)	
X	mu- (Locative)	
XI	pa- (Locative)	

(Note that the orthography used here is the one he recommended in his Report.)

The structure of the other categories and aspects of Shona grammar are dealt with by way of comparison only in *The Southern Bantu Languages*. Doke recommended that the noun prefix forms in those dialects which deviated from the list above, Korekore and Karombe, for example, should be ignored in the unified grammar. Indeed, this was followed and is the practice in standard Shona today.

As has already been said elsewhere above, Doke did not write a grammar of Shona as such. However, the influence of his grammatical scheme is evident in Shona studies between 1931 and about 1970. In order to facilitate the arguments which will be presented, an outline of Doke's scheme is given overleaf:

- I. Substantive: (a) Noun (divided into classes)  
 (b) Pronoun  
     i. Absolute  
     ii. Demonstrative  
     iii. Quantitative  
     iv. Qualificative  
     v. Relative
- II. Qualificative: (a) Adjective  
 (b) Relative  
 (c) Enumerative  
 (d) Possessive
- III. Predicative: (a) Verb  
 (b) Copulative
- IV. Descriptive: (a) Adverb  
 (b) Ideophone
- V. Conjunctive
- VI. Interjective

This scheme was adopted by G. Fortune in his *An Analytical Grammar of Shona* (1955) which became the main reference Shona grammar book for the next fifteen years or so.

Unlike his work on phonetics and phonology, Doke was credited by Gleason in the review mentioned above for departing from the tradition of European grammar and for setting up syntactic categories which were more appropriate for the description of Bantu languages. To show that the model had some merit, a number of grammar books were written using it for various Bantu languages in Southern Africa — Swazi, Zulu, Shona and Tswana, for example.

As we know, Doke's approach was first to identify the *word* in the language he was investigating. He did this by a phonetic criterion. This was his famous penultimate stress, but which Cole is said to have pointed out was more correctly termed penultimate length. Most words in Bantu languages seem to have this penultimate length. Having defined his units or words, he set them out into different categories or parts of speech, each according to its syntactic function. In this way he established his six main parts of speech: the substantive, the qualificative, the predicative, the descriptive, the conjunctive and the interjective.

The main criticism of the *An Analytical Grammar of Shona*, and by implication that of Doke, is that its categories are based on words.

Syntactic relationships for Doke appeared to be the relationships between words which he had isolated and identified. This did not allow for an adequate treatment of the interdependence of units below the words, for example, affixes as in *chingwa chichena*, and much more serious, of units greater than words, for example, phrases and clauses. Although he recognised the existence of phrases and clauses within the structure of sentences, he did not clearly show their syntactic relationships — how they meshed in with one another in sentences. The value of his scheme seems to lie more in its morphology than its syntax. In short, Doke's grammatical model did not make much headway in syntax beyond Southern Africa for at least two reasons: (a) his failure to realise that morphemes rather than words are the building blocks of a language in its grammatical aspect, and (b) that sentences are not just linear arrangements of words; they are to be understood in depth also.

### SUMMARY

Doke's work is criticised for occasionally lacking, among other things, principled and rigorous phonological and grammatical theories. Nevertheless, certain things stand clearly to his credit: firstly, his ability to observe, record, analyse and describe fairly accurately the data with which he worked; and, secondly, his boldness in breaking away from the grip of European grammatical tradition and devising a model suitable to some extent at that time for Bantu languages.

### REFERENCES

- Doke, C.M. 1931a. *Report on the Unification of the Shona Dialects*. Hertford: Stephen Austin and Sons.
- 1931b. *A Comparative Study in Shona Phonetics*. Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press.
- 1954. *The Southern Bantu Languages*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.
- Fortune, G. 1955. *An Analytical Grammar of Shona*. Cape Town: Longmans, Green.
- 1985. *Shona Grammatical Constructions*, Vol. 1. Harare: Mercury Press.

- Gleason, H.A. 1956. Review of *Southern Bantu Languages* by C.M. Doke. *Language* 32:567-73.
- Hartmann, A.M. 1893. *An Outline of a Grammar of the Mashona Language*, Cape Town: F. Y. Leger.
- Louw, C.S. 1915. *A Manual of the Chikaranga Language*. Bulawayo: Philpott and Collins.
- Marconnès, F. 1931. *A Grammar of Central Karanga*. Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press.
- O'Neil, J. 1935. *A Shona Grammar*. London: Longmans, Green.
- Pongweni, A.J.C. 1989. *Studies in Shona Phonetics: An Analytical Review*. Zambezia (Supplement 1989).
- Springer, H.E. 1905. *A Hand-book of Chikaranga or The Language of Mashonaland*. Cincinnati: Jennings and Graham.

N.C. Dembetembe  
*Department Of African Languages*  
*University of South Africa*

## Some Thoughts on Future Language Policy for South Africa

With reference to the Language Plan of Action  
 for Africa

---

Mubanga E. Kashoki

---

The choice of topic for this contribution to the Doke Centenary volume has been accompanied by nagging doubts. No sooner had I decided to share my ideas on a possible language policy for South Africa in light of the OAU's Language Plan of Action for Africa (1986) than I had second thoughts about it: would my seemingly presumptuous choice of topic be understood as interference in the internal affairs of another country?

