



## Ethnologue Languages of the World

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# Languages of Kenya

See [language map](#).

[See also [SIL publications](#) on the languages of Kenya.]

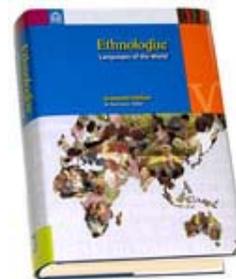
Republic of Kenya, Jamhuriya ya Kenya. 35,599,000.  
National or official languages: Kiswahili [sw], English.  
Literacy rate: 61% (1999 official government figure).  
Immigrant languages: American Sign Language, Hadrami  
Spoken Arabic (10,000), Hindi, Maay, Ta'izzi-Adeni  
Spoken Arabic (10,000). [Information](#) mainly from M.  
Amukobole, A. Majola, J. Mutiga, M. Muthwii, S. Nicolle,  
M. Njoroge, J. Ommani, and M. Wekundah 2007; J.  
Bendor-Samuel and Hartell 1989; BTL 1983-2007; Heine  
and Möhlig 1980; W. Whiteley 1969, 1974. Blind  
population: 70,000. Deaf institutions: 25. The number of  
individual languages listed for Kenya is 69. Of those, all  
are living languages.

Arabic, Omani [acx] 15,000 in Kenya (1995),  
Spoken increasing. Coastal. [Classification](#):  
Afro-Asiatic, Semitic, Central, South, Arabic  
[More information](#).

Aweer [bob] 8,000 in Kenya. Less than 20%  
monolingual. Coast Province, behind Lamu,  
and Tana River districts in forests; North-  
Eastern Province, Garissa District. 11  
villages or more. Also in Somalia. [Alternate  
names](#): Aweera, Bon, "Boni" , Ogoda,  
Sanye, Waata, Wata, Wasanye, Waboni,  
Wata-Bala. [Dialects](#): Similar to Garre [ggh]  
of Somalia, but not alike in culture or  
appearance. [Classification](#): Afro-Asiatic,  
Cushitic, East, Rendille-Boni  
[More information](#).

Borana [gax] 152,000 in Kenya (1994 I. Larsen),  
increasing. 96,000 Borana (1994), 43,000

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ABOUT SSL CERTIFICATES

	<p>Gabra (1994), 13,000 Sakuye (1994). Eastern Province, Marsabit, Isiolo and Moyale districts. <i>Alternate names:</i> Boran, Booran, Boraan, Southern Oromo, Oromo, "Galla". <i>Dialects:</i> Boran, Gabbra (Gabra, Gebra), Sakuye (Saguye). <i>Classification:</i> Afro-Asiatic, Cushitic, East, Oromo  <a href="#">More information.</a></p>
Burji	<p>[bji] 10,400 in Kenya (2006). Moyale, Marsabit Township area. <i>Alternate names:</i> Bambala. <i>Classification:</i> Afro-Asiatic, Cushitic, East, Highland  <a href="#">More information.</a></p>
Chichonyi-Chidzihana-Chikauma	<p>[coh] 121,000 (1994 I. Larsen BTL), increasing. Coast Province, Kilifi District. <i>Alternate names:</i> Chichonyi, Chonyi-Dzihana-Kauma. <i>Dialects:</i> May understand Kigiryama [nyf]. <i>Classification:</i> Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Volta-Congo, Benue-Congo, Bantoid, Southern, Narrow Bantu, Central, E, Nyika (E.40), Mijikenda  <a href="#">More information.</a></p>
Chidigo	<p>[dig] 217,000 in Kenya (1994 I. Larsen BTL), increasing. Population total all countries: 305,000. Coast Province, Kwale District, south of Mombasa. Also in Tanzania. <i>Alternate names:</i> Digo, Kidigo. <i>Dialects:</i> Partially intelligible with Giryama [nyf] but most remote from Giryama of the Mijikenda subgroup. Lexical similarity: 74% with Duruma [dug], 72% with Chonyi [coh] and Kiswahili [swh], 71% with Swahili dialects Mrima and Mvita, 67% with Amu [swh], 62% with Bajun [swh], 58% with Upper Pokomo [pkb]. <i>Classification:</i> Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Volta-Congo, Benue-Congo, Bantoid, Southern, Narrow Bantu, Central, E, Nyika (E.40), Mijikenda  <a href="#">More information.</a></p>
Chiduruma	<p>[dug] 247,000 (1994 SIL), increasing. Coast Province, West Kwale District, south of</p>

