

On Language

Names of places, languages or groups of people are sometimes given in Kiswahili – the Swahili language – or in languages from near Lake Tanganyika (e.g. Kiha or Kirundi). A few prefixes are useful to know:

- Wa-, Ba- or Aba- in front of a root (e.g. Manyema, Ha) refers to the people, in plural. The singular forms are Mw-, Mu-, Umu- or M-.
e.g. Mswahili (a Swahili person), Waswahili (Swahili people)
- U- or Bu- in front of a root (e.g. Jiji, Rundi) refers to the land of these people. U- is the Swahili form, Bu- is more common in the Lake Tanganyika region.
e.g. Ubwari (the land of the Bwari, de facto a peninsula in Lake Tanganyika)
- Ki- in front of a root (e.g. Swahili, Ha) refers to the language – or culture more generally – of these people.
e.g. Kirundi (the language or culture of the Warundi or of Burundi)
- The root itself can also be used as an adjective: e.g. the Swahili people, the Bwari peninsula, the Rundi language.