In the context of the Doke Centenary, however, I am emboldened to offer my few thoughts to my South African colleagues for a reason similar to that I had expressed to my Namibian colleagues in 1990:

What is absolutely clear to me is that only Namibians can shape their own destiny. We as outsiders can only be a helpful nuisance. As friends from outside all we can do is to create disquiet in the minds of the Namibian people by drawing their attention to pending or unfinished business and thereby creating an atmosphere of challenge. (Kashoki 1992a:45-46)

Precisely the same sentiments dictate the attitude I have adopted in shaping the present contribution. But there is perhaps a far weightier reason for my decision to discuss the challenges that the OAU's Language Plan of Action for Africa poses, or at least suggests, to the

people of South Africa. My resolve derives from the significance and relevance of Clement Martyn Doke as both pioneer and bridge builder in the scientific study of language and the practical promotion of African languages in this part of the world.

In the first regard, Doke, as a towering figure, can best be described not only as a pace-setter but even more as a founding father of Bantu linguistics. Indeed, as Wilkes (1978:96) noted, 'From 1927 until the fifties, Bantu linguistics in South Africa remained firmly in the model of what is generally referred to as the Dokean approach.' This in itself eloquently attests to the stature and influence of a single individual who brought so much to bear on the direction, character, and texture of the linguistic studies and literary works in African languages that up to this day continue to have an inspiring effect on those of us who are concerned with the promotion of language study in Africa. In this vein, if Doke could write of others and give them a place in history as 'Bantu language pioneers of the nineteenth century' (Doke 1959), he too, in equal measure, deserves a similar accolade as a Bantu language pioneer of the twentieth century. Doke was an intrepid explorer in a field which, at the time he lived, was only in the most speculative and rudimentary stage. There can be no doubt that this part of the world, and students of Bantu languages in particular, are in Doke's debt.

Doke as a pioneering luminary in Bantu linguistics has considerable relevance to what is to be stated subsequently. To a great extent his contribution to our knowledge of African languages spoken within the borders of Zambia and South Africa is of enduring relevance to the present pursuit of deepening our understanding of African languages.

Doke also played a prominent role as a bridge builder among African countries. His interest in language came out of his early experiences as a missionary in Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia). Doke's seven-year sojourn in Lambaland enabled him to complete his master's dissertation, which appeared in 1922 as *The Grammar of the Lamba Language*. From this initial work, Doke soon turned his attention to the languages of South Africa, beginning with Zulu. Doke's role as a central figure in the unification of the Shona dialects (Doke 1931) and his research into Shona phonetics extended the links he built to include three countries: Zambia, Zimbabwe, and South Africa.

Besides being a language pioneer and a bridge builder, Doke should be remembered and acknowledged as a practical man. He did not confine himself merely to matters of linguistic theory and description. He was concerned as well with putting dictionaries and manuals in the hands of

students of Bantu languages, specialists and non-specialists alike. Thus, in Zambia we see, apart from numerous religious pamphlets, the appearance of *Lamba Folk-Lore* (1927) and *English-Lamba Vocabulary* (1933; 1963) and *Graded Lamba Grammar and Exercises* (1963). In Zimbabwe, Doke's concern with the practical promotion of African languages yielded, as we have noted, his *Report on the Unification of the Shona Dialects* (1931). In South Africa, Doke's works at the practical level range from the monumental *Zulu-English Dictionary* (1953) to suggestions for a programme of linguistic research in Bantu and other native languages of South Africa as well as numerous Zulu and Ndebele readers.

Here we gain an illustrative glimpse of a committed scholar driven by the desire to bring to practical fruition his love for, and expert knowledge of, the African languages with which he was privileged to work. It is upon this legacy that I now wish to build as I turn to the implications for South Africa of the OAU's Language Plan of Action for Africa.

#### A NOTE ON SOME LANGUAGE POLICY ANTECEDENTS

Before going on to discuss specifically the major implications of the OAU's Language Plan for South Africa, it might first be useful to cast our eyes back and touch briefly on some language policy antecedents that appear to have lingering relevance apropos of language policy formulations in Africa. It is well known and widely acknowledged that language policy before the early 1960s when most former British colonies in Africa attained political independence was strikingly tilted in favour of African languages, especially in the domain of formal education. The retreat from language policies that clearly favoured the use of one or several selected African languages as media of instruction and/or as subjects in the national education system was sounded in 1961 by a Commonwealth Conference at Makerere University, Uganda (Commonwealth Conference 1961). In a significant departure from previous policy stands regarding the role of African languages in the formal educational process, the new stance held that wherever English functioned as a second language, particularly where it served as a medium of instruction in the higher grades, schoolchildren should be exposed to it as early as possible upon entering school, preferably as a medium of learning right from the start. The immediate consequence of this was the adoption of policies in such countries as Kenya and Zambia that now

made English the dominant medium of instruction during the entire span of a child's education in the formal national education system. In Zambia, this is still the position today.

