

## Lesson C. SPECIAL VOCABULARIES

In this lesson we compile a number of special thematic vocabularies. Although most of the words are introduced somewhere in the Cox Lessons, it is difficult to find them when searching for specific words. Even in a dictionary it may be time consuming. Sometimes the entries English - Kinyarwanda appear to the left and to the right we give related words with identical roots (if available) or other linguistic explanations. The entries are mostly not ordered alphabetically (except for the animals in Sect. 6), but thematically.

### 1: Orientation (in space)

left - ibumosô	
right - iburyô	uburyô - opportunity, method
beside, at the side - iruhaânde	
outside - haanzê	
inside - imbere	mbere - first
in the middle, midst of - hagâti	
on this side of (valley, ...) - haâkuno	
on the other side of (river, ...) - haâkurya	
forward, in front of - imbere	mbere - first, before
behind, at the back - inyuma	nyuma - after
up, above, on top - (he)ejuru	ijuru - sky
below, on the floor - muunsî, haasî	isî - earth
lower down, below - (he)epfô	
higher up, up there - haruguru	
south - amajyêepfô	(`-jy': kujyâ - to go) (lit: 'towards go down')
north - amajyaruguru	(`mu ma-' → `ama-': into) (lit: 'tow. go up')
west - iburêengerazûuba	kurêengera - to disappear, set; izûuba - sun
east - iburasirâzûuba	kurâsira - to rise; izûuba - sun

### 2: Sun, Moon, Sky, Planets, Times of the Day

sun - izûuba (ama-)	uruzûuba - drought
moon, month - ukwêezi (amêezi)	kwêeza - to have a good harvest
moonlight - umwêezi	
earth, world - isî (ama-)	haasî - on the ground; agasî - desert
equator - ekwatêeri	
planet, sphere - umubûumbe (ama-)	kubûumbabuumba - to make (or be) round
<i>names of planets: Merikire, Venusi, Isî, Marisi, Yupiteri, Saturune, Iranusi, Neputine</i>	(kubôna - to see, -mwê - yours)
comet, shooting star - kibonumwê	
star - inyênnyeerî (or: inyenyeerî)	
sky - ijuru (ama-)	(he)ejuru - above, (higher) up
day - umuûnsi (imiûnsi)	uyu muûnsi - today
to become day, dawn - gucyâ (-kêeye)	
dawn, sunrise - umusekê (imi-)	
morning - igitôondo (ibi-)	gutôonda - to queue, line up
midday, daytime - amanywâ	
afternoon, evening - umugôrooba (imi-)	kugôrooba - to become evening
late afternoon - igicamuûnsi (ibi-)	(gucâ - to pass by; umuûnsi - day)
to become evening - kwîira (-je)	evening - umugôrooba (imi-)
in the evening - nîmugôrooba	
to spend the day - kwîirirwa (-we)	(m)uriirirwe! - good afternoon!
night - ijoro (ama-)	nîjoro - at night
to spend the night - kurâara (-ye)	umurâaririzi (aba-) - night watchman
midnight - igicûku	[ ! igicûucu (ibi-) - shadow; idiot ! ]

### 3: Questions

a) With a question word at the beginning of a sentence:

<i>introducing a question:</i> (mb)esê ... ?	mbesê uzaabikora? - will you do it? (like French: 'est-ce-que' ... ?)
which ... ? - (pp)-hê ... ? (adj.)	abaâhê muuntu? - which people?
why ...? - kô ... ?	kô utaajê? - why have you (sg.) not come?
why ...? - (ni) kukî ...?	(ni) kukî unebwâ? - why are you lazy?
what ...? - ni iikî ...?	ni iikî twiigâ? - what do we learn?
who(m) ...? - nii ndê ...?	nii ndê mwaatumyê? - whom have you sent?

b) With a question word at the end of a sentence:

<i>closing a question:</i> - ... sê?	uzaabikora sê? - will you do it?
where ...? - ... hê, ... hêhê?	urajya hê? - where are you going?
which ...? - ... kî?	ni sâahâ kî? - which (what) time is it?
what ...? - ... ikî?	murakôra ikî? - what are you (pl.) doing?
who ...? - ... ndê? (sing.), ... baa ndê? (pl.)	urashaaka ndê? - whom are you looking for?
when ...? - ... ryâarî?	barageenda ryâarî? - when will they leave?

