

**LENJE HANDBOOK: A
SHORT INTRODUCTION TO
THE LENJE DIALECT SPOKEN
IN NORTH-WEST RHODESIA**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649026098

Lenje Handbook: A Short Introduction to the Lenje Dialect Spoken in North-west Rhodesia by
A. C. Madan

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

A. C. MADAN

**LENJE HANDBOOK: A
SHORT INTRODUCTION TO
THE LENJE DIALECT SPOKEN
IN NORTH-WEST RHODESIA**

LENJE HANDBOOK

A SHORT INTRODUCTION
TO
THE LENJE DIALECT
SPOKEN IN
NORTH-WEST RHODESIA

BY
A. C. MADAN, M.A.
STUDENT OF CHRIST CHURCH, OXFORD

OXFORD
AT THE CLARENDON PRESS
1908

PREFACE

THE object of this book is to give a short account of the Bantu dialect known as Lenje, and to supply the first steps to a fuller knowledge of it.

Lenje is the name generally applied to the district of North-East Rhodesia traversed by the railway between the Kafuwe (Kafuu) river and Broken Hill, with its inhabitants (Walenje) and language (chilenje). To the North lie the Lamba, to the East the Lala (Maswaka), Soli, and Luano tribes. But it is with their neighbours on the West (Ila or Shukulumbwe) and South (Tonga), that the Lenje people are most allied in language, and with such aids as the *Handbook of the Ila Language* (by E. W. Smith: Frowde, 1907), and the widely known *Comparative Grammar of South African Bantu Languages* (by J. Torrend, S.J., 1891), based as it is on Tonga, an elementary work on Lenje might perhaps seem superfluous, the more so as it is much indebted to both those books. The differences, however, of Lenje are considerable, both in Grammar and Vocabulary, and Tonga is a term which in its wider sense may be applied to a large group of dialects on the north bank of the Zambezi from Feira to Sesheke above the Victoria Falls, scarcely one of which has at present been made the subject of separate study. Thus a simple account of one of them, lying on the actual track of the railway, may be useful to missionaries, settlers, officials, and others, and serve the further purpose of an introduction to others of the group.

The people of the Lenje district seem to have little tribal unity, and to be known among themselves by the names of

clan-divisions, preserving no doubt some minor varieties of speech. And the Lenje dialect called Chine Mukuni (i.e. the language of the chief Mukuni and his people) may be taken as representative, and is the subject treated in this book throughout, though without excluding some words and features found elsewhere in the Tonga group. Incidentally it furnishes an example of typical Bantu grammar, which, once known, may serve as a key to other dialects, and (like the Ila Handbook) assist a new-comer to dispense with at least the worst features of the jargon known as Kitchen Kaffir.

Full and grateful acknowledgement is due to the Rev. Father Torrend, S.J., not only for the advantage of such common property of all students of Bantu as his *Comparative Grammar* already mentioned, but also for personal advice and encouragement, access to his stores of phonographic records and his transcriptions of them, and permission to make use of his labours. But it must be clearly understood that he is in no way responsible for the form of the present work, especially as regards spelling, nomenclature, and arrangement, or for the treatment of his materials in the vocabulary or elsewhere. The compiler's obligations to Mr. Smith's Handbook of Ila must also be here expressed, its detailed study of the verb and general completeness making it specially valuable for purposes of comparison.

The Tonga of the Middle Zambezi, referred to above, must be distinguished from the Tonga on the west side of Lake Nyasa, and also from the Tonga in the neighbourhood of Delagoa Bay.

