

LESSON

51

Time

In times gone by, time was anchored to the habits of cattle, birds, and the position of the sun; nowadays, clocks dictate our lives.

This lesson harks back to the days when Rwanda was a land of peasants, relaxed and living from one moment to the next. With “yesterday” and “tomorrow” being the same word, time was not as imperative here as it was in some other parts of the world where each moment dominated people’s lives. In days gone by, some Banyarwanda used to speak of “Banyarwanda time” (when being late was no problem) and “European time” (when being late was a problem).

Their timetables reflect their erstwhile untroubled attitude about the passage of the sun across the sky, the birds, and their precious cattle. The following table shows a few of their early “time posts.”

APPROXIMATELY:

7 a.m.	inka zāhutse	<i>cows go to graze</i>
noon	inka zishotse	<i>cows watered</i>
1–2 p.m.	inka zibyagiye	<i>cows rest</i>
5 p.m.	inka zibyagurutse	<i>cows return to pasture</i>
7 p.m.	inka zitashye	<i>cows return home</i>

A LITTLE MORE PRECISELY:

2 a.m.	mu nkoko za mbere	<i>first crowing of the cock</i>
3 a.m.	mu nkoko za kabiri	<i>second crowing of the cock</i>
5 a.m.	mu museke	<i>at dawn</i>
6 a.m.	mu bunyoni	<i>at the singing of birds</i>
7 a.m.	mu gitondo	<i>in the morning</i>
9 a.m.	ku gasusuruko	<i>at the warming up</i>
noon	ku manywa y’ihangu	<i>at noon</i>

1–2 p.m.	nimunsi	<i>in the afternoon</i>
3 p.m.	igica munsi	<i>midafternoon</i>
5 p.m.	nimugoroba	<i>in the evening</i>
7 p.m.	nijoro	<i>at night</i>
midnight	mu gicuku cya mbere	<i>at the first midnight</i>
1 a.m.	mu gicuku cya kabiri	<i>at the second midnight</i>

With the arrival of clocks and watches, time became more complicated. The influence of the Near East brought in words from Arabic and Swahili. Time was no longer tied to the cows and birds but to *hours* (**amasaha**) and minutes (**amadakika**), and the day began at sunset. Consequently, there is a difference of 6 hours between the Kinyarwanda and European systems of reckoning time, thus:

1 o'clock	Sāirindwi	7 o'clock	Sāimwe
2 o'clock	Sāmunani	8 o'clock	Sāebyiri (sāibiri)
3 o'clock	Sācyenda	9 o'clock	Sāeshatu (sāitatu)
4 o'clock	Sācumi	10 o'clock	Sāenye (sāine)
5 o'clock	Sācumi n'imwe	11 o'clock	Sāeshanu (sāitanu)
6 o'clock	Sācumi n'ebiyiri	12 o'clock	Sāsita*

- The difference between a.m. and p.m. is often indicated by adding to the hour expressions such as:

Sāimwe mu gitondo.
Sāimwe nijoro/y'ijoro.

seven o'clock in the morning
seven o'clock in the evening

- The word **idakika/umunota** and its plural **amadakika/iminota** are equivalent to the English words *minute* and *minutes*. For example:

Sāebyiri n'amadakika cumi. *(ten past eight)*
Or:
Sāmbiri n'iminota cumi. *(ten past eight)*

- The word for *hour* is **isaha** (plural: **amasaha**). And so we say:

Hariho amadakika mirongwitandatu mw isaha imwe, kandi hari amasaha makumyabiri n'ane mu munsi umwe.
(There are 60 minutes in an hour, and there are 24 hours in one day.)

Umuhe umuti buri saha. *(Give him the medicine each hour.)*

- **The light hours** of the day are termed **amanywa**. So we say:

Inka ntizāhuka nijoro, ahubwo zāhuka ku manywa.
(Cows don't graze at night; they graze during the day.)

* An alternate method of spelling for all of these expressions: Saa imwe, saa sita, etc.

