Linguistisches Kolloquium

Humboldt Universität zu Berlin

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Dialect Diversity in SE Ju varieties:

documentation of ‡X'ao-‖'aen

1. Background[1]

- ‡X'ao-‖'aen belongs to the Ju language-complex (henceforth LC), classified within the Kx'aa group of

languages (aka Ju-‡Hoan, Heine & König 2010).

- controversial classification(s): ‡X'ao-‖'aen and Ju|'hoan classified as distinct varieties (NI and NII respectively)

of the Northern Group of lects by Bleek (1929) and again by Snyman (1997). Classified by Sands (2010) and

Heine & König (forth.) on a single branch of the Southeastern group (as E3 and E1). Both continue to be listed

as distinct languages on Ethnologue as (aue) and (ktz) respectively.

- data mainly from own field trip (for ‡X'ao-‖'aen) or from Dickens (1994, 2005), in Ju|'hoan orthography

where feasible.
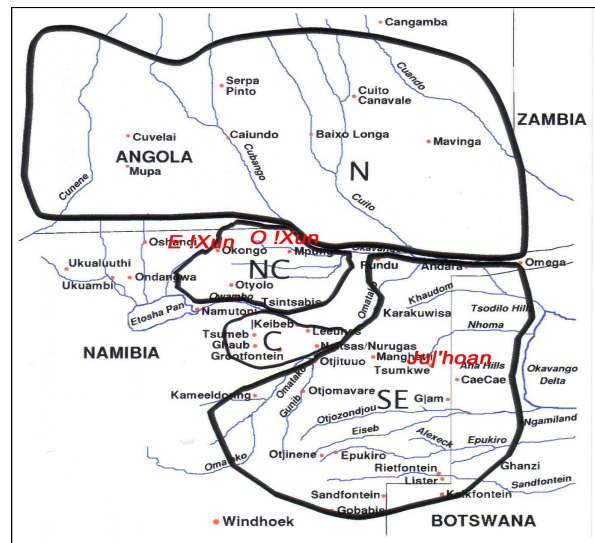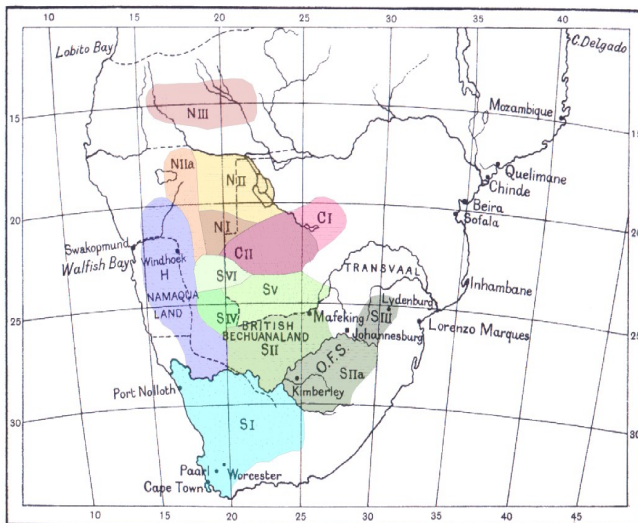
(Left: classification of bushman languages, Bleek 1929. Right: Classification of Ju varieties, Lionnet 2009)

1.1. The Project

- *Community-Based Digital Documentation of Ju|'hoan (ktz) and ǂX'ao-ǁ'aen (aue): Audio, Video and Text Archives of Language and Culture Diversity* funded by the Endangered Languages Documentation Project (ELDP).

+ Goals of project:

- Contribute to a linguistically sound classification of ǂX'ao-ǁ'aen

- Investigate regional variation (both linguistic and anthropological, i.e. variation in oral history etc.)

- Investigate possible historical contact with neighbouring non-Ju languages, namely Naro (Khoe-Kwadi) and Taa (Tuu).

- Research on lexical diffusion of taboo words.

- Investigate effects of modern contact with Khoekhoegowab and Afrikaans.

