

## **Aspectual tone marking in Ruhaya: the case of present habitual**

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*In Bantu languages, tense/aspect is marked morphologically, tonally or both. Although morphological marking of tense/aspect in Ruhaya is well documented, very little has been done on the role of tone in the tense/aspect system. The assumption that tone marks tense or aspect in Ruhaya is based on the fact that low tone verb roots acquire a high or falling tone when certain tense/aspect markers are inserted. Of all tense/aspect constructions, the present habitual (also known as present simple) is more intriguing. It does not contain any overt morphological tense/aspect marker, in which case, any high tone identified on a present habitual construction, that has low tone root, is apparently attributable to tense and aspect marking.*

*In their analysis of the same tense/aspect in Ruhaya, Hyman and Byarushengo (1984) attribute an obligatory high tone to the final vowel in affirmative constructions and make it optional in their negative counterparts. This raises interesting questions regarding the morphological stage at which tone is assigned to tense/aspect forms, the distribution of underlying tones, and justification of both obligatory and optional tone on the same morphological segment.*

*The paper, therefore, surveys the principles that govern the marking of tone in the present habitual in order to propose alternative argument. It looks at a variety of verb stems and categorises them in terms of tone and number of morphemes. In this way, it establishes the rules that appear to govern the assignment and spread of high tone to short, long and derived stems within the selected tense/aspect.*