- The word for **week** is **icyumweru (ibyumweru)**.

muri iki cyumweru	<i>this week</i>
mu cyumweru gishize	<i>last week</i>
mu cyumweru gitaha	<i>next week</i>
icyumweru gukurikiye igitaha	<i>week after next</i>

- The word for **month** is **ukwezi (amezi)**:

muri uku kwezi	<i>this month</i>
mu kwezi gutaha	<i>next month</i>
mu kwezi gukurikiyeho	<i>the following month</i>

- The word for **year** is **umwaka (imyaka)**:

muri uyu mwaka	<i>this year</i>
mu mwaka ushize	<i>last year</i>
mu mwaka mbere y'aho	<i>the previous year</i>

- The **four seasons** are:

Urugaryi	<i>the short dry season, approximately from mid-December to mid-March</i>
Itumba	<i>the long rainy season, approximately from mid-March to mid-May</i>
Icyi	<i>the long dry season, approximately from mid-May to mid-October</i>
Umuhindo	<i>the short rainy season, approximately from mid-October to mid-December</i>

Twagize amateraniro meza mu cyumweru gishize.
(*We had good meetings last week.*)

Ntibaje mu mwaka ushize, kandi sinzi ko bazaza mu mwaka utaha.
(*They didn't come last year, and I don't know if they will come next year.*)

Bazakomeza kuza buri mwaka.
(*They will continue to come each year.*)

Musabe Imana kugira ngo guhunga kwanyu kutaba mw itumba.
(*Pray to God that your flight be not during the rainy season.*)

THE NAMES OF THE WEEK

Ku cyumweru	<i>Sunday</i>
Ku wa mbere	<i>Monday</i>
Ku wa kabiri	<i>Tuesday</i>
Ku wa gatatu	<i>Wednesday</i>
Ku wa kane	<i>Thursday</i>
Ku wa gatanu	<i>Friday</i>
Ku wa gatandatu	<i>Saturday</i>

THE NAMES OF THE MONTHS

Ukwezi kwa mbere	<i>January</i>
Ukwezi kwa kabiri	<i>February</i>
Ukwezi kwa gatatu	<i>March</i>
Ukwezi kwa kane	<i>April</i>
Ukwezi kwa gatanu	<i>May</i>
Ukwezi kwa gatandatu	<i>June</i>
Ukwezi kwa karindwi	<i>July</i>
Ukwezi kwa munani	<i>August</i>
Ukwezi kwa cyenda	<i>September</i>
Ukwezi kwa cumi	<i>October</i>
Ukwezi kwa cumi na kumwe	<i>November</i>
Ukwezi kwa cumi n’abiri	<i>December</i>

SOME MISCELLANEOUS TERMS

- **Ordinal numbers** are used with the word **itariki (amatariki)** to name any dates during a given month:

Tuzasubirayo kw itariki ya gatandatu.
(We will return there on the sixth.)

Tuzabonana kw itariki ya makumyabiri n’imwe.
(We will see each other on the twenty-first.)

- **Which one?**

umunsi wa kangahe?	<i>which day?</i>
itariki ya kangahe?	<i>which date?</i>
ukwezi kwa kangahe?	<i>which month?</i>
umwaka wa kangahe?	<i>which year?</i>

- **Each one:**

buri segōnde	<i>each second</i>
buri saha	<i>each hour</i>
buri munsi	<i>each day</i>
buri kwezi	<i>each month</i>
buri mwaka	<i>each year</i>

- **The week:**

iki cyumweru	<i>this week</i>
icyumweru gitaha	<i>next week</i>
icyumweru gikurikiyeho	<i>the following week</i>
uku kwezi	<i>this month</i>
ukwezi gushize	<i>last month</i>
ukwezi gutaha	<i>next month</i>
ukwezi gukurikiyeho	<i>the following month</i>

- **Holidays:**

umunsi w'ibirori	<i>a festive day</i>
iminsi mikuru y'igihugu	<i>national holidays</i>
umunsi w'ubwigenge	<i>independence day</i>
umunsi wo kwibohōra	<i>national liberation day</i>
Noheri	<i>Christmas</i>
umunsi w'akazi	<i>labor day</i>
umunsi w'urwibutso rw'itsembabwoko	<i>Genocide Memorial Day</i>