c) The following question words act like *adjectives* and must be preceded by a personal prefix that accords with the foregoing noun or verb:

how many (often) ...? - ... (pp)-ngâahê?	abakôzi baangâahê? - how many workers?
how ...? - ... (pp)-tê?	intaama ziingâahê? - how many sheep?
	ntageenza ntê? - how will (can) I proceed?
	wakoze utê? - how have you done?
	biragura bite? - how much does it cost?

d) Very often, a question is identical with an affirmative sentence and only recognized by a question mark at the end and, acoustically, by a rising of the final syllable (plus its anticipation). This is exactly as in many European languages. E.g., affirmative: 'you are going', question: 'you are going?' Note that in Kinyarwanda, there is usually no change of word order in questions, such as 'are you going?'

In the following we list a series of examples, whereby the same question may appear in different forms. (Note the varying high tones!)

muzaajya i Kigali ejô?	do you go to Kigali tomorrow?
(mb)esê muzaajya i Kigali ejô?	do you go to Kigali tomorrow?
muzaajya i Kigali ejô sê?	do you go to Kigali tomorrow?
urii ndê?	who are you (sing.)?
muri baa ndê?	who are you (plur.)?
ni iinkâ yaâ nde?	to whom does this cow belong?
ni iinkâ zaâ nde?	to whom do these cows belong?
umugorê waa nyuma nîi ndê?	who is the last woman?
uzaabikora sê? / mbesê uzaabikorâ?	will you do it?
ntûuzâ?	do you not come?
muzaageenda ejô sê?	will you leave tomorrow?
bite sê?	so what? what is there?
murageenda mûte?	how will you leave (today)?
ati ikî?	what does he say?
umukoôbwa waawa mutô ari hê?	where is your little girl?
ni uumwâana waâ nde?	whose is the child?
bâriŷa baantu nî baa ndê?	who are those people over there?

#### 4: Time and times

a) **'Time'** can be named by the following three words, with different emphases:

igihe (ibi-) - 1. time, period, era; 2. tense (grammar); 3. weather (like French: 'temps')

inshûro (in-) - time, occasion (like Greek: 'kairos')

umwaanya (imy-) - 1. space, place, position; 2. time, moment, instant (Greek: 'hora')

The first one, igihe, is the most common and corresponds to the Greek 'chronos'.

b) **Time intervals:**

second - isôgoondâ (ama-)

also: isêkuundâ, isêgoondâ

minute - umunotâ (imi-)

hour, watch, clock - isâahâ

also: isaâ, saâ

day - umuûnsi (imiûnsi)

uyu muûnsi - today

week (also: Sunday) - icyûumwêeru (iby-)

root '-êer' = 'white'

month (also: moon) - ukwêezi (am-)

year (also: harvest) - umwâaka (imy-)

century (also: 100 of sth.) - ikinyeejana (ibi-)

eternity - itêekâ (i-)

c) **Times of the day:** In Rwanda, the day starts with the sunrise. What we call 06h00 is their 'zero-th hour', 07h00 is the 1st hour, etc. The same counting also applies to the night hours (from 18h00 - 06h00); to stress the night hours one can (but need not, if the context is clear) add 'nijoro' = 'at night'. See the table in Lesson 62, Par. 127.

Examples and special expressions:

saa (isâa) tatû - three o'clock (= 09h00 or 21h00)

isâahâ y'ijoro - one o'clock at night (= 19h00)

ni saa mooyâ n'igicê - it is 07h30 (or 19h30)

ni saa yinê nijoro - it is the 4th hour at night (= 22h00)

Special times of the day are:

dawn, sunrise - umusekê (imi-)

at noon (adv.) - saa sitâ

(lit: 'at the sixth hour' = 12h00)

midday, daytime - amanywâ

sunset (also: dusk) - akabwibwi

at midnight - nijoro saa sitâ

(lit: 'at night sixth hour' = 24h00)

midnight - igicûku

d) **Week days and months** (see also Lesson 62, Par. 126 and 125):

The **week** days are counted from first 'uwaa mbere' = Monday till sixth 'uwa gâtaandâtu' = Saturday, meaning 'n-th' (day of the week); the 'u-' accords with 'umuûnsi' = 'day'.

