

Linguistics 203 - Languages of the World

!Xóõ

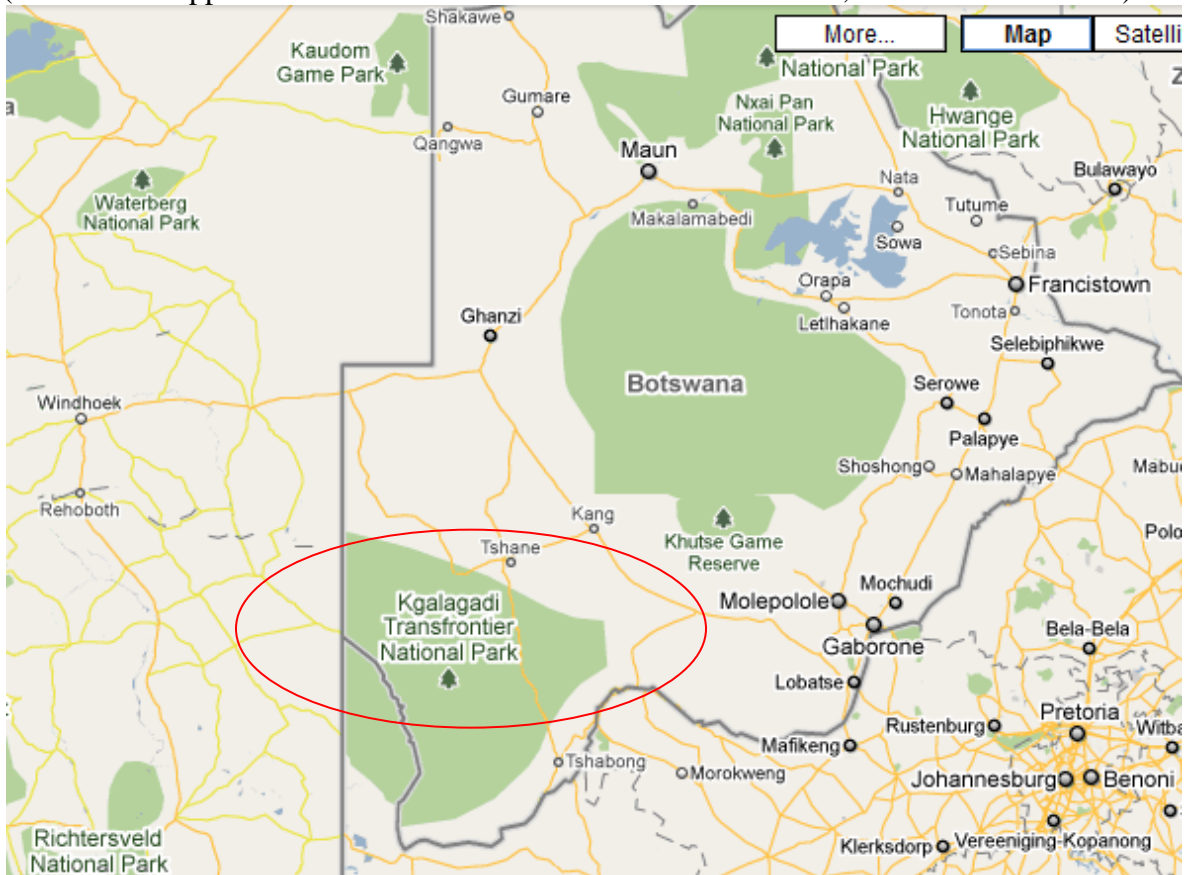
General Information

- spoken by about 4,000 people in Botswana and 200 in neighboring Namibia
- belongs to the Khoisan language family

Location



(below is the approximate location within Botswana and Namibia, based on Traill 1985)



Phonetics/Phonology

- incredibly large phonemic inventory of sounds
- although Khoisan languages are known for having click sounds, !Xóõ stands out for (a) using all five places of articulation click sounds are found in, and (b) each click is found with a total of 16-17 different accompaniments (also called ‘release features’, ‘secondary articulations, or ‘effluxes’).
 - these accompaniments may occur after the click, or before and during the click
 - 70% of words in Traill’s (1994) !Xóõ dictionary begin with a click (Ladefoged and Maddieson, 1996:246)
- contains the five canonical vowels [a i e o u]; these can often be further contrasted by being nasalized, pharyngealized, glottalized, breathy voiced, or some combination thereof, totaling 44 vowel contrasts according to Traill (1985).
- four tones according to Traill (1985).

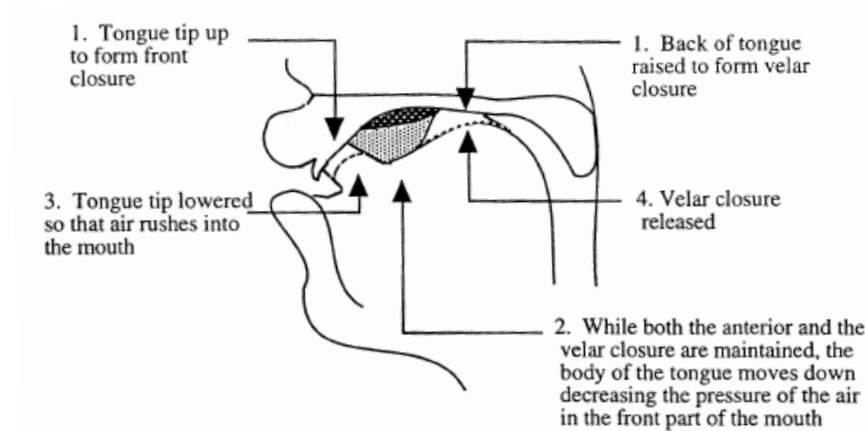
Consonant inventory (phonetic; excluding clicks)