VOCABULARY

gushyuha (-shye)	<i>to be hot</i>	gutaha (-shye)	<i>to go, to come home</i>
kubyuka (-tse)	<i>to arise from sleep</i>	gushira (-ze)	<i>to pass, to end, to be finished</i>
isaha (ama-)	<i>hour</i>	itariki (ama-)	<i>date</i>
idakika (ama-)	<i>minute</i>	ukwezi (ame-)	<i>month, moon</i>
umunota (imi-)		umwaka (imy-)	<i>year</i>
gusiba (-bye)	<i>to be absent</i>	umugani (imi-)	<i>proverb</i>
kumara (-maze)	<i>to stay, to spend time</i>	kare	<i>early</i>
kugoroba (-bye)	<i>to become eventide</i>	igitondo (ibi-)	<i>morning</i>
kwira (-ije)	<i>to get dark</i>	umugoroba (imi-)	<i>evening</i>
kurasa (-she)	<i>to shine</i>	ku manywa	<i>during the day</i>
kugwa (-guye)	<i>to fall</i>	isabato	<i>sabbath</i>
inyoni	<i>bird(s)</i>		

EXERCISES

Exercise 1

Translate into English:

1. Tuzagenda ejo inka zitashye, nko mu gihe cya sāimwe/saa imwe.
2. Reka dukore uko dushoboye muri iki cyumweru, kuko icyumweru gitaha bazaza.
3. Tuvuge yuko tuzahura ejo bundi nka sāsita/sāa sita n’igice.
4. Igihe cyo gukora ni ku manywa; ariko bamwe basinzira ku manywa na nijoro.
5. Inzogera ivuga buri muni sāsita ku manywa y’ihangu.
6. Tuzahurireyo ku wa gatandatu, amateraniro ataratangira.
7. Abantu bamwe babara igihe nk’abakera, abandi ntibacyitaho.
8. Abantu ba kera ntibabaraga amasaha, ahubwo bitaga ku nka n’inyoni.
9. Abanyarwanda baca umugani ngo “Iby’ejo bibara ab’ejo.”
10. Yavuze iby’ejo, ariko sinzi ko ar’ejo hashize, cyangwa ejo hazaza. Ntiwabinsobanurira se?
11. Ukwiriye kwitonda utagwa, kuko hazaba ari mu bunyoni, hatabona.
12. Umurimo wa none wanyishe, ni cyo gitumye ngaruka kare, inka zitarataha.
13. Wibaze yuko ari byiza kugenda none mu gitondo, cyangwa ejo nimugoroba, cyangwa ejo nijoro.
14. Itemere igiti none butarira, kuko ejo batazemera ko bitemwa ku manywa.
15. Ku manywa y’ihangu izuba n’ icyago. Ibyiza n’ukugenda hatarashyuha.
16. Bimukiye ahandi kw itariki ya mirongwitatu y’ukwezi gushize.
17. Nizezeraniye yuko nzabyuka kare izuba ritararasa.
18. Yabakoresheje neza, ni cyo cyatumye bagaruka none hakiri kare. Bageze hano nka sāebyiri/sāa mbiri.

EXTRA SENTENCES

Ngaho, dutahe buriye.

(Come on, let's go home; it is getting dark.)

Ejo tuzabyuka kare kugira ngo dusohore izuba ritararasa.

(Tomorrow we'll get up early so that we can arrive before sunrise.)

Ni bamara kumusūra, bazavayo bidatinze kugira ngo bagere iwabo butaragoroba.

(When they have finished visiting him, they will leave without delay so that they will reach their home before evening.)

Ngwino, Maria, n’igihe cyo kurya.

(Come, Mary, it's time to eat.)

Amaduka yo mw isoko akingura sayingahe?

(What time do the shops in the market open?)

Umubwire ngo agaruke nyuma ya sāsita/sāa sita.

(Tell him to come back after noon.)

Petero azagaruka mu mwaka utaha, naho Maria azagaruka mu mwaka ukurikiyeho.
(Peter will return next year, whereas Mary will return the following year.)

Yasohoyeyo hakibona.
(He arrived there while it was still light.)

Yayobye inzira kuko hari hatakibona, ni cyo cyatumye asohora bitinze.
(He lost [his] way when it was no longer light; that's why he arrived belatedly.)

Dukwiriye gukora hakibona, kuko ijoro riza ubwo abantu badakora.
(We must work while it is still light, because the night is coming when people do not work.)

Nakore ibi ubwa mbere. Ibindi azabikore ubwa nyuma.
(Have him/let him do this first. He will do the rest afterwards.)