**Sunday** is special: 'icyûumwêeru' with root '-êer' = 'white' (cf. 'kwêera' = 'to be white, pure, holy'). **Sabbat**: 'isâabatô'. The **months** are also counted, with a word '**ukwaa**' (from: 'ukwêezi kwaa' = 'month of'): 'ukwaa mbere' = January, 'ukwaa cûmi' = October, etc. There are, however, also old Kinyarwanda names for the months, which are given in Par. 125 of Lesson 62. For special dates, one adds '**itârikî**' = '**date**'. Examples:

itârikî yaa mbere Nyakâanga - on the 1st of July

mu kwaa mbere - in January

ku cyuumwêeru itârikî ya miroongo itatu y'uûku kwêezi - on Sunday 30th of this month  
nzaajya i Buraayi murî Gicûraasi (or: mu kwaa gâtaanu) - I will go to Europe in May

### e) **Seasons:**

1. (long) rain time (February - May) - itûumbâ
1. (long) dry season (June - September - impeêshyi
2. (short) rain time (September - November) - umuhiindo
2. (short) dry season (December - January) - umugâryi

### f) **Special words about time:**

today - uyu muûnsi, nôone  
 tonight - iri joro  
 the next day - bukêeye (bukêeye bw'âaho)  
 early, on time - kare  
 late, later on - bitiinze, hatiinze  
 it's late - burîije  
 soon, later that day - hatô, hatôoyâ  
 later, in far future - kure  
 now - ubu  
 just now - ubu nyîne, or: nôonaha  
 this instant, right now - ubu ngûubû  
 now, and so; today - nôone  
 right now, immediately - nôonaha  
 at this moment - aka kaânya  
 and then, afterward, thereafter - haanyuma  
 tomorrow, **or:** yesterday - ejô  
 day before yesterday, **or:** after tomorrow - ejô(-)buûndi  
 recently, **or:** soon (or: fast) - vubâ  
 early, **or:** late - (pp)-îîra (adj.)  
 long ago, **or:** in the far future - keêra (← ka-iîra)  
 tomorrow, **or:** yesterday evening - ejô nîmugôrooba  
 tomorrow, **or:** yesterday morning - ejô mugitôondo  
 last week - mu cyûumwêeru gishîze  
 next month - mu kwêezi gutaaha  
 last year - mu mwâaka ushîze  
 last time - ubushîze  
 next time - ubutâaha  
 usually - ubusâanzwe  
 always, all day - imiînsi yôose  
 always, ever, eternally - itêekâ  
 always, every time, invariably - buri gihe  
 never, not - ntabwô  
 once, at the same time - rimwê  
 once, recently, some day - haambere  
 often - kêenshi (← ka-iînshi)  
 at some other time - ubuûndi  
 soon, in a moment - hatô, hatôoyâ  
 before, first - mbere  
 after, then, at last - (haa)nyuma  
 while, whilst - icyôkorâ  
 when - igihe (adv.)  
 (at the moment) when - ubwô  
 sometimes, from time to time - rimwê na rimwê  
 to be late - gukêereerwa (-rerewe)  
 to become old - gusâaza (-shâaje)

umuûnsi - day  
 ijoro - night  
 gucyâ (-**kêeye**) - to become day

gutiinda (-**tiinze**) - to be late  
 kwîira (-**îije**) - to become late  
 (pp)-tô, -tôoyâ (adj.) - small

nyîne - just, in fact

akaânya (utw-) - brief moment

umugôrooba - evening  
 igitôondo - morning  
 gushîra (-**shîze**) - to be finished  
 gutaaha (-shye) - to be next

(lit: every day)

