

1. Introduction

The Turkana language is at present spoken by approximately 200,000 Turkana in the northwest of Kenya. They are generally classed as Nilo-Hamites, but strictly speaking they belong to one of the numerous sub-groups of this linguistic family. Using both cultural and linguistic criteria, Huntingford (1953: 9 and 1956: 201) divided the Nilo-Hamites into the following three principle groups: 1. A northern Bari group which extends from the Sudan to the Sudanese-Ugandan border. 2. A central Teso group which is situated between Lake Kioga in Uganda and Lake Turkana in Kenya. Those belonging to this group are the Teso, Karamojong, Jiye, Dodos, Toposa and Turkana. 3. A southern Nandi group which extends from western Kenya to northern Tansania. Tucker and Bryan's (1956: 106ff.) as well as Murdock's (1959: 328ff.) classifications are similar to that of Greenberg (1955: 62ff. and 1963: 85ff. et passim). Sutton's recent linguistic classification of East Africa is directly modelled on that of Greenberg. He also differentiates between three main groups: the River-Lake Nilotes, Plains Nilotes and Highland Nilotes (1974: 83), and divides these into several sub-groups. Amongst the Plains Nilotes, the Turkana, as well as the Teso, Kuman, Jie, Dodos and Karamojong, belong to the sub-group of "Itunga peoples".

Even today it is noticeable that at least the Turkana, Karamojong, Dodos, Jie, Jiye, Toposa and Donyiro show linguistic as well as cultural mutuality. Due to the fact that these collective sections are descended from the Karamojong on account of their oral tradition, Gulliver (1952) named these groups the "Karamojong Cluster".

Today the Turkana practise fishing at Lake Turkana and horticulture in the southern region, the central, northern and western Turkana are still nomads and keep cattle, camels, sheep, goats and donkeys.

There exists an insufficient and obsolete contribution to the Turkana language written by Barton (1921), however, most of the words listed there are not understood by the Turkana, and the grammar differs considerably from the one given here. There are two short mimeographed Turkana grammars in circulation (Kelly 1969 and Anderson 1974) written mainly for the benefit of the missionaries working in Turkanaland of which I have made additional use in this study. A pure linguistic contribution can be found in the "Language and Dialect Atlas of Kenya" (1980,

vol. 2: 37-97). As this manuscript was completed before the end of 1980, the latter work has not been consulted. Shortly afterwards I was in the process of preparing another field research which was completed by the end of July, 1982.

The method used in carrying out this study was above all that of participant anthropological observation. The oral sources were spoken by numerous informants and simultaneously recorded. The recorded sources were initially transcribed and then interlinearly and finally freely translated with the help of my interpreters.

My interpreters were: Mr. Patrick Epayan, 26 years, who has completed a three year Bible College training and is a member of the Turkana Bible Translation Project, he lives at Katilu where he was born. Mr. Philip Lomekwi Lowoto, 31 years, (Lokitaung) is a trained primary school teacher. Mr. Emmanuel Eمويت, 35 years, (Lodwar) is a trained primary school teacher. Mr. Joseph Louse, 28 years, (Kakuma) is an adviser for adult school teachers.

4. The Days of the Week and the Months of the Year

This section has been placed after the numbers as, particularly in dealing with the days of the week, a knowledge of the numbers leads to a better understanding of the same.

4.1 The Days of the Week

Originally, the Turkana did not use the days of the week in the European sense. This classification is an artificial innovation created by the British administration. Previous to this time the month was divided into moons making possible the exact calculation of the days of the week. I shall not attempt to explain this very complex system which is still being used by the older generation.

<i>Akwar naekingaren</i>	the first day (Monday)
<i>Akwar nangarei</i>	the second day (Tuesday)
<i>Akwar nangauni</i>	the third day (Wednesday)
<i>Akwar nangomon</i>	the fourth day (Thursday)
<i>Akwar nangakan</i>	the fifth day (Friday)
<i>Akwar nangakan-ka-apei</i>	the sixth day (Saturday)
<i>Akwar nangakan-ka-arei</i>	the seventh day (Sunday)

4.2 The Months of the Year

The Turkana year begins with the month *lomaruk* (March) which is the beginning of *akiporo* (rainy season). The year ends with the month *lodunge* (February) which is the end of *akamu* (dry season). Due to the seasonal migration of the nomads, the "calendar" plays an important role. It appears to be pertinent to explain the meanings of the single termini.

Lomaruk March (derived from *emarukwa*, vegetation, i.e. when rain falls and vegetation, esp. grass, grows).

<i>Lochoto</i>	April	(derived from <i>echoto</i> , mud, i.e. when people scoop the old animal dung out of the animal enclosures which, after the short rain [<i>ekichere</i>], looks like mud).
<i>Titima</i>	May	(derived from <i>akititim</i> , luxuriant, i.e. when vegetation, esp. grass, is very green and high).
<i>Elel</i>	June	(derived from <i>ekielar</i> , flowering, i.e. when plants bloom and produce pods or grains).
<i>Losuban</i>	July	(derived from <i>ngasuban</i> , ceremonies, i.e. when people perform various ceremonies, such as marriage, initiation etc.).
<i>Lotyak</i>	August	(derived from <i>atyaka</i> , separation, i.e. when the nomads separate their animals and migrate with the livestock; the year is also divided into rainy and dry seasons).
<i>Lolongu</i>	September	(derived from <i>alongu</i> , "nothing to eat", i.e. when there is scarcely any grass for the animals and hardly any milk for the people).
<i>Lopo</i>	October	(derived from <i>akipore</i> , to cook, i.e. when people cook animals' blood for their food when milk is not available).
<i>Lorara</i>	November	(derived from <i>araraiyar</i> , leaf, i.e. when trees shed their leaves).
<i>Lomuk</i>	December	(derived from <i>akimuk</i> , to cover, i.e. when clouds cover the sky and short rains [<i>erupe</i>] fall).
<i>Lokwang</i>	January	(derived from <i>ekwang</i> , white, i.e. when the sky is very clear and the sun very hot).
<i>Lodunge</i>	February	(derived from <i>adudungiar</i> , elapse, i.e. when the dry season elapses).

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Culture and Language of the Turkana
NW Kenya

HEIDELBERG 1983

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