In sharp contrast, before the Commonwealth Conference in 1961, the notion that the mother tongue was the most appropriate medium of instruction generally held sway. As evidence of this, consider the British Government's 'Education Policy in British Tropical Africa' (Great Britain 1925), wherein the principle was established that indigenous languages (or *vernaculars*, as they were commonly known) should be accorded primary importance in the educational policy of colonial territories. This policy was given greater explicit force following the publication of 'The place of the vernacular in Native Education' in 1927 (UNESCO 1953). It is as a result of this policy that as early as 1927 educational policy in Northern Rhodesia (Zambia) allowed for the use of four indigenous languages, namely Bemba, Lozi, Nyanja and Tonga, as both media of instruction and as school subjects in the educational system. It is largely the same policy that accounts for the use of Tswana, Northern and Southern Sotho, Venda, Xhosa and Zulu in South Africa's educational system. There can hardly be any doubt, moreover, that it was the favourable attitudes prevalent at the time towards African languages which in large measure influenced Clement Doke and others to take scholarly and practical interest in them.

Indeed, it is pertinent to remember that *Education in Africa*, being a study of East, Central and Southern Africa published in 1925 by the (Second) African Education Commission stated unequivocally, *inter alia*, that 'all peoples have an inherent right to their own language. It is the means of expression of their personality and no greater injustice can be committed against a people than to deprive them of their own language.' Of particular relevance to the South African situation and, of course, the present discussion, the report added that 'in the past, practically all controlling nations forced their language on native peoples and discourages the use of their native tongue. Fortunately at the present time the only powers that still maintain this attitude in their possessions are the French and the Portuguese. Whatever their motives the policy is unwise and unjust.'

Towards the end of the 1920s, a new ally espousing the virtues of African languages and cultures arrived on the scene in the corporate person of the International African Institute (originally known as the International Institute of African Languages and Cultures). The 1930 meeting of the Executive Committee in Rome resulted in the issue of the

oft-quoted statement regarding the place of African languages in education, the main elements of which are cited below:

- 'It is a universally acknowledged principle in modern education that a child should receive instruction both in and through his mother tongue and this privilege should not be withheld from the African Child.'
- 'The child should learn to love and respect the mental heritage of his own people, and the natural and the necessary expression of this heritage is the language.'
- 'We are of the opinion that no education which leads to the alienation of the child from his ancestral environment can be right, nor can it achieve the most important aim of education, which consists in developing the powers and character of the pupil.'
- 'Neglect of the local language involves the danger of crippling and destroying the pupil's productive powers by forcing him to express himself in a language foreign both to himself and to the genius of his race.'
- Consequently, 'As a general rule, therefore, during the first three years of school education instruction should be carried on exclusively in an African language.'
- As a safeguard, 'We recognize that it is undoubtedly necessary for the progress of Africa that many Africans should acquire a thorough knowledge of a European language in order to obtain free access to the sources of western life and thought, but these will be better understood and more appreciated by the student if he has first learned to think in his own language and to understand his own civilization.'

Following close on the heels of this statement by the International African Institute was the philosophical position assumed by UNESCO (1953), which was given concrete expression in the well-known report *The Use of Vernacular Languages in Education*. Paralleling the sentiments of the International African Institute, UNESCO held the view that on educational, cultural and psychological grounds, education is best and more efficaciously imparted by means of the mother tongue as a medium of instruction.

The antecedents sketched here, together with the foundation laid by Doke, provide an immediate and relevant bridge to the OAU Language Plan of Action for Africa. It is therefore appropriate to examine the provisions of this plan and some possible implications for language policy in a new, democratic South Africa.

## THE OAU 'LANGUAGE PLAN OF ACTION FOR AFRICA'

### *Implications*

At the present time South Africa is poised on the threshold of a break from its apartheid past, and a new democratic era. This period calls for a great deal of conscious self-examination and planning for the future. It is a period that will severely test the ability of South Africa to shape its destiny in the best manner possible and to the greatest advantage of all its citizens. In this process of planning for the future – a very delicate and intricate task of shaping the national destiny – South Africans will inevitably have to come to grips with the inescapable necessity of formulating an appropriate and comprehensive language policy that will truly reflect the aspirations and political, cultural, social and economic needs of its people. It is in this regard that the 'Language Plan of Action for Africa' may be of some relevance by pointing to some critical considerations that ought to inform the formulation of an appropriate comprehensive language policy.

The full text of the Language Plan of Action for Africa is contained in the Appendix. The following discussion outlines some of the major provisions of the plan, with particular attention to the development of future language policy for South Africa.

As adopted by Heads of State and Government in Addis Ababa in July 1986 as henceforth the official position of the OAU, the most immediate and relevant provisions of the Language Plan of Action for Africa are as follows:

- First, that a major primary objective is 'to encourage each and every member state to have a clearly defined language policy'.
- Second, that steps should be taken to ensure that 'all languages within the boundaries of member states are recognised and accepted as a source of mutual enrichment'.
- Third, that appropriate measures should be taken 'to liberate the African peoples from undue reliance on the utilisation of non-indigenous languages as the dominant, official languages of the state in favour of the gradual take over of appropriate and carefully selected indigenous African languages in this domain'.
- Fourth, that member states have the duty of fostering and promoting 'national, regional and continental linguistic unity in Africa in the context of the multilingualism prevailing in most African countries'.