- Provide language materials for the local communities and facilitate orthography workshops and integration of ǂX'ao-ǁ'aen speakers into the Ju|'hoan Transcription Group.

+ Goals of first field trip:

- Investigate claims of a separate 'language' potentially unintelligible for Ju|'hoan speakers.

- Establish basic word list which can be used to differentiate lects and evaluate regional heterogeneity.

- Sociolinguistic survey of region, evaluation of contact situation(s), local language attitudes and language perceptions.

- Investigate local population histories, speaker biographies, privileging older speakers with 'older lects' and greater ties to southern and/or isolated regions.

- Carry out surveys on behalf of other Khoisan research projects (KBA).

1.2 Summary of Speaker-Communities

- Much greater influence of Damara-Nama in Namibia compared to Botswana, with most speakers professing decent competence in Damara-Nama.

- Naro a greater influence on more southern communities (Blouberg, Vergenoeg), and in Botswana.

- Sites with a greater inter-ethnic tensions (Epako, Tsjaka Ben Hur) demonstrated greater degree of code-switching and diffusion of loan words (normally Nama and sometimes Afrikaans).

- Similar sites also proved particularly difficult to carry out surveys with a greater cultural bias, due to slow erosion of traditional knowledge (plant names, animal names) as local groups no longer partake in hunter-gatherer customs. Younger generations in densely populated multi-ethnic settlements seek to identify with dominant cultures, especially Otjiherero despite a general negativity expressed *vis.* the Otjiherero. Inversely, isolated sites still demonstrated a strong knowledge of hunter-gatherer customs, even younger generations (whole families still go gathering) and this reflects in the data.

- Isolated sites (Donkerbos, Groot Laagte, Blouberg) demonstrated greater monoglossia. Language attitudes also tend to be more positive in isolated communities.
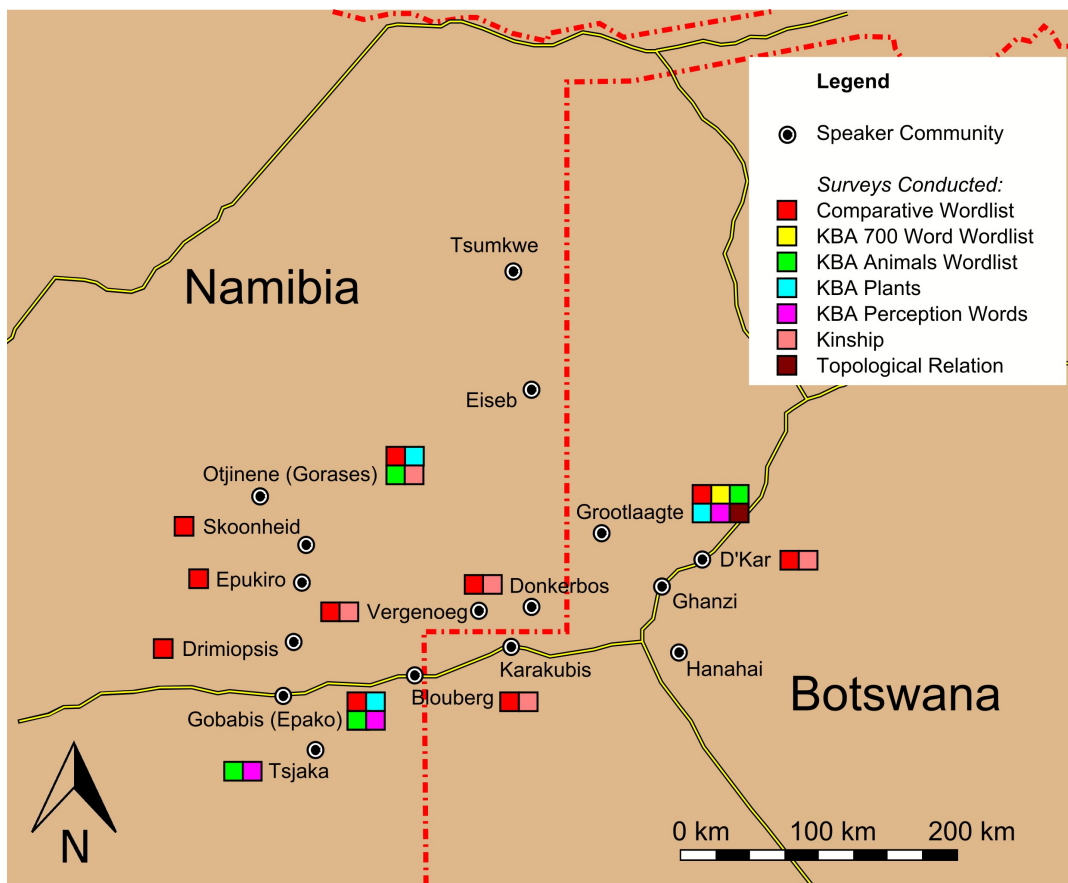
.(Map of ǂX'ao-ǁ'aen speaker communities and various surveys undertaken)