- Mombasa to Tanzania border. *Alternate names:* Duruma, "Wanyika". *Dialects:* 9 ethnic groups form the Mijikenda community. Duruma is the second most remote from Giryama linguistically. Lexical similarity: 74% with Digo [[dig](#)], 66% with Kiswahili [[swh](#)]. *Classification:* Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Volta-Congo, Benue-Congo, Bantoid, Southern, Narrow Bantu, Central, E, Nyika (E.40), Mijikenda [More information.](#)
- Cutchi-Swahili [ccl] 46,000 in Kenya (2000). Also in Tanzania. *Alternate names:* Asian Swahili. *Dialects:* May be intelligible with standard Kiswahili [[swh](#)]. Cutchi-Swahili and Asian Swahili may not be the same. *Classification:* Creole, Swahili based [More information.](#)
- Daasanach [dsh] 8,000 in Kenya (1999 census), increasing. Over 50% monolingual. Population varies as people freely cross the border with Ethiopia. Eastern Province, Marsabit District, Lake Turkana northeast shore, Illeret area. *Alternate names:* Daasanech, Dama, Dasenech, Dathanaik, Geleb, Geleba, Gheleba, Marille, Reshiat, "Shangilla". *Classification:* Afro-Asiatic, Cushitic, East, Western Omo-Tana [More information.](#)
- Dahalo [dal] 400 (1992 M. Brenzinger). Ethnic population: 400. Coast Province, Lamu and Tana River districts, near Tana River mouth. *Alternate names:* Guo Garimani, Sanye. *Classification:* Afro-Asiatic, Cushitic, South [More information.](#)
- Dawida [dav] 312,000 (2006), increasing. Coast Province, Taita District, Taita hills. *Alternate names:* Dabida, Davida, Kidabida, Kitaita, Teita. *Dialects:* Mbololo, Werugha, Mbale, Chawia, Bura, Mwanda. Lexical similarity: 62% with Sagalla [[tga](#)], 46% with Gweno [[gwe](#)], 41%–44% with Chaga languages.

- Classification:* Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Volta-Congo, Benue-Congo, Bantoid, Southern, Narrow Bantu, Central, E, Nyika (E.40), Taita  
[More information.](#)
- Dholuo [luo] 4,270,000 in Kenya, increasing. Population total all countries: 4,410,000. Nyanza Province. Also in Tanzania. *Alternate names:* Kavirondo Luo, Luo, Nilotic Kavirondo. *Classification:* Nilo-Saharan, Eastern Sudanic, Nilotic, Western, Luo, Southern, Luo-Acholi, Luo  
[More information.](#)
- Ekegusii [guz] 2,120,000 in Kenya (2006), increasing. Population total all countries: 2,120,300. Nyanza Province, Kisii District, south of Kavirondo Gulf. Also in Tanzania. *Alternate names:* Gusii, Guzii, Kisii, Kosova. *Classification:* Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Volta-Congo, Benue-Congo, Bantoid, Southern, Narrow Bantu, Central, E, Kuria (E.10)  
[More information.](#)
- Ei Molo [elo] 8 (1994 I. Larsen), decreasing. Ethnic population: 700 (2007 BTL). Eastern Province, Marsabit District, Lake Turkana southeast shore, Elmolo Bay. *Alternate names:* Dehes, Elmolo, Fura-Pawa, Ldes, "Ndorobo". *Dialects:* The original language is similar to Daasanach [dsh].  
*Classification:* Afro-Asiatic, Cushitic, East, Western Omo-Tana *Nearly extinct.*  
[More information.](#)
- English [eng] 24,300 in Kenya (2006), increasing. More than 65% of total population of Kenya use English. *Classification:* Indo-European, Germanic, West, English  
[More information.](#)
- Gichuka [cuh] 70,000 (1980 SIL), increasing. Eastern Province, South Meru District. *Alternate names:* Chuku, Suka. *Dialects:* Comprehension of northern Meru [mer]