Quite clearly, these provisions of The Language Plan of Action for Africa have definite implications for South Africa. As outlined above, one of the major objectives of the plan is for every African country to embark upon the formulation of a comprehensive language policy appropriate to its circumstances. It stresses the importance of political will as the primary ingredient in utilising language factor in a meaningful way in the process of national development. My position in Namibia in 1990 was the following:

If Namibia does not embark upon an integrated language policy at the dawn of its political independence, it will have made a false start. The time to put the Namibian house in order as far as language is concerned is at the beginning and not when independence has been consolidated. At that time, deep-seated attitudes will have set in and become entrenched and it will then be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to change them. (Kashoki 1992a:43)

The United Nations Institute for Namibia's (UNIN) publication *Toward a Language Policy for Namibia* reinforces this view when it points out that:

Experiences of other African countries have shown that where English has been the vehicle for communicating the affairs of government, law, education and politics, the development of African languages has all too often been retarded if not overlooked altogether. This seems to be largely due to the lack of an integrated language policy at the beginning which can lead to indigenous peoples developing attitudes of indifference to their own language. (UNIN 1981:54)

For South Africa, the time to seize and exercise the required political will cannot be more opportune than now, while the country is preoccupied with shaping the national destiny and practically the entire population is galvanised towards a single national purpose. Subsequently, it is most likely that the government's attention will be drawn in many different directions as a result of a diversity of pressing national issues coupled with the emergence of detractors and critics, a condition which will tend to distract the government from pursuing delicate issues such as those pertaining to language policy in a determined manner.

It is said that humanity never learns from the precedents of history.

None the less, it is to be hoped that South Africa will prove an exception to this generalisation. In this connection it may be said that Namibia, by all appearances, missed a golden opportunity to learn from historical antecedents by directing its planning not at the evolution of a truly comprehensive language policy but somewhat narrowly at ensuring that Afrikaans, perceived at the time as an instrument of oppression, was supplanted as an official language by English, a non-indigenous language associated with democratic attributes and global communication.

A third dimension, the provision calling upon each African country to have in place a clearly defined language policy, touches on a broader issue than just the language or languages that ought to be in use in the national education system. It relates to the broader question of what ought to constitute the functional languages in the formal affairs of the state, in what domains, to what degree and to what end. Indeed, as stated explicitly in (d) of the Plan under 'Aims, Objectives and Principles', African countries are expected 'to ensure that African languages, by appropriate legal provision and practical promotion, assume their rightful role as the means of official communication in the public affairs of each Member State in replacement of European languages which have hitherto played this role'. The reference to *practical promotion* is an invitation to African countries to go beyond mere sweet-sounding resolutions and various political platitudes to something more concrete: the translation of pious, if well meaning, political posturings into meaningful programmes of sustained action.

While on the matter of legal provision, a crucial point is how this is to be accomplished, the question being whether it is to be by constitutional arrangements or merely by juridical provisions outside the framework of the national constitution. Those countries which regard language as a fundamental human right, for example, China, India and, more recently, Namibia, elect to ensure that the question of language is provided for in the heart of their constitutions. This is yet another aspect concerning language policy that South Africa will have to consider as it plans for its long-term future.

The practical issue which poses the greatest problem in multilingual countries is the question of selection of one or several languages out of multiplicity of others to serve the formal functions of the state. The Language Plan of Action for Africa urges that all languages within the boundaries of Member States be recognised and accepted as a source of mutual enrichment. This laudable suggestion, however, only begs the vexing question of which languages are to be selected and legislated as

the official languages of the state – and which ones are to be denied this status.

This, of course, brings multilingualism, both societal and individual, into the equation. How is the widespread phenomenon of multilingualism in both these senses best to be exploited to the advantage of citizens of multi-ethnic, multicultural and multilingual nation-states, as a rich national resource and as a positive force, as well as a fact of life than cannot be ignored?

This further raises the politico-philosophical question which is best stated in this way: what kind of citizen is to be regarded as an ideal citizen from a sociolinguistic perspective? The view which is increasingly common is that in multilingual countries, in order to match policy with sociolinguistic reality, the multilingual rather than the monolingual individual ought to be regarded as the ideal citizen of linguistically complex modern nation-states. Or, as Bamgbose (1991) has aptly put it, 'In the African situation, a person who speaks several languages is to be regarded as a better integrated citizen than one who is proficient in one language, even if that language happens to be the country's official language.' In other words, 'it is the adaptable, flexible, or versatile multilingual capable of exploiting to his best advantage the multilingualistic codes at his disposal, and not the inflexible monolingual, that we posit as the future citizen of multilingual Zambia' (Kashoki 1977).

This view clearly suggests that in multilingual countries, notwithstanding questions of cost and the highly sensitive nature of the issue of selection, it is highly desirable that multilingualism ought to be the cornerstone of language policy. It follows from the recognition that if multilingualism as a sociolinguistic phenomenon is a normal, natural feature of the majority of countries in the world, then it deserves to be reflected appropriately in national language policies. Stated negatively, the new orientation thus calls on governments in multilingual countries to reverse the earlier preoccupation with monolingual language policies in favour of those more in accord with actual sociolinguistic phenomena. Here Brann provides a timely caution when he observes, 'In Africa generally, and in West Africa in particular, the unilinguistic model is not appropriate and would lead both to conflict as well as to cultural impoverishment' (Brann 1990:123).

