

Proto-Bantu: Before and after

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The historical connection between Bantu languages and other Bantoid languages is a hotly debated issue. This debate has important implications for proto-bantu homeland. In this study we present a detailed analysis of the classification of Bantu languages of the North West area and neighboring non-Bantu bantoid languages. This research is based on a phylogenetic study of 100 words (from basic vocabulary) from 207 languages (with sample languages taken from Ekoid, Tivoid, Bebid, Grassfields, Jarawan and Bantu languages from A, B, C, D, H and L zones).

Our results indicate that traditional classification of Bantu languages should be revised, in particular for a split found in A40-60 and B20 groups. We identified two groups: North-West (all zone A languages and B 10-20 and 30 languages) and Central (B40,50,60,70,80, all C languages, D10,20,30,40 H10,30,40 L10) which clearly bring us to reconsider the contact area between A and B languages.

We finally propose migration trajectories for periods corresponding to stages preceding and following the Proto-Bantu stage.