1.3 ǂX'ao-ǁ'aen or Juǀ'hoan: community perceptions.

- ǂX'ao-ǁ'aen is a Naro exonym meaning 'people of the north'. ǂX'ao-ǁ'aen is known by a number of different names, most commonly by Kaukau (corruption of ǂX'ao-ǁ'aen). In Botswana, the ǂX'ao-ǁ'aen are called the Makaukau (sg.)/Bakaukau (pl.) and their language is called Sekaukau.

- There is a major divide in how the label ǂX'ao-ǁ'aen is perceived by the different groups in Namibia.

- *A political label*: ǂX'ao-ǁ'aen label merely distinguishes Juǀ'hoan people in the Omaheke from those in Nyae Nyae. Small (insignificant?) difference between the lects and no difference in culture.

- *A linguistic label*: language communities in Donkerbos and Blouberg argue a greater linguistic & cultural distinction must be made between the two groups.

- In Donkerbos, a label meaning 'people of the north' is strongly rejected considering the relative southerly location of the community. ǂX'ao-ǁ'aen therefore serves to identify the communities to the north (ie. Tsumkwe). The Donkerbos community distinguished itself from the neighbouring Sonneblom community, as most of the Sonneblom residents originally came from Tsumkwe. Donkerbos residents preferred *ǂ'am kx'ausi*, 'people of the south'.

- Only communities in Botswana (Groot Laagte and D'kar) identify solely as ǂX'ao-ǁ'aen, extending the label to include the entire diaspora, irrespective of location.

- Only in Botswana was the label Juǀ'hoan used to collectively identifies all San groups.

- On inquiring about the differences between the lects, most speakers fall on the same few examples.

- In summary, for many communities the label ǂX'ao-ǁ'aen seems inappropriate and made introducing the project complicated.

+ Challenges:

- Accessing communities; physical condition of speakers; weather; social-economic factors effecting community participation in cultural practices; drinking; lack of a go-between language...

2. The Bleek Survey

+ Aims:
- to deduce validity of lexical data for region (based on Bleek 1929) upon which previous classification was based, and to evaluate lexical diversity across region with a look to highlighting contact and inheritance with neighbouring languages non-Ju languages.

+ Method:
- word list of approximately 170 lexical items, composed of data from Bleek (1929), Swadesh List, and extra lexical items (flora and fauna, names of local groups, culturally significant words).

- for lexical items taken from Bleek (1929), only data pairs (for NI and NII) with fully divergent forms were used.

2.1 Results:

- of the 170 words, this sample (Table 1) highlights a few important points:

- many of the assumptions made by Bleek cannot be defended:

- phonological opposition: alveolar click (NI) and lateral click (NII), generally alveolar click in both

- often, NI lexemes were the same as data recorded for by Dickens for Tsumkwe (the NII area)

- the NII lexeme sometimes closer to speakers from Central !Xun region.