buri - each; igihe - time  
 ubwô - when, since, now that

(pp)-iînshi (adj.) - many, much

igihe (ibi-) - time, see a) above

**keêra** - long ago, in old times  
 umusâaza (aba-) - old man

## 5: Body parts (thematically ordered in two columns)

body - umubiri (imi-)	head - umutwê (imi-)
forehead - uruhaânga (impaânga)	brain - ubwoônko
skull, cranium - igihaânga (ibi-)	spine - ihwâ (amahwâ), urutirîgoongo (in-)
hair (on head) - umusatsi (imi-)	beard - ubwaânwa (iby-)
eye - ijîisho (amâaso)	pupil of eye - imboni (im-)
eyebrow - urugôhe (in-)	eye lashes - ingohe (pl.)
cheek - itâma (ama-)	nose, nostril - izûuru (ama-)
ear - ugutwî (ama-)	hairs (on body) - ubwoôya (pl.)
mouth, lip - umunwa (imi-)	interior of mouth - akanwa
tooth - iryîinyo (amêenyo)	jaw - urwâasayâ, umusaya (imi-)
tongue - ururîmi (indîmi)	throat - umuhogô (imi-)
chin - akâanaânwa (utu-)	neck - ijosi (ama-)
breast, chest - igituûza (ibi-)	breast (of woman) - ibêere (ama-)
rib - urubavu (im-)	back - umugôongo (imi-)
shoulder - urutûgu (in-)	armpit - ukwâaha (am-)
elbow - inkôkorâ (in-)	wrist - ubujana (ama-)
arm - ukubôko (ama-)	hand - ikigaanza (ibi-)
palm of hand - urushyî (ama-)	fist - igipfuûnsi (ibi-)
finger - urutoki (in-)	thumb - igikûmwe (ibi-)
index finger - mukubitarukoko, or: mareere	[-reere = long, lit: 'the long one']
middle finger - musuumbazôose	[gusuumba - to be more important, -ôse - all]
ringfinger - mukûru wa meme	[mukûru - older brother, wa meme - of little finger]
little finger - meme, or: agahêra (udu-)	[guhêra (-ze) - to be last]
fingernail, toenail - urwâara (inzâra)	toe - ino (amano)
pelvis (hip bones) - imisuûmbi (plur.)	hip joint - intaântu (in-)
leg - ukuguru (or: akaguru) (ama-)	knee - ivî (amavî)
thigh - itâko (ama-)	shin - rusêke, or: umurundi (imi-)
calf muscle - impfuundiko (im-)	foot - ikireenge (ibi-)
ankle - akagoombambari (utu-)	heel - agatsîintsiino (udu-)
bone - igûfwa (ama-)	skin - uruhû (impû)
stomach - ibifû (igi-)	intestines - urura (ama-, ubu-)
swollen belly, gut - umudigi (imi-)	distended or bloated belly - idoma (i-)
navel - umukôondo (imi-)	tendon, vein, nerve - umutsî (ama-)
heart - umutîma (imi-)	liver - umwîijimâ (imy-)
lung - igihahâ (ibi-)	kidney - impyîko
abdomen, fetus, pregnancy - inda (in-)	bottom, back - ikibûno (ibi-)
bladder - uruhago	urine - inkâri (in-)
vagina - igituba (ibi-)	penis - imborô (im-)
testicle - ibya (ama-)	sperm - intaanga
blood - amarâso (pl.)	tears - amarirâ (pl.)
sweat, transpiration - icyuûya (iby-)	spittle, saliva - amacâandwê (pl.)
spit, saliva, foam - inkoonda (in-)	pus, matter (of wound) - amashyirâ (pl.)

## 6: Animals (alphabetically ordered in two columns)

animal (domestic) - itûungo (ama-)	animal (young, newborn) - icyâana (iby-)
animal, male - ingabo	animal, female - ingorê
animal (beast) - igisiîmba (ibi-)	animal (wild, ferocious) - inyamâaswa (i-)
ant ('pincher') - urutôzi (in-)	ant (white), termite - umuswâ (i-)
ant (small black) - ubushîishi (i-)	antelope ('bushbuck') - impoongo (im-)
babbler (bird) - ikijwangajwanga (ibi-)	baboon ( <i>Papio anubis</i> ) - igitera (ibi-)
bat - agacûramâ (udu-)	beast, dangerous animal - igikôokô (ibi-)