A multilingual language policy in another sense touches upon the democratic principle of effective participation of citizens in national affairs. Undoubtedly, where multilingualism is consciously built into the



country's language policy as the dominant principle, it has the likely consequences of broadening opportunities for more citizens to participate in national affairs. It has, in other words, democratising consequences.

Recognising that even a multilingual policy in a complex multilingual nation-state cannot accommodate all the languages within national boundaries without exception, the practical question arises as to the role of non-official languages, following the principle that all languages within national boundaries are to be recognised and accepted as a source of mutual enrichment. Where democratic structures revolve primarily around community-based organisations and hence community-centred decision-making processes, non-official languages may achieve easy accommodation. However, where social and political structures are highly centralised, such accommodation may not be easy to achieve. The central issue, therefore, of the place of communities in a democratic South Africa and in the decision-making process with respect to language policy formulation and implementation, as with other spheres of national life, will have to be faced. What is not at issue is that quite clearly some matters pertaining to language maintenance or language utilisation will have to be left to the communities themselves as their direct responsibility while the state concentrates on the use of others for official purposes.

The points just discussed lead to the call by the Language Plan of Action for Africa upon African countries 'to liberate the African peoples from undue reliance on the utilisation of non-indigenous languages as the dominant official languages of the state in favour of the gradual take-over of appropriate and carefully selected indigenous African languages in this domain'. Here it will suffice to address only two cognate issues.

The first, as a point of clarification, is that the suggested gradual shift from non-indigenous to indigenous languages as official languages is not in any way intended to negate the complementary, useful role that non-indigenous languages have played in the past, are playing now, and will undoubtedly continue to play well into the distant future in Africa's affairs. Both in recognition of today's reality of the ever growing interdependence of our world and the need to equip citizens of African countries with the communicative competence necessary to make them citizens of the world, it is imperative that as many languages as possible spoken in the world, particularly those of wider communication and of science and technology, are within reach of a wide spectrum of African citizens. After all, the Language Plan of Action for Africa desires that, within Africa itself, deliberate steps should be taken 'to foster and promote regional and continental linguistic unity in Africa in the context

of the multilingualism prevailing in most African countries'. The extension of this proposition to the rest of the world is both logical and inevitable, for the phenomenon of multilingualism is not confined to Africa alone; it is a dominant feature of the majority of countries in the world. The challenge to South Africa, however, is the quite intricate matter of the policy that has to be decided upon as to which and how many African and non-African languages are to be taught in the education system within the limits of government resources.

The second point worth making here relates to the argument, so often made by those who question the suitability of African languages in their present state as viable instruments of modern government, whether it is at all realistic to expect African languages to eventually become functional languages of the state. The case of Afrikaans in the context of South Africa is both instructive and illustrative in this regard. As Combrink reminds us,

A century ago, in August 1875, in Paarl, a small town near Cape Town, the founding meeting of a language society took place behind drawn curtains in a private house. The main aim of this rebel society, called the Fellowship of True Afrikaaners, was to create an awareness amongst the speakers of Afrikaans that Afrikaans, not Dutch or English, was their mother tongue and ought to be their written language. The vigour and enthusiasm of this Fellowship kindled a flame and nurtured it for many years. Fifty years later, 1925, Afrikaans was legally recognised as one of the two official languages of the then Union of South Africa, the other one being English. (Combrink 1978:69)

Combrink further states that, whereas initially 'Afrikaans had an embryonic literature (mainly poetry), very few textbooks, no Bible, a puerile technical terminology and no standing in the world of commerce and industry' (1978:69), within a relatively short period of fifty years the situation had changed drastically:

Today Afrikaans is the mother tongue of more than 4,000,000 speakers, and is the second language of an equal number of people. It is the medium in thousands of primary and secondary schools. Afrikaans is now fully fledged as a language of religion, education, economics and science. More than two hundred

technical dictionaries have appeared in it — most of them English-Afrikaans, Afrikaans-English — and thousands of scientific textbooks, even encyclopedias and learned journals. (Combrink 1978:69)

Afrikaans is also a medium of instruction at several South African universities; according to Combrink (1978:69), 'of the sixteen South African universities eight are English medium, five Afrikaans medium and three dual medium'.

This single example implicitly provides several relevant lessons. Perhaps the most salient is the recognition that from small insignificant beginnings great things are possible; that is, any language, however impoverished originally, can rise to the occasion as an official language, adequate in every way for the functions of a modern state. Secondly, political will is a necessary ingredient in the transformation of a language from a state of inadequacy to a state of adequacy as an official language.

However, for African languages to achieve any measure of functional utility as official languages, the initial mobilisation of the necessary political will alone is not sufficient. Unfailing commitment and sustained practical support (financial and otherwise) are necessary to ensure the modernisation of the language(s) in question to a reasonable or acceptable degree of viability.