A. C. MADAN.

MOMBOSHI, N.-W. RHODESIA,
Jan., 1908.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	7
PART I. GRAMMAR	
CHAPTER I	
LENJE AS WRITTEN	8
CHAPTER II	
NOUNS	10
Notes on the Classes	12
Formation of Nouns	16
CHAPTER III	
ADJECTIVES AND NUMERALS	17
Numerals	17
Table of Concorde	19
CHAPTER IV	
PRONOUNS	21
1. Personal	21
2. Possessive (Adjectives)	22
3. Demonstrative (Adjectives)	23
4. Interrogative (Adverbs and Adjectives)	24
5. Relative	24
6. Reflexive	25
Tables of Concorde (Demonstrative Pronouns and Adjectives)	25-9

CHAPTER V

	PAGE
VERBS	30
1. Introduction	30
2. Person-prefixes	31
Table of Person-prefixes	32
3. Tenses	33
Table of Tenses	35
Notes on the Tenses	36
4. Negative Conjugation	39
5. Imperative Mood	40
6. Subjunctive Mood	41
7. Infinitive Mood	43
8. Voices	44
9. Verb-stems	45
10. Roots	49
11. To be, To have	49

CHAPTER VI

ADVERBS, PREPOSITIONS, CONJUNCTIONS, &C.	51
--	----

CHAPTER VII

APPENDIX	56
I. Extracts from Native Stories, with Translations and Notes	56
II. Short Sentences	68

VOCABULARIES

I. Lenje-English	71
II. English-Lenje	124

INTRODUCTION

1. The Lenje dialect has all the usual characteristics of other dialects of the Bantu family of speech, and its grammar can be treated under the divisions and terms commonly used in grammars ancient and modern, i. e. Nouns, Adjectives, Pronouns, Verbs, Adverbs, Conjunctions, Prepositions, and Interjections; also Numbers, Persons, Moods, Tenses, &c.

2. A leading characteristic is the system of Concord, i. e. the system by which adjectives and verbs are brought into grammatical agreement with nouns. All nouns in Bantu fall into definite groups or classes, distinguished by prefixes about sixteen in number, and either the same or a corresponding prefix is used at the beginning of all adjectives and verbs agreeing with any given noun. This is a universal rule. Hence all correct speaking of Bantu must begin with a knowledge of the prefixes of nouns.

3. A simple example, anticipating what will be explained hereafter, is as follows :—

Chintu, meaning 'thing' in Lenje and other dialects, consists of the prefix *chi-*, and the root syllable *-ntu*; and the prefix *chi-* of the noun *chintu* is repeated with all adjectives and verbs qualifying the noun. Thus—

chi-ntu (thing) *chi-lya* (that), that thing.

chi-ntu chi-lya chi-li (is) *chi-nene* (big), that thing is big.

chi-ntu ch-angu (my) *cha-wota*, my thing is good.

Similarly with the plural prefix *shi-* :—

shi-ntu shi-lya, those things, &c.

The same root *-ntu* also takes the prefix *mu-*, and then means 'person', and the concord-prefixes vary accordingly :—

mu-ntu u-lya u-li mu-nene, that person is big.

mu-ntu w-ake (his) *w-aya* (is gone).

PART I. GRAMMAR

CHAPTER I

LENJE AS WRITTEN

4. Lenje words are here written, as far as possible, phonetically, i. e. as pronounced, by using the English alphabet in accordance with a few necessary rules ; and each group of sounds pronounced together as parts of a whole, and forming a word, is written separately, as a word. This system, without pretending to scientific precision, seems the plainest guide for Englishmen in getting to speak, write, and understand a Bantu dialect. The phonograph is the simple and sufficient resource for the exact study of phonology, and removes the necessity for elaborate description of sounds in an elementary handbook. One common sound in Lenje seems to require a distinct sign, viz. *w* (see below, §§ 9-10).

5. 1. VOWELS, *a, e, i, o, u.*

These are used as in Southern Europe.

a for the sound of *a* in *father*.

e " *a* in *fate*.

i " *ee* in *feet*.

o " *ou* in *ought*.

u " *oo* in *root*.

When an accent does not fall on them, they are also pronounced as in *fat, fet, pil, not, full*.

6. When two vowels are written together, they are pronounced separately, not as forming a single long sound or diphthong.

7. The following rule as to contraction of vowels is general and important :—

a with *a* forms a long *a* (*kambo*, for *ka-ambo*).

a with *e* or *i* forms *e* (*wesa*, for *wa-isa*).