	<p>dialects is borderline. Similar to Kitharaka [thk]. Lexical similarity: 73% with Embu [ebu], 70% with Gikuyu [kik], 67% with Meru, 63% with Kamba [kam].</p> <p><i>Classification:</i> Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Volta-Congo, Benue-Congo, Bantoid, Southern, Narrow Bantu, Central, E, Kikuyu-Kamba (E.20), Meru</p> <p><a href="#">More information.</a></p>
Gikuyu	<p>[kik] 7,180,000, increasing. West central, Central Province, Kiambu, Murang'a, Nyeri, and Kirinyaga districts. <i>Alternate names:</i> Gekoyo, Gigikuyu, Kikuyu. <i>Dialects:</i> Southern Gikuyu (Kiambu, Southern Murang'a), Ndia (Southern Kirinyaga), Gichugu (Northern Kirinyaga), Mathira (Karatina), Northern Gikuyu (Northern Murang'a, Nyeri). Lexical similarity: 73% with Embu [ebu], 70% with Chuka [cuh], 67% with Kamba [kam], 63% with Meru [mer]. <i>Classification:</i> Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Volta-Congo, Benue-Congo, Bantoid, Southern, Narrow Bantu, Central, E, Kikuyu-Kamba (E.20)</p> <p><a href="#">More information.</a></p>
Gujarati	<p>[guj] 50,000 in Kenya (1995 SIL). Nairobi mostly. <i>Classification:</i> Indo-European, Indo-Iranian, Indo-Aryan, Central zone, Gujarati</p> <p><a href="#">More information.</a></p>
Kachchi	<p>[kfr] 10,000 in Kenya (1995 SIL). Nairobi, Mombasa, and main trade routes. <i>Alternate names:</i> Cutch, Cutchi, Kacchi, Katchi. <i>Classification:</i> Indo-European, Indo-Iranian, Indo-Aryan, Northwestern zone, Sindhi</p> <p><a href="#">More information.</a></p>
Kalenjin	<p>[kln] A <a href="#">macrolanguage</a>. Population total all countries: 1,626,725.</p> <p><a href="#">More information.</a></p>
Kamba	<p>[kam] 3,960,000, increasing. South central, Eastern Province, Machakos and Kitui districts; Coast Province, Kwale District.</p>

	<p><i>Alternate names:</i> Kekamba, Kikamba.</p> <p><i>Dialects:</i> Masaku, South Kitui, North Kitui, Mumoni. Lexical similarity: 67% with Gikuyu [kik], 66% with Embu [ebu], 63% with Chuka [cuh], 57%–59% with Meru [mer].</p> <p><i>Classification:</i> Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Volta-Congo, Benue-Congo, Bantoid, Southern, Narrow Bantu, Central, E, Kikuyu-Kamba (E.20)</p> <p><a href="#">More information.</a></p>
Keiyo	<p>[eyo] 111,000 (2007), increasing. Rift Valley Province, Elgeyo Marakwet District.</p> <p><i>Alternate names:</i> Elgeyo, Keyo.</p> <p><i>Classification:</i> Nilo-Saharan, Eastern Sudanic, Nilotic, Southern, Kalenjin, Nandi-Markweta, Nandi</p> <p><a href="#">More information.</a></p>
Kenyan Sign Language	<p>[xki] 340,000, increasing. 32 primary schools for the deaf in Hola, Kapsabet, Karatina, Karen, Kerugoya, Kilifi, Kisumu, Kitui, Kwale, Meru, Mombasa, Mumias, Murang'a, Nairobi, Nakuru, North Kinangop, Ruiru, Sakwa. Schools under the Kenya Institute of Education (KIE) use Kenyan version of (American) Exact Signed English, including one at Machakos. KSL used at Nyangoma School at Bondo, a primary and boys' technical school (Sakwa), and in one girl's school. A school in Mombasa uses British Sign Language [bfj].</p> <p><i>Alternate names:</i> KSL. <i>Dialects:</i> Mainly unrelated to other sign languages. Standardized with slight variations since 1961, when primary schools for deaf children were begun. Deaf Kisumu (western Kenya) and deaf in Mombasa (eastern Kenya) can understand each other completely even with some dialect differences. The deaf in Uganda and Tanzania do not really understand KSL, though they have much in common.</p> <p><i>Classification:</i> Deaf sign language</p> <p><a href="#">More information.</a></p>

- Kiembu** [ebu] 429,000 (1994 I. Larsen), increasing. 150,000 in Embu, 61,725 in Mbeere (Heine and Möhlig 1980). Eastern Province, Embu District. *Alternate names*: Embu. *Dialects*: Mbeere (Mbere, Kimbeere), Embu. The Mbeere dialect is reported to have intelligibility with Embu. Population estimate may include Chuka [cuh] and Mwimbi-Muthambi [mws]. Lexical similarity: 85% with the Mbeere dialect, 73% with Gikuyu [kik] and Chuka, 66% with Kamba [kam], 63%–65% with Meru [mer]. *Classification*: Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Volta-Congo, Benue-Congo, Bantoid, Southern, Narrow Bantu, Central, E, Kikuyu-Kamba (E.20) [More information.](#)
- Kigiryama** [nyf] 623,000 (1994 I. Larsen), increasing. 496,000 Giryama, 17,000 Kauma, 19,000 Jibana, 13,000 Kambe, 72,000 Rabai, 6,000 Ribe. Coast Province, Kilifi and Kwale districts, north of Mombasa. *Alternate names*: Agiryama, Giriama, Kigiriama, Kinyika, Nika, Nyika. *Dialects*: Kauma, Ribe (Rihe), Kambe, Giryama, Chwaka, Rabai. Digo [dig] and Duruma [dug] are the most distinct from Giryama. Dialect speakers may understand Chonyi [coh]. Lexical similarity: 72% with Digo, 63% with Mrima [swh], 62% with Mvita [swh], 61% with Amu [swh], 59% with Lower Pokomo [poj] and Bajun [swh]. *Classification*: Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Volta-Congo, Benue-Congo, Bantoid, Southern, Narrow Bantu, Central, E, Nyika (E.40), Mijikenda [More information.](#)
- Kimĩru** [mer] 1,740,000, increasing. Eastern Province, Meru District, northeast of Mt. Kenya. *Alternate names*: Kimeru, Meru. *Dialects*: Meru, Igembe, Tigania, Imenti, Miutini, Igoji. Lexical similarity: 85% between dialects Imenti and Tigania. 67% similarity with Chuka [cuh], 63% with Embu [ebu] and Gikuyu [kik], 57% with Kamba [kam]. *Classification*: Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo,

