

# Lexicography and language revival/ raising: The case of Tshwao

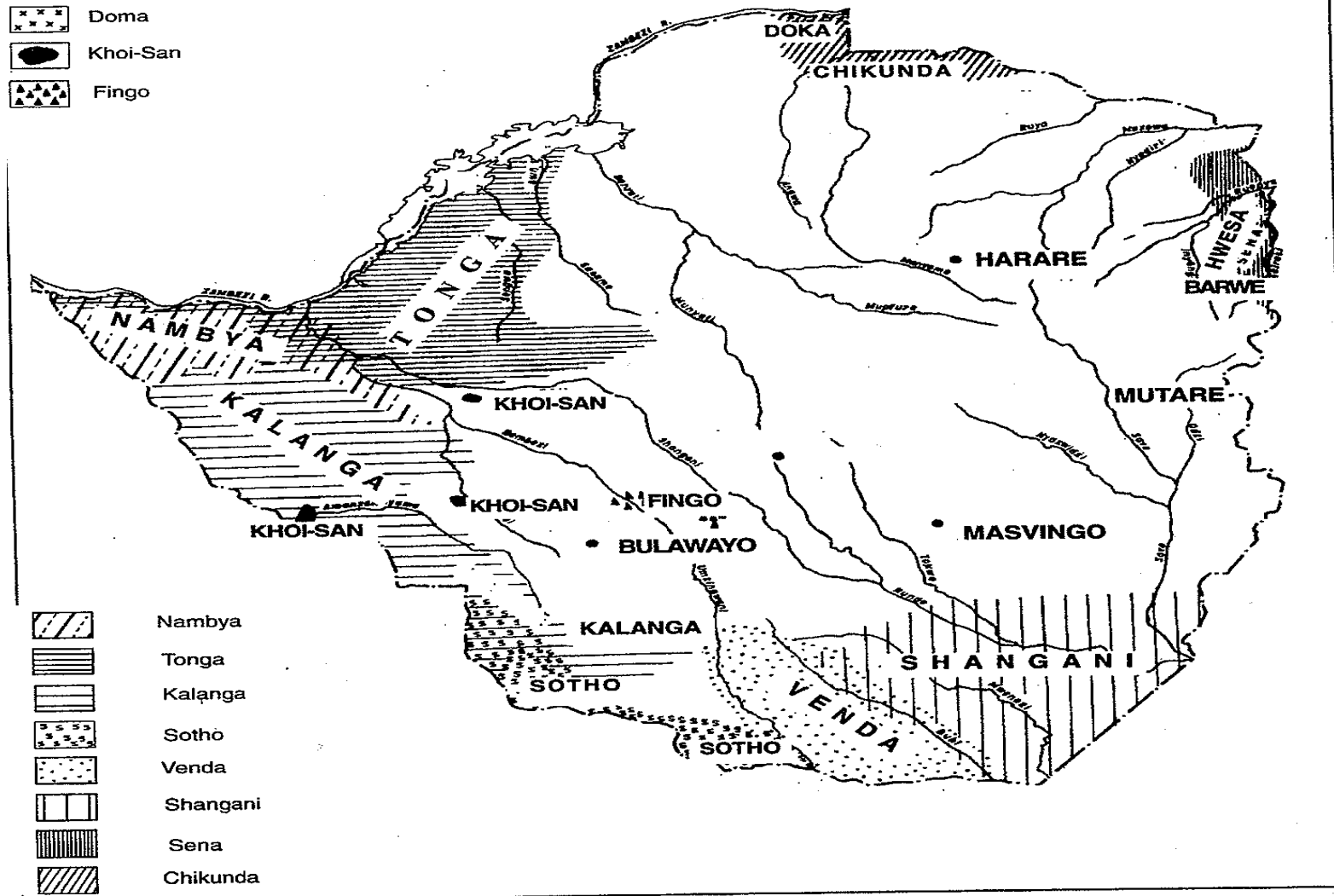
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# Purpose of the study

This study aims:

- to show the importance of lexicographical products for Tshwao language revival and language raising.
- to highlight how we are carrying out lexicographical work on the Tswao language in Zimbabwe.