		Labial	Dental	Alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Uvular	Glottal
Oral stop	voiced	b ~ v	d	dz		g	g ~ NG	
	tenuis	p	t	ts		k	q	ʔ
	aspirated	p ^h	t ^h	ts ^h		k ^h	q ^h	
	ejective		tʼ	tsʼ		kʼ, kxʼ	(qʼ)	
	aspirated cluster		dt ^h	dts ^h		gk ^h	gq ^h ~ NGq ^h	
	ejective cluster			dtsʼ		gkxʼ		
Fricative	voiceless	f		s		x		
Nasal	voiced	m		n	ɲ	(ŋ)		
	glottalized	mʔ		nʔ				
other			(l)		dʲ ~ j			

(modified from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/!xoo>; based on Traill 1985, 1994)

Clicks

- produced by pulling air into the mouth by creating a vacuum within the oral cavity
- clicks involve *two* points of closure: one in the front (whence their names), and one in the back (usually velar, but also sometimes uvular)
- air from the lungs is not used, and one can freely breathe and hum while producing clicks



(Source: Ladefoged and Maddieson 1996:247)

- five types of clicks are generally distinguished

position	onset of click closure	just before release	IPA symbol
bilabial			⦿
dental			
alveolar			!
palatal			ǀ
lateral			ǁ

Source: Ladefoged and Maddieson 1996:250; based on Traill 1985.

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- all clicks have ‘accompaniments’, which (can) include:
 - i. velar or uvular posterior closure (always)
 - ii. glottal closure
 - iii. nasality
 - iv. aspiration
 - v. voicing
 - vi. frication
 - vii. a few other things...

	<u>bilabial</u>	<u>dental</u>	<u>alveolar</u>	<u>lateral</u>	<u>palatal</u>
1	g Ǿðǿ (type of worm)	g áã 'work'	g !ãã 'accompany'	g ãã 'beg'	g ≠ãã 'exploit'
2	k Ǿðǿ 'dream'	k ââ 'move off'	k !ãã 'wait for'	k ãã 'poison'	k ≠ãã 'bone'
3	k Ǿ ^h ou 'ill fitting'	k ^h áa 'be smooth'	k ^h àn 'inside'	k ^h ãã 'other'	k ≠ ^h ãã 'stamp flat'
4	g Ǿðo 'be split'	g áa 'spread out'	g !áã 'brains'	g áa 'light up'	g ≠áa 'depress'
5	q Ǿou 'wild cat'	q âa 'rub with hand'	q !ãǽ 'hunt'	q áã 'thigh'	q ≠ãã 'conceal'
6	ŋ Ǿðǿ 'louse'	ŋ ãa 'see you'	ŋ !ãã 'one's peer'	ŋ áã 'grewia berry'	ŋ ≠ãã 'peer into'
7	ŋ Ǿá?ã 'be close together'	ŋ ú?i 'be careful'	ŋ !á?m 'evade an attack'	ŋ á?m 'be damp'	ŋ ≠ú?ã 'be out of reach'
8	?ŋ Ǿãje 'tree'	?ŋ âa 'to suit'	?ŋ !âŋ 'lie horizontal'	?ŋ âhã 'amount'	?ŋ ≠ãú 'right side'
9	ŋ Ǿ ^h ðǿ 'smeared with dirt'	ŋ ^h áa 'look for spoor'	ŋ ^h ài 'fall'	ŋ ^h ãã 'carry'	ŋ ≠ ^h ãã 'ahead'
10	k Ǿ ^x óǿ 'walk slowly'	k ^x ãã 'dance'	k ^x áa 'go a distance'	k ^x ãã 'scrape'	k ≠ ^x ãã 'mind out'
11	g Ǿkxàna 'make fire with sticks'	g kxáã 'splatter water'	g !kxàn 'soften'	g kxá?n 'calf muscle'	g ≠kxá?ã 'sneeze'
12	k Ǿ ^q óm 'delicious'	k ^q áa 'hand'	k ! ^q áa 'spread out'	k ^q ãã 'grass'	k ≠ ^q áú 'neck'
13	g Ǿ ^q óǿ 'fly'	g ^q áã 'chase'	g ! ^q áã 'cry incessantly'	g ^q ãã 'tumor'	g ≠ ^q áa 'ground to powder'
14	g Ǿhòǿ 'sp. bush'	g hãa 'stale meat'	g !hàa 'thorns'	g hãã 'bone arrow tip'	g ≠hãã 'cut'
15	k Ǿ?òǿ 'be stiff'	k ?ãa 'die'	k ! [?] ãã 'be seated' [pl.]	k ?ãã 'not to be'	k ≠?ãã 'shoot you'
16	q Ǿ ^u m 'close mouth'	q án 'small' [pl.]	q ! ^u ama 'stickgrass'	q ^u na 'turn one's back'	q ≠ ^u àn 'lay down' [pl.]
17	—	g hàǿ 'put into'	g !hãna 'grey haired'	g ≠hãē 'push away'	—

(clicks and clusters involving clicks in !Xóõ; source: Ladefoged and Maddieson 1996:266)

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Resources

<http://archive.phonetics.ucla.edu/Language/NMN/nmn.html> – sound recordings from actual fieldwork done on !Xóõ.

References

Ladefoged, Pater and Ian Maddieson. (1996). *The Sounds of the World's Languages*. Blackwell Publishers, Massachusetts.

Trails, Anthony. (1985). *Phonetic and Phonological Studies of !Xóõ Bushman*. Quellen zur Khoisan-Forschung 5. Helmut Buske Verlag, Hamburg.

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