- Volta-Congo, Benue-Congo, Bantoid, Southern, Narrow Bantu, Central, E, Kikuyu-Kamba (E.20), Meru  
[More information.](#)
- Kipfokomo [pkb] 63,000 (2007). Coast Province, Tana River District, Upper and Lower Tana River. *Alternate names:* Pokomo, Upper Pokomo, Lower Pokomo. *Dialects:* Malalulu, Zubaki, Ndura, Kinakomba, Gwano, Ndera, Mwina, Buu I, Buu II, Buu III, Kulesa, Ngatana, Dzunza, Kalindi. Lexical similarity: 63% with Mvita [swh], 61% with Amu [swh], 60% with Mrima [swh], 59% with Kigiryama [nyf], 58% with Chidigo [dig], 57% with Bajun [swh]. *Classification:* Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Volta-Congo, Benue-Congo, Bantoid, Southern, Narrow Bantu, Central, E, Nyika (E.40), Pokomo  
[More information.](#)
- Kipsigis [sgc] 471,000 (2007), increasing. Rift Valley Province, Uasin Gishu District; Nandi District. *Alternate names:* Kipsiikis, Kipsikis, Kipsikiis. *Dialects:* Similar to Nandi [niq]. *Classification:* Nilo-Saharan, Eastern Sudanic, Nilotic, Southern, Kalenjin, Nandi-Markweta, Kipsigis  
[More information.](#)
- Kiswahili [swh] 131,000 in Kenya, increasing. 66,000 Bajuni (1994 I. Larsen BTL), 6,000 Siyu, 3,000 Pate, 15,000 Amu, 25,000 to 30,000 Mvita, 13,900 Shirazi (1989 census), 2,000 Vumba (Heine and Möhlig 1980). Coast Province. *Alternate names:* Arab-Swahili, Kisuahili, Kiswaheli, Suahili. *Dialects:* Amu, Mvita (Kimvita, Mombasa), Bajuni (Bajun, T'ik'uu, Tikulu, Tukulu, Gunya, Mbalazi, Chimbalazi), Pate, Pemba (Phemba, Hadimu, Tambatu), Mrima, Fundi, Siu (Siyu), Shamba (Kishamba), Matondoni. *Classification:* Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Volta-Congo, Benue-Congo, Bantoid, Southern, Narrow Bantu, Central, G, Swahili (G.40)

[More information.](#)

Kitharaka [thk] 139,000 (2006), increasing. Less than 35% monolinguals. Some Tharaka people live outside their homeland. Ethnic population: 150,000. Eastern Province, East Meru District, Embu District; some in Kitui District. *Alternate names*: Saraka, Sharoka, Tharaka. *Dialects*: Gatue (North Tharaka), Thagichu (Kitui), Ntugi (Central Tharaka), Tharaka (South Tharaka). Thagichu dialect has extensive Kamba [kam] borrowings. Gatue is influential. Difficult intelligibility with northern Meru [mer] dialects. Some Meru words have offensive meanings in Tharaka. Similar to Chuka [cuh]. *Classification*: Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Volta-Congo, Benue-Congo, Bantoid, Southern, Narrow Bantu, Central, E, Kikuyu-Kamba (E.20), Meru

[More information.](#)

Kiwilwana [mlk] 8,000 (1994 I. Larsen), increasing. Coast Province, Tana River District, Tana River north of Pokomo, between Bura and Garissa. *Alternate names*: Ilwana, "Malakote". *Dialects*: Not intelligible with Kipfokomo Pokomo [pkb] or Lower Pokomo [poj]. Lexical similarity: 57% with Lower Pokomo, 55% with Kipfokomo Pokomo. *Classification*: Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Volta-Congo, Benue-Congo, Bantoid, Southern, Narrow Bantu, Central, E, Nyika (E.40), Malakote