In more distant times, the story of *The Triumph of the English Language* (Jones 1953) provides further testimony to what is needed in order for what was originally essentially a rustic tongue, unsuited to the demands and exigencies of complex forms of statecraft, to become a functional medium of government business in a modern state. As with Afrikaans in the nineteenth century, English from modest, lowly beginnings in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is today not only the pre-eminent language of international communication but is additionally, and even more importantly, the premier language of science and technology.

More recently in this century and on a considerably more modest scale, Kiswahili in Tanzania presents us with yet another apt lesson. Following a political decision taken shortly after the attainment of political independence designating it as a national and official language, practical measures within the limited resources of Tanzania were taken in a deliberate attempt to render Kiswahili suitable for use as a functional language of government business. The result is that today, apart from its use as a medium of instruction in primary and secondary schools,

Kiswahili is also the predominant language of government business generally (cf. Abdulaziz 1980). Kiswahili is used in the national parliament, widely employed in the Civil Service, taught at the University of Dar-es-Salaam, where a Department of Kiswahili has been established, and it occupies a healthy place in the mass media, both print and electronic. As in the case of Afrikaans, specialised, technical dictionaries of Kiswahili are increasingly available.

Kiswahili as an example has special significance: not only does it demonstrate that any human language is amenable to modernisation but, even more to the point, it pointedly undermines the widely held notion that African languages by some conspiracy of nature are innately incapable and unsuitable for modernisation, particularly in the scientific and technological fields.

This paper has sought to achieve two primary ends. The first has been to renew Clement Martyn Doke's deserved place in the history of Bantu linguistics and to celebrate his legacy to the ongoing programmes involving the conscious promotion of African languages in a practical manner. The second aim has been to provide a thumbnail sketch of the principal features of the OAU's Language Plan of Action for Africa and its implications and challenges for language planners, and thereby to stimulate those whose task it is to shape the linguistic destiny of South Africa.

### BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abdulaziz, M.H. 1980. The Ecology of Tanzania Language Policy. In E.C. Polomé and C.P. Hill (eds), *Language in Tanzania*. London: Oxford University Press, pp.139-75.
- Bamgbose, A. 1991. *Language and the Nation*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Brann, C.M.B. 1990. The French Revolution and the Administration of the National Language Question in Africa. In E. Nwokedi and J.-P. Daloz (eds), *French Revolution: A Nigerian Perspective*. Lagos: Macmillan Nigeria Publishers, pp.109-28.
- Combrink, J. 1978. Afrikaans: Its Origins and Development. In L.W. Lanham and K.P. Prinsloo, *Language and Communication Studies in South Africa*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.

- Commonwealth Conference. 1961. *Commonwealth Conference on the Teaching of English as a Second Language, Report*. Entebbe: Government Printer.
- Doke, C.M. 1922. *The Grammar of the Lamba Language*. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner.
- 1926. *The Phonetics of the Zulu Language*. Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press.
- 1927. *Text Book of Zulu Grammar*. Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press.
- 1931. *Report on the Unification of the Shona Dialects*. Government Blue Book, Government of Southern Rhodesia.
- 1931. *A Comparative Study of Shona Phonetics*. Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press.
- 1935. *Bantu Linguistic Terminology*. London: Longmans, Green.
- 1938. *Text Book of Lamba Grammar*. Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press.
- 1945. *Bantu: Modern Grammatical, Phonetical and Lexicographical Studies since 1860*. London: International African Institute.
- 1954. *The Southern Bantu Languages*. London: International African Institute.
- 1959. Bantu language pioneers of the nineteenth century. *African Studies* 13: 1-27.
- 1963. *English-Lamba Vocabulary*. Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press.
- Doke, C.M. and Cole, D.T. (eds). 1961. *Contributions to the History of Bantu Linguistics*. Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press.
- Doke, C.M. and Mofokeng, S.M. 1957. *Textbook of Southern Sotho Grammar*. London: Longmans, Green.
- Doke, C.M. and Vilakazi, B.W. 1948. *Zulu-English Dictionary*. Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press.
- Fishman, J.A., Ferguson, C.A. and Das Gupta, J. (eds). 1969. *Language Problems of Developing Countries*. New York: John Wiley.
- Fortune, G. 1972. Clement Martyn Doke: A biographical and bibliographical sketch. In *Catalogue of the C.M. Doke Collection in the Library of the University of Rhodesia*. Boston: G.K. Hall.
- Great Britain. 1925. *Education Policy in British Tropical Africa*. London: His Majesty's Stationery Office for Advisory Committee on Native Education in the British Tropical Dependencies.