- divergence in the present data is nowhere near as extreme as the data for Bleek's NI and NII.

- much of the divergence recorded in the present data is absent in the 1929 data (ie forms for grandfather, etc.).

2.1.1 Lexical divergence

- claims that the difference between Bleek's NI and NII is due to greater contact with Naro seem plausible for some lexical items, but does not explain all divergence. Whereas for 'ostrich', *tsuu* (<Naro) seems to have been almost completely assimilated into the Tsumkwe lect (Bleek's NII), it only appears as part of the avoidance register for the area in the NI area. The presence of NI speakers from Botswana in Tsumkwe may be able to explain the diffusion of Naro lexicon into the Tsumkwe area. For other lexical items, contact with Naro speaker communities on the NI dialect region is more evident.
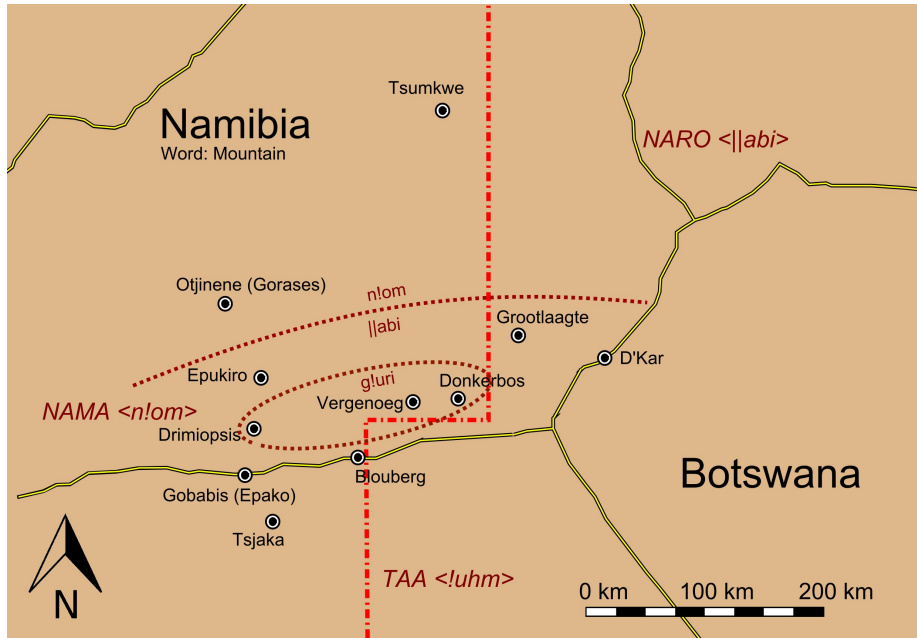
(Isogloss map of 'mountain'. Influence of Naro on E3 dialect area. NB *!uhm* in Taa means 'hill')

+ Taboo language: evidence of historical contact?