[More information.](#)

Konkani, Goan [gom] 3,900 in Kenya (1987). Nairobi. *Alternate names*: Goan, "Goanese", Gomataki, Konknni. *Classification*: Indo-European, Indo-Iranian, Indo-Aryan, Southern zone, Konkani

[More information.](#)

Kuria [kuj] 174,000 in Kenya (2006), increasing. The first 4 dialects are in Nyanza Province, Kuria District. Last 3

dialects in Tanzania. *Alternate names:* Ekiguria, Igiguria, Kiguria, Kurya, Tende. *Dialects:* Nyabasi, Bugumbe, Bukira, Bwirege, Kiroba, Simbiti, Sweta. *Classification:* Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Volta-Congo, Benue-Congo, Bantoid, Southern, Narrow Bantu, Central, E, Kuria (E.10)  
[More information.](#)

- Lubukusu [bɔk] 565,000 (1987 BTL), increasing. 47,000 Tachon (Heine and Möhlig 1980). Current census data is unclear. Western Province, Bungoma District, Mt. Elgon. *Alternate names:* Bukusu. *Dialects:* Bukusu, Tachoni (Tachon). *Classification:* Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Volta-Congo, Benue-Congo, Bantoid, Southern, Narrow Bantu, Central, J, Masaba-Luyia (J.30), Luyia  
[More information.](#)
- Luidakho- [ida] 306,000 (1987 BTL), increasing.  
 Luisukha- Idakho 65,000, Isukha 90,000, Tiriki  
 Lutirichi 100,000 (Heine and Möhlig 1980). Western Province, Kakamega District. *Alternate names:* Idakho-Isukha-Tiriki. *Dialects:* Idakho (Idaxo, Itakho), Isukha (Isuxa, Lwisukha), Tiriki. High comprehension of Logooli [rag], but resistance to each other's pronunciation. Lexical similarity: 70% with Logooli, 52% with Masaba [myx] (Uganda) and Luyia [luy]. *Classification:* Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Volta-Congo, Benue-Congo, Bantoid, Southern, Narrow Bantu, Central, J, Masaba-Luyia (J.30), Luyia  
[More information.](#)
- Lukabaras [lkb] Western Province, Lugari and Kakamega districts. *Alternate names:* Kabras. *Dialects:* Similar to Lutachoni [lts]. *Classification:* Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Volta-Congo, Benue-Congo, Bantoid, Southern, Narrow Bantu, Central, J, Masaba-Luyia (J.30)  
[More information.](#)

- Lulogooli** [rag] 197,000 in Kenya (1987 BTL), increasing. Population total all countries: 197,300. Western Province, Vihiga District. Also in Tanzania. *Alternate names:* Llogole, Llugule, Logooli, Lugooli, Luragoli, Maragoli, Maragooli, Ragoli, Uluragooli. *Dialects:* Lexical similarity: 70%–80% with Idakho-Isukha-Tiriki [ida]. *Classification:* Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Volta-Congo, Benue-Congo, Bantoid, Southern, Narrow Bantu, Central, J, Masaba-Luyia (J.30), Luyia  
[More information.](#)
- Lutachoni** [lts] Western Province, Lugari and Bungoma districts. *Alternate names:* Tachoni, Tatsoni. *Dialects:* Similar to Lukabras [lkb]. *Classification:* Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Volta-Congo, Benue-Congo, Bantoid, Southern, Narrow Bantu, Central, J, Masaba-Luyia (J.30)  
[More information.](#)
- Maasai** [mas] 590,000 in Kenya, increasing. Population total all countries: 1,045,000. Rift Valley Province, Kajiado and Narok districts. Also in Tanzania. *Alternate names:* Masai. *Dialects:* Kaputiei, Keekonyokie, Matapo, Laitokitok, Iloodokilani, Damat, Purko, Loitai, Siria, Moitanik (Wuasinkishu), Kore, Arusa (Arusha), Parakuyo (Baraguyu, Kwavi), Kisonko. Arusha is distinct from the Bantu Chaga-related variety. Reportedly Arusha, who are pastoralists, dress like Maasai and speak a Maasai-related variety; whereas, agriculturalists intermarry with the Chaga. Other sources say the Arusha originally spoke a Bantu language. Lexical similarity: 82%–86% between Kenya and Tanzania dialects. Purko has 91%–96% lexical similarity with other Kenya dialects, 82% with Baraguyu, 86% with Arusa, 77%–89% with Samburu [saq], 82%–89% with Chamus [saq], 60% with Ngasa [nsg] (Ongamo). *Classification:* Nilo-Saharan, Eastern Sudanic, Nilotic, Eastern, Lotuxo-Teso,