- Jones, R.F. [1953] 1966. *The Triumph of the English Language*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Kashoki, M.E. 1977. Language and the Future Citizen of Zambia. Paper presented to the Department of Sociology, University of California, San Diego, 21 November.
- 1982. Language Policies and Practices in Independent Black Africa: Trends and Prospects. In A. Olabimtan (ed.), *African Universities and Development and Wider Use of African Languages*. Lagos: UNESCO, pp.9-25. (Also in *Report of the Seminar on the Teaching of African Languages in African Universities*. Accra: Association of African Universities, 1981, pp.29-62.)
- 1982. Achieving nationhood through language: The challenge of Namibia. *Third World Quarterly* 4(2):282-90.
- 1984. *The African Language as a Tool of Development*. Kampala: OAU BIL Paper No. 1.
- 1990. *The Language Factor in Zambia*. Lusaka: Kenneth Kaunda Foundation.
- 1992a. Independence and nation-building: Towards a comprehensive language policy for Namibia. *Logos* 12(1/2):33-47.
- 1992b. Language, Law and Human Rights vis-à-vis the Place and Role of Non-official Languages in a Democracy in Multilingual Settings. Paper presented at the Third Conference of the International Academy of Languages Law, University of Pretoria.
- 1993. Variety is the Spice of Life: The Place of Multilingualism in the Concept of One Zambia, One Nation. Paper presented to the Institute of Human Relations, University of Zambia.
- OAU (Bureau of Languages). 1980. *Reconsideration of African Linguistic Policies*. Kampala: OAU BIL Publication 3.
- 1985. *Linguistic Liberation and Unity of Africa*. Kampala: OAU BIL Publication 6.
- 1986. *The Language Plan of Action for Africa*. Addis Ababa: OAU Secretariat. Mimeo. [See Appendix 1]
- Polomé, E.C. and Hill, C.P. (eds). 1986. *Language in Tanzania*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Rubin, J. and Jernudd, B.H. 1975. *Can Language Be Planned? Sociolinguistic Theory and Practice for Developing Nations*. Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii.
- UNESCO. 1953. *The Use of Vernacular Languages in Education*. Report of the UNESCO Meeting of Specialists (1951). Monographs on Fundamental Education VIII. Paris: UNESCO.

- UNIN (United Nations Institute for Namibia). 1981. *Toward a Language Policy for Namibia*. Namibia Studies Series No. 4. Lusaka: UNIN.
- Wilkes, A. 1978. Bantu language studies. In L.W. Lanham and K.P. Prinsloo (eds), *Language and Communication Studies in South Africa*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.

MUBANGA E. KASHOKI  
*Institute for African Studies*  
*University of Zambia*

## Language Plan of Action for Africa

---

### Organization of African Unity

---

Secretariat  
 P.O. Box 3243  
 Addis Ababa

Council of Ministers  
 Forty-Fourth Ordinary Session  
 21 – 25 July 1986 Original:  
 Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

CM 1352 (XLIV)

English

#### *PREAMBLE*

We, Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity meeting in our 22nd Ordinary Session, in Addis Ababa, from 28 to 30 July 1986

#### GUIDED

- By the Organization of African Unity Charter,
- By the Pan-African Cultural Manifesto of Algiers (1969),
- By the Inter-Governmental Conference on Cultural Policies in Africa organized by UNESCO in Accra 1975 in cooperation with the Organization of African Unity,
- By the Cultural Charter for Africa, with Special reference to Part I Article 1 (a) and (b), Article 2 (a), Part III Article 6 1(a), 2(b) and Part V Articles 17-19,
- By the OAU Lagos Plan of Action (1980) for the Economic Development of Africa,
- By the Final Report (27th April, 1982) of UNESCO's Meeting of Experts

on the 'Definition of a Strategy for Promotion of African Languages':

#### CONVINCED

That language is at the heart of a people's culture and further convinced that, in accordance with the provisions of the Cultural Charter for Africa, the cultural advancement of the African peoples and the acceleration of their economic and social development will not be possible without harnessing in a practical manner indigenous African languages in that advancement and development;

#### CONVINCED

That, as in other spheres of national life, Africa needs to assert her independence and identity in the field of language;

#### AWARE

That, up to the present, the majority of Member States have not taken the necessary practical steps to accord their indigenous languages their rightful official role as provided for by the Cultural Charter for Africa, the Lagos Plan of Action and other related resolutions of the Organization of African Unity;

#### RECOGNIZING

That each sovereign state has the right to devise a language policy that reflects the agricultural and socio-economic realities of its country which is consonant or in close harmony with the needs and aspirations of its people;

#### CONVINCED

That the adoption and practical promotion of African languages as the official languages of the state are certain to have great advantages over the use of non-indigenous languages in democratizing the process of formal education and involvement of the African populations in the political, cultural and economic affairs of their country;

#### AWARE

That illiteracy is an obstacle to the economic, cultural and social development of African countries and that mass literacy campaigns cannot succeed without the use of indigenous African languages;

#### AWARE

That, in recognition of the ever-growing interdependence and interaction at all levels of human endeavor and brotherhood of man, communication with the outside world beyond the boundaries of the African continent is inevitable and ought to be provided for or reflected in the language policies to be devised and implemented by each sovereign state;

#### CONVINCED

That the promotion of African languages, especially those which transcend national frontiers, is a vital factor in the cause of African Unity;

#### RECOGNIZING

That, within Africa itself, the existence side by side in almost all African countries of several languages is a major fact of life and the knowledge that, because of this, multilingualism (i.e. the mastery and use of several languages by individuals for purposes of daily communication) is an equally dominant social feature of life in these countries, should induce Member States to make the promotion of multilingualism in their countries a prime consideration in the evolution of an appropriate language policy;