- 'Ostrich' may be an example of a loan (< Naro?) to have diffused as part of an avoidance register of taboo language, from *tsuu* meaning 'to do something with ostrich shell'. /dʒom/ 'lion', widespread amongst southern communities, most likely from the Naro word *zom*, meaning 'to turn into': many Juǀ'hoan and ǂX'ao-ǁ'aen believe hunters have the power to turn into lions.
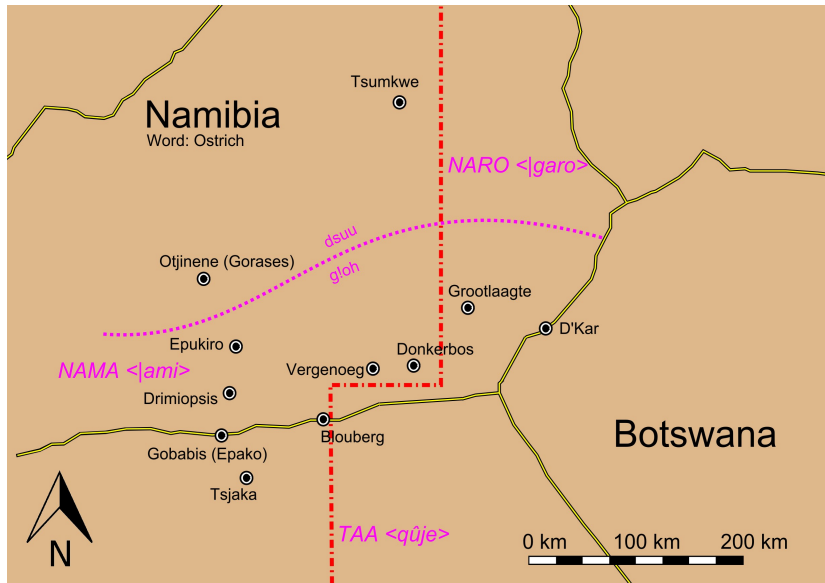
(Isogloss map for 'ostrich'. Isogloss line passes underneath Otjinene settlement)
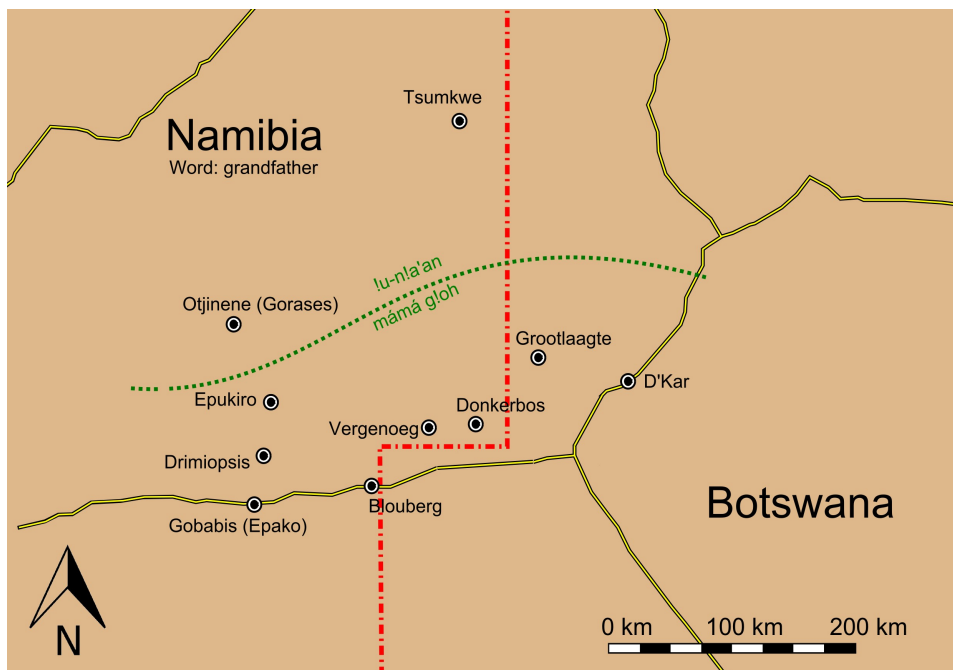
+ Dialect Perception : example of 'dog'

- 'dog' is very often the first (only) example speakers can give to exemplify the difference between E1 and E3.

Legend
Word: Dog

- ■ Fieldnotes 2012 (red)
- ■ Ju (green)
- ■ Hai||om (blue)
- ■ Naro (dark red)
- ■ Eastern N|uu (magenta)
- ■ Taa (Traill ²2009) (olive)
- ■ Taa (KBA) (teal)

‡uny

‡'hwi (Doke 1925)

g‡hoe
‡ui

Tsumkwe
g‡huin
g‡hoa

Namibia

Otjinene (Gorases) g‡huin
g‡hoa

Grootlaagte g‡hoa

D'Kar g‡huin
haghu

Epukiro g‡hoa

Donkerbos g‡hoa

Drimiopsis g‡hoa

Botswana

g‡hoa Blouberg g‡hoa
Gobabis (Epako) g‡huin
g‡hoe

Tsjaka
g‡hoa

g‡xui

‡huny

‡hàì

0 km   100 km   200 km

(Map of 'dog': possible doublet in SE Ju dialects? Variation likely due to nasalisation lowering vowel height)