# Background Information



**Areas of Minority Languages in Zimbabwe**

Source: Hachipola (1998)

# Background information

- Tshwao is one of the 16 languages accorded official recognition in the 2013 national constitution.
- Low demographical status - Total population of about 2500 members (Creative Arts & Education Development Association (CAEDA) census 2013).
- . Low socio-economic status of the language
- Socio-historical factors - forced Tshwao to shift to Ndebele or Kalanga for survival.

# The state of the Arts on Tshwao

- Recently developed orthography (2015)
- Some resource books in the Ndebele orthography
- An online dictionary of Tshwao by the Living Tongues Institute for Endangered Languages (2014)

# The Role of Lexicography

- Storing knowledge
- Improving knowledge and cultural acquisition and transmission
- Lexicography is also believed to be a step towards the development and standardisation of language (Ulrike 2002, Chimhundu, 2005)

# Methodology

- Interviews are on-going recording oral texts or word lists covering different areas/ of life beginning with the most frequent and common items. The interview participants are :
  - Mthandazo Mvundla (70s)
  - Bakadzi Tshuma and Sibanda, (70s) (couple)
  - Mabheka Tshuma Volo Tshuma (60s) (couple)
  - Hlanganisile Mpofu-Moyo (80s)
- Some of the words are from the Talking dictionary-Institute of Living Languages (2014)

# Challenges

- There are challenges we meet as we work with the Tshwao orthography.
  - the language's orthography has just been formulated.
  - The data we collect appears to be two writing systems.



# Samples of the Tshwao corpus

The following is taken from the ongoing corpus building exercise on Tshwao.

## **Human nouns**

bhara – father

bhabhara – maternal grandfather

dánàtjò – girl,

eβè- boy,

gxe cwa – daughter

kau- tsho – man (adult male human)

kae-tsha-tsho – hunter  
mara – mother  
námà – child,  
ne gxe tshwa – woman  
tibhabha – brother  
tiKwinkee – elder sister  
tshatsho - elder brother  
tshu-cwan – baby

## **Hunting and gathering terms**

Áhhì (s) áhà (pl) – bird(s )

cau – buffalo

cee – fire

cwan – bone

damu – tortoise

da-o – path

dao-hho – bull (elephant)

dumba – drum

**dzin-ra – days**

dziraa – bird

ékáṅè - sweet  
gain – mountain  
gcana – leaf  
gcau – hyena  
gcubaa – spider  
gudora – baboons  
ham – lion  
hitshe – day  
hitshe dzini – today  
kari – root  
kàrìsè k'áù - bitter

khuri – pig

koho – meat

kohora – animal

koroo – cave

kwe-e – lake

kwee- river

ja-u – bull

jii-du – forest

jira – tree

pîi - milk

pimboro – mosquito

shoko – monkey

tákà – blood

tsárùwè - salty

tsini – smoke

tsúà – elephant

tswaa – elephant (compare with earlier example)

turuu – rat

uwe uwaha – dawn

xhana – valley

xhao – spear

thama- grass

xuu – tooth

## **Body Parts (human and animals)**

dam – tongue

kam – mouth

kao – neck

karee – foot

tsau – hand

tshai - eye

tshee – ear

tswii – nose



## **Adjectives**

bushanu – five (influence of Bantu language)

cam – two

cwe-ha – full

k'á zwénà ||ám – good

k'ài táà - bad

ngwanaye – three

tswinye – small

tunye – round

xhoha – dry

# OBSERVATIONS

- The existence of different orthographies- there is need to go back to the transcription stage and harmonise according to the approved orthography.
- some variations were noted in the lexicon variations or an error as in the word eg:
  - elephant – tswaa and tsúà,
  - bull- ja-u or dao-hho.
- The process of dictionary compilation follows. We hope to come up with all the planned dictionaries.

# Explanations of Components of dictionary entries

- The headword and any variant spellings
- An indication of pronunciation
- Word class/parts of speech to which the headword belongs
- Morphology:inflections- agglutinative, isolating --
- The syntax-potential of the headword-syntax restrictions
- Explanation of senses
- Exemplifications of usage
- Some derived forms

- Hopefully the dictionary will be written and other lexicographic products on Tshawo are to follow.

# References

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