beast - ikiruûra (ibi-)	bee - uruyûki (inz-)
bee-eater (bird) - umusamanzuki (imi-)	bird (small) - inyoni (in-)
bird (big, preying) - igisiiga (ibi-)	buffalo - imbogô (im-)
bug, insect - agakôokô (udu-)	bull - ikimasâ (ibi-), impfizi (im-)
bull - imfizi (im-)	butterfly - ikinyûgunyûgu (ibi-)
calf - inyâna (i-)	camel - ingamiya (in-)
cat (domestic) - injâangwê (in-)	cat (wild) - inturo (in-)
cat - ihuûku (i-)	cat ( <i>Profelis aurata</i> ) - imbâka (im-)
chicken, fowl - inkokô (in-)	chimpanzee - impuundu (im-)
cockroach - inyeênzi (in-)	cock - isaâke (i-, ama-)
cow - inkâ (in-)	crane ('crowned') (bird) - umusambi (imi-)
cricket, locust - uruzige (in-)	crocodile - ingoona (in-)
crow ('African pied') - igikôona (ibi-)	dog - imbwâ (im-)
dog (for hunting) - intoozo (in-)	dog (male) - impwerûme
dog (female), bitch - imbwakazi (im-)	donkey, mule - indôgobê (in-)
dove - inumâ (i-)	duck (wild) - imbaata (im-)
eagle ('long-crested') - samusure	eagle ('Royal') - kagoma
egret ('cattle') (bird) - inyange (i-)	elephant - inzovu (in-)
fish - ifi (i-, ama-)	flea - imbâragasa (im-)
fly - isaazi (i-)	flycatcher (bird) - umuryasaazi (imi-)
frog - igikeri (ibi-)	gazelle - ishâ (ama-)
gecko - icyuûgu (iby-)	giraffe - twiga ( <i>Swahili</i> )
goat (female) - ihenê (i-)	goat (male) - isekûrume (i-)
goose (wild) - igishuhe (ibi-)	gorilla - ingagi (in-)
grasshopper - uruyige (inz-)	Guinea-fowl - inkâanga (in-)
hen - inkokôkazi (in-)	heron ('black-head') - uruyôngoyôngo
hippopotamus - imvubû (im-)	horse - ifaraasi (ama-)
hyena - impyisi (im-)	ibis ('Hadada') - nyrâbarazâana
impala (antelope) - impara (im-)	insect, bug - agasiimba (igi-, udu-)
insect, bug - agakôokô (udu-)	jackal - umuhari (imi-)
kingfisher (bird) - nyiramurôbi	kite ('Black', <i>Milvus migrans</i> ) - sakabaka
leopard - ingwe (in-)	lion - intâre (in-)
lizard - umuserêbanya (imi-)	locust, grasshopper - uruyige (inz-)
louse - indâ (in-)	mole - isihâ (i-)
monkey ('blue') - inyeênzi (in-)	monkey ('golden') - inkina (in-)
monkey ('vervet', grey) - inkeende (in-)	mosquito - umubû (imi-)
mouse, rat - imbeba (im-)	owl - igihûunyirâ (ibi-)
panther - igisâmagwe (ibi-)	parrot - gasuku
pheasant ('Coulal') - ikibiribiri (ibi-)	partridge - inkwaâre (in-)
pig - ingurube (in-)	pigeon - inumâ (i-)
porcupine - ikinyogôte (ibi-)	primate - ingugê (in-)
python - uruzirâmire (in-)	rabbit - urukwâavu (in-)
rat, mouse - imbeba (im-)	raven - ikiîyoni (ib-), igikôona (ibi-)
rhino(-ceros) - inkura (in-)	robin-chat (bird) - inyoombia (in-)
rooster - isaâke (i-)	scorpion - indyanishamurizo (in-)
sheep - intaama (in-)	snake, worm - inzôka (in-)
sparrow - intaâshya (in-)	stork - karori
sunbird - umûununi (imi-)	swallow - inyamâanza (i-)
termite - umuswâ (i-)	tiger - ingwe (in-)
topi (antelope) - inyemera (i-)	tortoise, turtle - akanyamasyo (utu-)
turtle (pigeon) - inyoômbya (i-)	vulture - inkoôngoro (in-)
warthog - isatura (ama-)	weaver (bird) - isandi (ama-)
wolfe - ikiruûra (ibi-)	woodpecker (bird) - indoonzi (in-)
worm, maggot - urunyô (inyô)	zebra - imparage (im-)

## 7: Names

The material in this section is mainly taken from the following book:

**Alexandre Kimenyi:** *"Kinyarwanda and Kirundi Names. A Semi-linguistic Analysis of Bantu Onomastics"*, African Studies, Volume 7 (Edwin Mellen Press, 1989).

The simplest way to build names is to omit the augment (first vowel) of a noun and to spell the remaining part with a capital letter: 'umugabo' → Mugabo, etc.