- Lotuxo-Maa, Ongamo-Maa  
[More information.](#)
- Markweeta [enb] 161,000 (1997 census). Rift Valley Province, Elgeyo Marakwet District. [Alternate names:](#) Endo, Endo-Marakwet, Marakwet. [Dialects:](#) Endo (Northern), Sambirir (Southern). Low intelligibility of major Kalenjin dialects. [Classification:](#) Nilo-Saharan, Eastern Sudanic, Nilotic, Southern, Kalenjin, Nandi-Markweta, Markweta  
[More information.](#)
- Mwimbi-Muthambi [mws] 70,000 (1980 SIL). Eastern Province, Central Meru District. [Dialects:](#) Mwimbi (Kimwimbi), Muthambi. People may be able to use Meru [mer] literature. [Classification:](#) Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Volta-Congo, Benue-Congo, Bantoid, Southern, Narrow Bantu, Central, E, Kikuyu-Kamba (E.20), Meru  
[More information.](#)
- Nandi [niq] Rift Valley Province, Uasin Gishu District, Nandi District. [Alternate names:](#) Naandi, Cemual. [Classification:](#) Nilo-Saharan, Eastern Sudanic, Nilotic, Southern, Kalenjin, Nandi-Markweta, Nandi  
[More information.](#)
- Nubi [kcn] 10,000 in Kenya. 3,000 to 6,000 in Kibera. Kibera, outside Nairobi. [Alternate names:](#) Ki-Nubi, Kinubi. [Classification:](#) Creole, Arabic based  
[More information.](#)
- Nyala [nle] 35,000 (1980 SIL). Western Province, Lake Victoria area, Kakamega. [Alternate names:](#) East. [Dialects:](#) East Nyala, West Nyala. [Classification:](#) Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Volta-Congo, Benue-Congo, Bantoid, Southern, Narrow Bantu, Central, J, Masaba-Luyia (J.30), Luyia  
[More information.](#)

- Okiek [oki] 42,000 in Kenya (2006). Rift Valley Province, Nakuru District, east Mau Escarpment. Sogoo in Mau Forest south between Amala and Ewas Ng'iro rivers near Nosogami stream. Also in Tanzania. *Alternate names*: Akie, Akiiek, Kinare, "Ndorobo" , Ogiek. *Dialects*: Okiek, Suiei, Sogoo (Sokoo). *Classification*: Nilo-Saharan, Eastern Sudanic, Nilotic, Southern, Kalenjin, Okiek [More information.](#)
- Olukhayo [lko] Western Province, Busia District. *Alternate names*: Khayo, Xaayo. *Dialects*: Similar to Olumarachi [lri]. *Classification*: Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Volta-Congo, Benue-Congo, Bantoid, Southern, Narrow Bantu, Central, J, Masaba-Luyia (J.30) [More information.](#)
- Oluluyia [luy] A [macrolanguage](#). Population total all countries: 1,558,529. [More information.](#)
- Olumarachi [lri] Western Province, Busia District. *Alternate names*: Marachi. *Dialects*: Similar to Olukhayo [lko]. *Classification*: Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Volta-Congo, Benue-Congo, Bantoid, Southern, Narrow Bantu, Central, J, Masaba-Luyia (J.30) [More information.](#)
- Olumarama [lrm] Western Province, Butere-Mumias District. *Alternate names*: Marama. *Dialects*: Similar to Oluwanga [lwg]. *Classification*: Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Volta-Congo, Benue-Congo, Bantoid, Southern, Narrow Bantu, Central, J, Masaba-Luyia (J.30) [More information.](#)
- Olunyole [nyd] 120,000 (Heine and Möhlig 1980), increasing. Western Province, Kakamega District, above Kavirondo Gulf. *Alternate names*: Lunyole, Lunyore, Nyole, Nyoole, Nyore, Olunyore. *Dialects*: Lexical similarity: 61% with Nyole [nuj] of Uganda.