- Interestingly, 'dog' is more prominent in the community perception of dialects than the words for grandparents, which are fully divergent lexical items (*mama di* and *mama g!oh*)

Namibia
Word: grandfather

Tsumkwe

!u-n!a'an
mámá g!oh

Otjinene (Gorases)

Grootlaagte

D'Kar

Epukiro

Donkerbos

Vergenoeg

Drimiopsis

Botswana

Gobabis (Epako) Blouberg

0 km   100 km   200 km

2.1.2 Morphosyntactic divergence

+ Question Markers: *ba, re, xa, kaq'e*, ua**

- Strong preference for *ba* in southern communities. *ba* and *re* appear in free variation in Epako, most notably in the greeting '*a ba ǂxai*' or '*a re (o) ǂxai*':

(1) <u>Epako</u>   *a*   **ba**   *ǂxai?*   (2) <u>Otjinene</u>   *a*   **re**   *o*   *ǂxai?*

               2Sg   Q   to awake   2Sg   Q   ?   awake

               How are you? (lit. have you risen?)   How are you?

(3) <u>GL</u>   *a*   **ba**   *kari*   *tcm*   *tee?*

           2Sg   Q   want   drink   tea

           Do you want to drink tea?

(4)   *hatci*   *-tci*   *ka* **xa** *ahi*   *ko*   *nǂau*   *Kam*

           what   thing   ? Q 2Sg.Emph   PST   go to   Ghanzi

           Why did you go to Ghanzi?

(5)   *a*   **kaq'e**   *o*   *ju*   *-a*   *kxae*   *dibi*

           2SG   Q   COP   person   REL   have   children

           Do you have children? (lit. are you a person who has children?)

(6) <u>Otjinene</u>   *a*   **re**   *ua*   *kuri?*

           2Sg   Q   take?   want

           What do you want?

- variation in question marker (and topic marker) was the most obvious feature of an 'old language' spoken by only village elders, replacing all other question markers by *kaq'e* or *ua*. *Kaq'e* is listed in the Dickens (1995).
- Biesele (pers. comm) noted that the features were typical amongst older residents in Tsumkwe who had migrated from Botswana.
- when testing mutual intelligibility, most speakers admitted having difficulties understanding, or to having

'filled in the gaps' in their understanding.

+ Variation in 'Topic Marker': *m* and *kom,* plus *tsi/tca* and *n/a*

NB. the almost obligatory presence of the topic marker in some southeastern Ju dialects is a feature of the dialect cluster. It is a feature of the E3 lect, not of the E1 lect (Heine & König, forth.).

(7) <u>Blouberg</u>   *mí*   **m**   *o*   *‖àí'kè*   *tsí*

    1Sg   TOP   ?   today   come

    I came today

(8)   *!'hoan*   **tsi**   *tci*   *n!ai*

    man   ?   thing   angry

    The man is angry

(9) <u>Donkerbos</u>   *mi*   *!u*   **kom**   *|Kaece*

    1SG   name   TOP   PN

    My name is |Kaece

(10)   *mi*   **kom**   *n|ang*   *cu*   *|ho*

    1SG   TOP   sit   lay   face

    I sit on the floor

(11) <u>Otjinene</u>   *mihi*   **m**   *‖ae*   *n!ai*

    1Sg   TOP   hold   anger

    I am angry

(12)   *mi*   *tohm*   *n!ang*

    1SG   hunt   eland

    I hunt the eland

(13) <u>GL</u>   *mi*   **n/a**   *kxae*   *dibi*   *n!anni*

    1Sg   ?   have   children   three

    I have three children

(14)   *mi*   **n/a**   *ku*   *tsi*

    1Sg   ?   IMPF   come

    I come

(15) <u>Tsjaka</u>   *mi*   *!u*   **tca**   *o*   *Besa*

    1SG   name   ?   COP?   PN

    My name is Besa

(16)   *m*   **tca**   *ǂxai*

    1SG   ?   rise/awake

    I am well (lit. I rise)