### a) Typical prefixes of names:

Nya-: 'the one (male) who (has or is)'

Sa-: 'the one (male) who (has or is)', mostly used for persons (men)

Sêe-: 'father of' (also in an abstract sense)

Mukâa-: 'wife of', used for names of women; e.g. 'Mukâamusôni' = 'wife of Musoni'

Mweêne-: 'son of'

Nyirâ-: 'the one (female) who has', used both for persons (women) or places

Nyirî-: 'the one (male) who has', used both for persons (men) or places

Mu-, Ba-: names built from nouns with '(u)mu-', (a)ba-' (cl1), used for persons

Bu-: names built from nouns with 'ubu-' (cl8), mostly for places or countries

Ki-: names built from nouns with 'iki-' (cl4), used for places or languages

### b) Typical endings of names:

-mâana: from 'Imâana' - God, chance, destiny

-mungu: from the Swahili word for God

-(um)waâmi: from 'umwaâmi (abw-)' - king

-gabo: from 'umugabo' - man

-inkâ: 'cow, cattle' (this shows the important role of cattle in rural Rwanda)

-kabwâ: from 'akabwâ' - little dog

-byâago: 'who has bad luck', from 'ibyâago' - misfortune

### c) Some example names: (without tone notation)

Sabuhoro, Sebuho: 'Father of peace, the quiet one', cf. 'ubu-**hôro**' - peace

Mukakarori: 'wife of Charles'; from 'mukaâ (wa) Kâroôri'

Nyamukuru: 'the wise man', cf. 'umu-**kurû**' - old man, ancestor

Nyakabwa: 'he (she) who loves (or has) dogs'

Nyiramana: 'she who has chance' or 'who knows God'

Nyiragongo (Volcano in DRC): 'Mother of the mountain', 'umu-**gôngo**' - mountain ridge

Nyirabyago: 'the unlucky one (female)'

Nyirizinka: 'the possessor of (these) cows'; from 'îizi nkâ' - these cows

Harerimana: 'it's God who raises children'; from 'kurera (-ze)' - to raise a child, educate

Bizimana, Bizimungu: '(only) God knows it'; from '-**zi**' - to know, '**bi**-' - it (cl4 pl.)

Bigirumwami: '(only) the king does (or has) it'; from 'kugira (-ze)' - to do, act, have

Ntakirutinka: 'there is nothing superior to cows'; cf. 'kuruta (-se)' - to have more than

Kirundi: the language spoken in Burundi (from 'iki-ruûndi')

Twagirayezu: 'may we have Jesus' (from 'tu-a-gir-a Yeezû')

### d) See section 7 of Lesson A for names of **family relations**.

### e) Some loan-word names:

Bibiriya (pl. za Bibiriya) - Bible; Nohêli - Christmas, etc. (see Lesson 62);

Roôma - Rome; Megisikô - Mexico; Angerinâ - Angéline; Mariyâ - Mary; Yeezû - Jesus;

Yohaâni - John; Tereêza - Theresa; Peetero - Peter; Dawidî - David; Paawûlo - Paul.

## f) Some known names:

Nyagâtare: from 'igi-**târe** (ibi-)' - white(ness), white cow

Rwaanda: '(u)**ru-**' (cl6) often for augmentation, 'kw-**aanda** (-nze)' - to expand, spread

Mutara: is a dynastic name of kings; the origin of the root is unknown

Kigali: from '-**gari**' - large, wide

Butâre: '(red) rocky place': from 'ubutâre' - iron ore, 'urutâre (in-)' - rock, big stone

Habyâarimâana: 'only God can beget': from 'ku**byâara** (-ye)' - to give birth

Kagame: 'may he be strong' [? from 'kugâama (-mye)' - to live carefree ?]

## g) Calling people:

In order to call somebody, one forms a **vocative**, to which one can add a vocative pronoun '**weê**', e.g.: 'Peêtero weê' - 'hey, Peter!'; 'Paâwulo weê' - 'hey, Paul!' The vocative of a **name** is formed by insertion or shift of a high tone. Often one omits the last syllable if the name has two or more. If a name consists only of two syllables, a high tone may appear on the second one. Almost always there is a high tone on the last vowel. But the tone rules are rather involved. Here we just give a number of examples:

Peetero → Peêtero!

Juru → Jurû!

Kâago → Kaâ!

Kâamaanzi → Kaâma!

Karoôli → Karoô!

Gatêmanyi → Gatemâ!

Paawûlo → Paâwulo!

Maanzi → Maâ!