- Classification:* Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Volta-Congo, Benue-Congo, Bantoid, Southern, Narrow Bantu, Central, J, Masaba-Luyia (J.30), Luyia  
[More information.](#)
- Olusamia [lsm] *Classification:* Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Volta-Congo, Benue-Congo, Bantoid, Southern, Narrow Bantu, Central, J, Masaba-Luyia (J.30)  
[More information.](#)
- Olushisa [lks] Western Province, Butere-Mumias District. *Alternate names:* Kisa. *Dialects:* Similar to Olumarama [lrm]. *Classification:* Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Volta-Congo, Benue-Congo, Bantoid, Southern, Narrow Bantu, Central, J, Masaba-Luyia (J.30)  
[More information.](#)
- Olutsotso [lto] Western Province, Kakamega District. *Alternate names:* Tsotso. *Classification:* Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Volta-Congo, Benue-Congo, Bantoid, Southern, Narrow Bantu, Central, J, Masaba-Luyia (J.30)  
[More information.](#)
- Oluwanga [lwg] Western Province, Butere-Mumias District. *Alternate names:* Wanga, Hanga, Luhanga, Oluhanga, Kawanga. *Dialects:* Similar to Olumarama [lrm]. *Classification:* Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Volta-Congo, Benue-Congo, Bantoid, Southern, Narrow Bantu, Central, J, Masaba-Luyia (J.30)  
[More information.](#)
- Omotik [omt] 50 (1980). Ethnic population: 200 or more (2000). Rift Valley Province, Narok District, Lemek area. *Alternate names:* Laamoot, "Ndorobo", Omotic. *Dialects:* Suiei. Lexical similarity: 60% with Kalenjin [kln], 50% with Datooga [tcc].  
*Classification:* Nilo-Saharan, Eastern Sudanic, Nilotic, Southern, Tatoga [Nearly extinct.](#)  
[More information.](#)

- Orma [orc] 69,000 (2006), increasing. North Eastern and Coast provinces, Garissa and Tana River districts. *Alternate names:* Uardai, Wadai, Warday, Wardei. *Dialects:* Munyo (Korokoro, Munyo Yaya), Waata (Sanye), Orma. Distinct from Borana [gax]. Munyoyaya is an ethnic group speaking a dialect of Orma. *Classification:* Afro-Asiatic, Cushitic, East, Oromo  
[More information.](#)
- Panjabi, Eastern [pan] 10,000 in Kenya (1995 SIL), increasing. Nairobi. *Alternate names:* Gurmukhi, Gurumukhi, Punjabi. *Dialects:* Panjabi Proper. *Classification:* Indo-European, Indo-Iranian, Indo-Aryan, Central zone, Panjabi  
[More information.](#)
- Pökoot [pko] 264,000 in Kenya (1994 I. Larsen), increasing. Population total all countries: 334,400. Rift Valley Province, Baringo and West Pokot districts. Also in Uganda. *Alternate names:* Pakot, Pökot, Suk. *Dialects:* East Pokot, West Pokot. *Classification:* Nilo-Saharan, Eastern Sudanic, Nilotic, Southern, Kalenjin, Pokot  
[More information.](#)
- Rendille [rel] 34,700 (2006), increasing. Eastern Province, Marsabit District, between Lake Turkana and Marsabit Mt. *Alternate names:* Randile, Rendile. *Classification:* Afro-Asiatic, Cushitic, East, Rendille-Boni  
[More information.](#)
- Sabaot [spy] 279,000 in Kenya (Johnstone and Mandryk 2001), increasing. Western Province, Mt. Elgon District; Rift Valley Province, Trans-Nzoia District. *Alternate names:* "Mt. Elgon Maasai" , Sebei. *Dialects:* Bong'omeek (Bong'om, Pong'om), Koony (Kony), Book (Bok, Pok). Related to Kupsabiny [kpz] of Uganda. *Classification:* Nilo-Saharan, Eastern Sudanic, Nilotic, Southern, Kalenjin, Elgon

- [More information.](#)
- Sagalla** [tga] 100,000. Coast Province, Taita District, Taita Hills, Sagala Hill slopes. *Alternate names:* Kisagala, Kisagalla, Sagala, Saghala, Teri. *Dialects:* Dambi, Mugange, Teri, Kishamba, Gimba, Kasigau. Lexical similarity: 62% with Taita [dav]. *Classification:* Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Volta-Congo, Benue-Congo, Bantoid, Southern, Narrow Bantu, Central, E, Nyika (E.40), Taita [More information.](#)
- Samburu** [saq] 174,000 (2006), increasing. Samburu District, Lake Baringo south and east shores; Rift Valley Province (Chamus), Baringo District. *Alternate names:* Burkeneji, E Lokop, Lokop, Nkutuk, Sambur, Sampur. *Dialects:* Chamus (Ilcamus, Njemps). Lexical similarity: 94%–88% with the Chamus dialect, 89%–77% with Maasai [mas], 59% with Ngasa [nsg] (Ongamo), 82% between Chamus and Maasai [mas]. *Classification:* Nilo-Saharan, Eastern Sudanic, Nilotic, Eastern, Lotuxo-Teso, Lotuxo-Maa, Ongamo-Maa [More information.](#)
- Somali** [som] 420,000 in Kenya (2000 WCD), increasing. 45,098 Somali, 27,244 Hawiyah, 100,400 Degodia, 139,597 Ogaden (1989 census). Northeastern Province, Wajir area. *Alternate names:* Standard Somali. *Dialects:* Degodia, Ogaden. *Classification:* Afro-Asiatic, Cushitic, East, Somali [More information.](#)
- Suba** [sxb] 174,000 (2007). Lake Victoria east shore; Mfangano and Rusinga islands. *Dialects:* Mfangano, Gwasi, Kaksingri, Muhuru, Suna, Wiregi, Ungoe. Most similar to Suba-Simbiti [ssc]. *Classification:* Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Volta-Congo, Benue-Congo, Bantoid, Southern, Narrow Bantu, Central, E, Kuria (E.10)