#### AGREE

To adopt the Language Plan of Action for Africa as set out below:

### *PART I*

#### *AIMS, OBJECTIVES AND PRINCIPLES*

The aims and objective of this Plan of Action are as follows:

- (a) To encourage each and every Member State to have a clearly defined language policy;
- (b) To ensure that all languages within the boundaries of Member States are recognized and accepted as a source of mutual enrichment;
- (c) To liberate the African peoples from undue reliance on the utilisation of non-indigenous languages as the dominant, official languages of the state in favour of the gradual take-over of appropriate and carefully selected indigenous African languages in this domain;

- (d) To ensure that African languages, by appropriate legal provision and practical promotion, assume their rightful role as the means of official communication in the public affairs of each Member State in replacement of European languages which have hitherto played this role;
- (e) To encourage the increased use of African languages as vehicles of instruction at all educational levels;
- (f) To ensure that all the sectors of the political and socio-economic system of each Member State are mobilized in such a manner that they play their due part in ensuring that the African language(s) prescribed as official language(s) assume their intended role in the shortest time possible;
- (g) To foster and promote national, regional and continental linguistic unity in Africa in the context of the multilingualism prevailing in most African countries;

## *PART II*

### *PRIORITIES*

- (a) *Policy formulation*  
Whether at the national, regional or continental levels, the selection and prescription without undue delay of certain viable national, regional or continental indigenous African languages as the official languages to be used for the formal official functions of the State, regional grouping or the OAU.
- (b) *Implementation and Promotion*  
The subsequent implementation of the language policy adopted and the incorporation of the official African languages in the political, educational, social, cultural and economic lives of the people.
- (c) *Modernization*  
The modernization as necessary and by any means required of the indigenous African languages selected and prescribed as official languages.
- (d) *Mobilization of Resources*  
The mobilization of financial, human and other resources and all relevant public and private institutions in the practical promotion of the chosen official languages.

## *PART III*

### *PROGRAMME OF ACTION (METHODS AND MEANS)*

In order to fulfil the objectives set out in Part I, the African States solemnly subscribe to the following programme of action:

- (a) At continental level and as a concrete expression and demonstration of the OAU's seriousness of purpose, the adoption without undue delay by the Organization of African Unity and the regional associations, Organizations or institutions affiliated to it of viable indigenous African languages as working languages;
- (b) To encourage regional associations, organizations or institutions already accorded or those applying for observer status to the OAU to adopt indigenous African languages as their working languages;
- (c) At regional level, the adoption by regional groupings of viable, regional indigenous African languages as official or working languages;
- (d) At national level, the imperative need for each OAU Member State to consider it necessary and primary that it formulates with the minimum of delay a language policy that places an indigenous African language or languages spoken and in active use by its peoples at the centre of its socio-economic development;
- (e) In order to fulfil the objective in (d), the need by each Member State to establish a national language council, where none exists, or to strengthen it, where one already exists, as a national sounding board for the formulation of an appropriate national language policy;
- (f) The absolute necessity that each Member State, as a matter of supreme practical importance, follows up the formulation of an appropriate national language policy with an adequate and sustained allocation of the necessary financial and material resources to ensure that the language or languages prescribed as official language(s) achieve(s) a level of modernization that meets the needs of administering a modern state;
- (g) In recognition of the negative estimation in which indigenous African languages are generally held in Africa by the general public, the necessity for each Member State, as part of its national programme of promoting those African languages duly prescribed as official languages, to mount a sustained campaign of educating or re-educating the national population about the inherent or potential

practical utility of African languages to counter the present widespread negative attitudes in Africa towards these languages;

- (h) In recognition that the formal national education system plays a key role in the practical use of any language, the need for each Member State to ensure that all the sectors (i.e. primary, secondary and tertiary) of the national education system are pressed as appropriate in the service of the practical promotion of the indigenous language(s) selected and prescribed as (an) official language(s);
- (i) Aware that African universities, research institutes and other institutions concerned with the study and promotion of African languages have a unique role to play in strengthening the role these languages play in the daily lives of the African peoples, the need to these institutions to strike a proper balance in future between the scientific study of the African languages and their actual use and practical promotion;
- (j) In connection with (i) above, the need for each Member State to render its national universities and other research and related institutions a primary instrument for the practical promotion of African languages as regards such critical promotional activities as the compilation of technical and general dictionaries, the writing of textbooks on useful subjects, the training of teachers of language, translators, interpreters, broadcasters and journalists, the production of useful books and other types of literature relevant to the lives of the contemporary African and the up-dating of vocabulary in African languages;
- (k) In recognition of the fact that to impart formal or other types of knowledge the vehicle of instruction or communication should be a language familiar to the learner, the absolute necessity that each Member State should, as an essential part of its educational policy, prescribe as media or vehicles of instruction those indigenous African languages that best and most effectively facilitate the learning process;
- (l) In recognition of the singularly strategic role widespread literacy among the national population plays in the socio-economic development of a country, and recognizing further that literacy in languages familiar to the national population are employed, the advisability of using indigenous African languages as media of instruction in national literacy campaigns mounted by Member States.