Kaatsî → Kaâ!

Yohaâni → Yohaâ!

Musonera → Musône!

Ruhigiisha → Ruhîgi!

Yohaâni → Yohaâni!

Kabwâ → Kabwâ!

Gakookô → Gakoô!

Filîpo → Filî!

Biizimâana → Biizimâ!

Marîgarîta → Marîgarî!

The word '**diî**' (from French: 'dis!' - 'say!') can be combined with a vocative:

'Peêtero diî!' - 'hey, tell me, Peter!' or: 'Peter, my dear!'

**Note:** One can also form vocatives of a regular **noun** by omitting its augment (first vowel), eventually also omitting its last syllable. The vocative noun '**weê**' becomes '**mweê**' if the plural is used. Examples:

umugabo → mugâbo! - man!

umugaanga → Mugâanga! - Doctor!

umwâana → mwaâna weê! - hey, child!

abahuungu → bahuû mweê! - hey, guys!

daatâ → daâta! - father!

umusâaza → musaâza!, musaâ! - old man!

abagabo → bagâ! - men!

umugorê → mugorê!, mugô! - woman!

baâna mweê! - hey, children!

abakoôbwa → bakoô mweê - hey, girls!

maamâ → maâma! - mother!

umwâarimu → Mwaari! - Master! (teacher)

## h) Some customs involving names:

(This was written by Kimenyi in 1989; some of it may not apply any more today.)

- In traditional Rwanda, a woman was absolutely forbidden to pronounce the names of her parents-in-law and their siblings. Even words which sounded similar to one of their names were taboo. She had to find (or even create) synonyms for the forbidden words. This technique of 'taboo speaking' was called 'gutsîinda' - 'to overcome, succeed'. E.g., if her father-in-law had a name ending with '-imana' (God) and she wanted to mention God, she had to use the synonym 'Kagomoke' (related to 'kamâana' - little god).

- Spouses never called each others' names; she had to use the polite plural form of 'you' (or 'they' in the 3rd person) when speaking to (or of) her husband. Christian would not speak of 'Anne' but of 'Nyirâ wa Sofîija', or: 'Maamâ (wa) Sofîija' - Mother of Sophia.

- Similarly, one had to avoid using an own parent's (especially mother's) name, unless necessary to avoid confusion. (We expect this usually from our children, too!)



## 8: List of common Bantu words (taken from Kimenyi, 2002)

In the following we list Kinyarwanda words that are found in the majority of Bantu languages (apart from slight differences in spelling and phonetics).

kubara - to count	kubôna - to see	kubora - to rot
kubyâara - to give birth	kubyîna - to dance	kubuûmba - to mould
guhâ - to give	guhîta - to pass	kugura - to buy
gukûra - to grow	kuroga - to poison	kurûma - to bite
kugeenda - to leave	gutûka - to insult	kunywâ - to drink
kuryâ - to eat	gupfâ - to die	kugwa - to fall
kunya - to defecate	gucyâ - to dawn	kurâara - to spend the night
kurôota - to dream	-ti - to say	kurira - to cry
kugona - to snore	kwîita - to name	gukûbita - to hit
kurima - to toil	kuriinda - to guard	kurîrimba - to sing
guseka - to smile, laugh	gushyika - to arrive	gutêma - to cut
gutûma - to send	kuzuza - to come	
umuuntu - human, person	umupfumû - diviner	umugaanga - medicine man
umugeni - bride	umwâana - child	umwaârî - good marriable girl
umuzuûngu - white person		
ibêere - breast (female)	umutwê - head	ugutwî - ear
ijîisho - eye	iryîinyo - tooth	umunwa - mouth
ururîmi - tongue	ruoongo - clitoris	umugôongo - back
ukubôko - arm	itâko - thigh	itâma - cheek
imborô - penis	ubwoônko - brain	
imbwâ - dog	inkokô - chicken	inkwaâre - partridge ('Rebhuhn')
umubû - mosquito	inzôka - snake	impyisî - hyena
imbogô - buffalo	imvubû - hippo	ingoona - crocodile
ingwe - leopard	ingurube - pig	inkâanga - Guinea-fowl
umuswâ - termite	inzûki - bees	
inzara - hunger	inyôota - thirst	inzira - path, way
isôni - shame, shyness	inyuûmba - large house	ibuye - stone
inyaanja - lake	imbêho - cold, wind	imvûra - rain
igitî - tree	inyama - meat	imbogâ - vegetables
indûurû - war cry	ijuru - sky	izûuba - sun
ukwêezi - moon, month	umwâaka - year, crop	amâazi - water
ubwaâto - canoe, boat	umuhîni - handle	ingabo - shield
inyuundo - hammer	ingoma - drum	icûmu - spear
isi - earth	umwôotsi - smoke	umuriro - fire
-iînshi - many, much, a lot	-êese/-ôose - all, every	-shyâ - new
-ree-re - long, tall, deep	-kurû - old, important	-bî - bad
-zima - alive, healthy		
-mwê - one	-biri - two	-tatu - three
-nê - four	-taanu - five	(umu)naâni - eight
icûmi - ten		