	<a href="#">More information.</a>
Taveta	[tvs] 24,300 (2006), increasing. Coast Province, Taita District, Taveta area; Tanzania. <i>Alternate names:</i> Kitaveta, Kitubeta, Tubeta. <i>Dialects:</i> Closely related to Asu [asa]. <i>Classification:</i> Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Volta-Congo, Benue-Congo, Bantoid, Southern, Narrow Bantu, Central, G, Shambala (G.20) <a href="#">More information.</a>
Terik	[tec] 262,000 (2007), increasing. Rift Valley Province, Uasin Gishu District; Nandi District. <i>Alternate names:</i> Nyang'ori. <i>Dialects:</i> Similar to Nandi [niq]. <i>Classification:</i> Nilo-Saharan, Eastern Sudanic, Nilotic, Southern, Kalenjin, Nandi-Markweta, Terik <a href="#">More information.</a>
Teso	[teo] 279,000 in Kenya (Johnstone and Mandryk 2001), increasing. Western Province, Busia District. <i>Alternate names:</i> Ateso. <i>Dialects:</i> Lokathan (Biri, Ketebo, Mening), Orom (Rom). <i>Classification:</i> Nilo-Saharan, Eastern Sudanic, Nilotic, Eastern, Lotuxo-Teso, Teso-Turkana, Teso <a href="#">More information.</a>
Tugen	[tuy] 144,000 (1987 BTL), increasing. Baringo District north of Nakuru town. <i>Alternate names:</i> North Tuken, Tuken. <i>Dialects:</i> People may not be able to use other Kalenjin [kln] literature. <i>Classification:</i> Nilo-Saharan, Eastern Sudanic, Nilotic, Southern, Kalenjin, Nandi-Markweta, Nandi <a href="#">More information.</a>
Turkana	[tuv] 451,000 in Kenya (2006). Over 60% monolingual. Population total all countries: 476,200. Rift Valley Province, Turkana, Samburu, Trans-Nzoia, Laikipia, Isiolo districts, west and south of Lake Turkana; Turkwel and Kerio rivers. Also in Ethiopia. <i>Alternate names:</i> Buma, Bume, Turkwana.

*Dialects:* Northern Turkana, Southern Turkana. Inherently intelligible with Toposa speakers, but hostile to them. Also partially intelligible with Karamojong [[kdj](#)], Jie [[kdj](#)], and Nyangatom [[nnj](#)], but all 5 are ethnically distinct. There are a few phonological, lexical, and discourse marker differences between them. Northern Turkana [[tuv](#)] and Eastern Toposa [[toq](#)] are more similar to Southern Turkana [[tuv](#)] and Western Toposa [[toq](#)] are farther apart linguistically. The 4 varieties form a subgroup divided in the middle by the Kenya-Sudan border. Lexical similarity: 85% similarity with Karamojong, 76% with Teso. *Classification:* Nilo-Saharan, Eastern Sudanic, Nilotic, Eastern, Lotuxo-Teso, Teso-Turkana, Turkana

[More information.](#)

Waata [ssn] 17,400 (2006), increasing. Coast Province, Lamu District, Tana River lower parts. *Alternate names:* Ariangulu, Langulo, Sanya, Sanye, Waat, Wasanye. *Classification:* Afro-Asiatic, Cushitic, East, Oromo

[More information.](#)

Yaaku [muu] 50 (1983). Ethnic population: 250 (1983). Laikipia District, Mukogodo Division, Mukogodo Forest west of Doldol, foothills north of Mt. Kenya. *Alternate names:* Mogogodo, Mukogodo, Mukoquodo, "Ndorobo", "Ntorobo", Siegu, Yaakua, Yiaku. *Classification:* Afro-Asiatic, Cushitic, East, Yaaku [Nearly extinct.](#)

[More information.](#)

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**Lewis, M. Paul (ed.), 2009. Ethnologue: Languages of the World, Sixteenth edition. Dallas, Tex.: SIL International. Online version: <http://www.ethnologue.com/>.**

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