(17)   *m*   **tca**   *o*   *Tsjaka*

    1SG   ?   COP?   PN

    I live in Tsjaka

- *N/a* only occurred in the 'old language' of the speakers from Groot Laagte, although not completely consistently. Heine & Koenig (forth.) mention *tci* as a complementiser in the E3 lect, but not as a topic marker.

- Is it a topic marker? Some form of adjunct? If so, the absence of a topic marker makes the 'old language' less typically like the E3 lect.

In a few examples of object-fronting, no 'topic marker' was used:

(18) Epako   *!ha*   *na*   *m*   (19)   *ǂxani*   *na*   *ku'u*

       meat   1Sg   eat   paper   1Sg   burn

       I eat meat   I burn paper

NB. Speaker originally from Grootfontein – the 'central' dialect area where topic marking is not obligatory

- it is possible that '*m*' can be traced back to *te kom* or *te ǁom*, which according to Biesele is much more common in Botswana compared to Namibia (pers.comm.).

- variation occurs within communities and even for speakers:

(20) Blouberg *ná*   **m**   *o*   *!hun*   *g!o'e*   (21)   *kxa*   **tsi**   *ǀoa*   *!kau*

       1SG   TOP   COP   kill   gemsbok   sand   ?   NEG   dry

       I kill the gemsbok   The sand is not dry

(22) Donkerbos *daba*   *-ma*   **kom**   *tze*   *-ma*   (23)   *mi*   **m**   *tahm*

       child   DIM   TOP   small   DIM   1SG   TOP   not know

       The child is small (lit. the small child is small) I don't know

+ 1SG pronoun variation:

- variation of 1SG pronoun for southern-most NI speakers: *na* (recorded by Bleek as NII – probably mistaking suppletive verb 'give me', *na*) but data is still unreliable and speakers use both *mí* and *na* (examples 18-20).

2.1.3 Extra-linguistic arguments

- Boden (pers.comm.) noted that in Donkerbos the kinship system seemed to diverge from both Juǀ'hoan and Naro systems, whilst in Vergenoeg there was a clear indication that the speaker community, in marrying Naro speakers, had adopted elements of the Naro system. Terms were often identical, but distribution different.

3. Conclusions

- variation is greatest in settlements which exhibit a high rate of migration from other areas (Epako).

- a high level of free variation exists for communities and for speakers. Underlying speaker pragmatics?

- the greatest divergence occurs in the most isolated communities furthest south from Tsumkwe, namely in Blouberg and Donkerbos, but also in Botswana at Groot Laagte.

- could 'old language' of Groot Laagte may have introduced E3 features to Tsumkwe? Or did the lect previously bear more ressemblance to the E1 lect?

- handful of lexical & grammatical items are useful isoglosses; most isogloss lines clustering just under Otjinene.

- evidence of avoidance register built using loans from Naro. How deep does this go?

- early signs of inheritance across the region, with some SE Ju lexical items having sources in neighbouring non-Ju languages (i.e. 'dog'). Some grammatical features of Ju clearly shared with neighbouring Tuu languages also (i.e. SVCs, suppletive irregular verbs).

- variation in clause second particles not understood.

+ Discussion:

- phonological correspondences (inconsistent): /s/ vs. /ʃ/ & /ʒ/ vs. /z/

- Is ǂX'ao-ǁ'aen as a label inappropriate?

- how to measure/elicit the effect of speaker-rhetoric in variation of interrogative markers?

- how reliable is data if I cannot control the session? Is it different? or just truncated versions?

- how to test for mutual intelligibility and how useful is the question 'do you understand' ?

- …

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