There is also a large number of monosyllabic words, or words that have lost their initial consonant, which have their cognates in many Bantu languages.

## 9: Language curiosities

a) **Repetition of syllables** (or themes) can be used to enforce the meaning of a word or to give it a special meaning (e.g., also emotionally). Examples:

kubûumba - to mold → kubûumbabumba - to mould repeatedly, to make round  
 kuruunda - to pile → kuruundaruunda - to keep piling  
 kwooshya - to mislead → kwooshyooshya - to tell sweet lies, make a fool of someone  
 kugeenda - to walk → kugeendageenda - to walk around, go here and there  
 kuvuga - to talk → kuvugavuga - to talk a lot  
 guhêenda - to cheat, be expensive → guhêendaheenda - to implore  
 gushaaka - to look for → gushaakashaaka - to look for everywhere, to do research  
 kumenya - to know → ikimênnyamenyi (ibi-) - exact knowledge, proof  
 (kwîihuuta - to hurry →) huuti - fast → hûutihûuti - very fast  
 buhôro - slowly → mporoompôro - very slowly  
 kuzira - to be forbidden → ikizîrazîri (ibi-) - taboo  
 insôre - bad young man (men) → insôresôre (insôreesôre) - very bad young man (men)  
 ikigôori - corn (maize; plant or fruit) → ikigôorigôori - stalk of corn without fruit  
 uruuntu - human smell → uruunturuuntu - (strong) human smell  
 izûuba - sun → ikizûubazûuba - sunshine

kujôojooba - to drip (rain)	guhôohootera - to harass
kubêbeera - to go around aimlessly	kurîrimba - to sing
tsiritsiri - very dark	yirîrîrîrî, yorôrôrôrô - the (very) same
'yuûbubububu' - sound of war	'pôopôopôopôo' - sound of astonishment
'yûuyûuyûuyûu' - sound of pain	'odôdôdôdô' - sound in sight of small objects

b) **Onomapoetic words** mimic particular sounds or movements (which may also be repeated for emphasis):

igihûunyirâ - owl ('mother of hûu')	isaazi - fly (makes sound 'zii')
ikibiribiri - pheasant, Coucal (bird)	kajûgujûgu - helicopter
gutitira - to tremble	kunyûunyuuza - to suck (observe the lips!)
'hô', 'hôhô' - sound of barking dog	'pyii' - sound from hot liquid (e.g. water vapor)
'papapapa' - sound of engine	'kakakaka' - sound of falling tree

c) **Language games** are used in Kinyarwanda in three forms:

i) *Parasitic syllable insertion*. A parasitic (i.e. foreign to the word) syllable is inserted after each syllable (repeating the vowel) of the original word. Examples:

u-mwâa-na → u-pu-mwa-pa-na-pa      i-gi-ta-bo → i-pi-gi-pi-ta-pa-bo-po

ii) *Exchange of the last two syllables*. Examples:

u-mwâa-na → u-nâa-mwa      i-gi-ta-bo → i-ki-bo-ta

Note the move of the tone 'âa' and the application of Dahl's law!

This game remotely reminds of what one in German calls 'Schüttelreim'. Example:

„Schreck erfasst' die **Klapperschlangen**, als ihre Klappern **schlapper klängen**."

iii) *Inversion*. One says the syllables backwards. Examples:

u-mwâa-na → na-mwâa-u      i-gi-ta-bo → bo-ta-gi-i

Note that hereby collisions of two vowels happen (at the end: -âa-u and -i-i), which otherwise do not exist in Kinyarwanda.