

A SOCIOLINGUISTIC PERSPECTIVE OF THE INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES OF BOTSWANA

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Kyoto University, April – July, 2007*

ABSTRACT The indigenous communities of Botswana discussed in this paper are generally referred to as the Khoisan (Khoesan). While there are debates on the common origins of Khoisan communities, the existence of at least five language families suggests a separate evolution that resulted in major grammatical and lexical differences between them. Due to historical conflicts with neighboring groups, they have been pushed far into the most inhospitable areas of the regions where they presently live. The most significant victimization of Khoisan groups by the linguistic majority has been the systematic neglect of their languages and cultures. In fact, social and development programs have attempted to assimilate them into so-called majority ethnic groups and into modernity, and their languages have been difficult to conserve in contact situations. This paper provides an overview of these indigenous communities of Botswana and contributes to ongoing research of the region. I discuss reasons for the communities' vulnerability by examining their demography, current localities, and language vitality. I also analyze some adverse effects of development and the danger the Khoisan face due to negative social and political attitudes, and formulate critical areas of intervention for the preservation of these indigenous languages.

Key Words: Indigenous ethnic communities; Khoisan languages of Botswana; Language and identity; Language policy; Sociolinguistics of Khoisan.

KHOISAN IN BOTSWANA: HISTORY AND CURRENT SITUATION

Much of the linguistic and anthropological information concerning the Khoisan was gathered during the 20th century, although some historical records date from much earlier. The linguistic and ethnographic distinction between Khoi (Khoe) and San dates back to the early 20th century (Dornan, 1917; Schultze, 1928; Vossen & Keuthmann, 1986; Barnard, 1988). The word Khoe (or Khoi), meaning person, has to most Khoekhoe speakers become a generally accepted term for the people and their languages. The word San, a Khoekhoe word for gatherers, comes from Saon (with a Nama gender common plural). This shows that even among themselves they make this socio-cultural difference. Anthropologists during the colonial era (e.g., E.C.E. Latham, quoted from Schultze, 1928; Vossen & Keuthmann, 1986; Barnard, 1988) used Khoisan as a racial term, referring to ethnic groups that African and European settlers in Southern Africa despised and regarded lowly (cf. Chebanne, 2003: 59). This term has to non-linguists therefore taken a pejorative connotation, even relegating these people to a subhuman class. It was only after Schapera's 1930 publi-

cation of “The Khoisan people of Southern Africa” that the term was rehabilitated and conferred validity beyond racial and physical stereotypes. Over the years, other studies have helped to clarify this situation, most notably, works by Vossen (1997: 386), Westphal (1963, 1971), and Köhler (1971). Westphal’s (1963, 1971) studies were the first significant and comprehensive accounts of Khoe and San communities of Botswana, although they lack detail and polish. Nonetheless, Köhler (1981) objected to Westphal’s contention that Khoe and San languages did not share a common ancestry. Köhler’s (1971) hypothesis was that the common structure of word roots and the combination of rare consonants of click and glottal types largely demonstrated that Khoe and San languages shared an ancient origin, and that pursuing such a hypothesis would be scientifically credible and productive (Traill, 1986). Other studies on the Khoisan describing their current situation are presented in the African Study Monograph (Volume 22, Supplement Issue, introduced by Tanaka & Sugawara, 1996).

Khoisan studies is a domain that should be considered critical in linguistics and anthropology for the following reasons: 1) little is known about these ancient people (Köhler, 1971; Tanaka, 1980; Güldemann & Vossen, 2000; Chebanne, 2003) and very few languages of Khoisan communities have been studied; 2) they still maintain an autochthonous lifestyle, preserving ancient indigenous knowledge systems and subsistence patterns (Silberbauer, 1965; Saugestad, 2001; Barnard, 1988); 3) phonologically, they present interesting sounds that are typologically peculiar among world languages (Nakagawa, 2006; Traill, 1986); 4) the fact that their lifestyle appears incompatible with a modernity that appears to be destroying their chosen mode of existence and their culture renders it both timely and critical to understand them, and to help them maintain their ethnic, linguistic, and anthropological uniqueness (Takada, 2007; Sommer, 1992; Barnard, 1888); and 5) the Botswana language use policy means that no provisions are being made to maintain Khoisan languages, as a massive language shift to the majority Setswana language is encouraged (Batibo, 2005; Nyati-Ramahobo, 2001). It should also be noted that speakers of Khoisan languages do not form a homogenous linguistic community even as they share, for example, phonetic typology and common adaptations to their desert environment. The current classification of these communities according to their languages is shown in Figure 1.

In terms of number of different languages and linguistic diversity, Botswana is among the countries of Southern Africa with a significant number of Khoisan speech communities. While it is not immediately evident from the labels of Botswana, Batswana, and Setswana (all designating a mono-ethnic derivation), the nation is home to many disparate ethnic and language groups. Essentially covered by the arid conditions of the Kalahari Desert, Botswana is a sparsely populated country for its size (580,000 km²); its population is only 1.8 million. In their analysis of the 2001 Botswana population census data on language knowledge and use, Chebanne & Nyati-Ramahobo (2003) devised an analysis, represented in Table 1, which provides information not only on lan-

guage and ethnicity, but also on which languages are spoken and their status in Botswana. The table shows indisputable evidence that numerous languages exist in Botswana. On the basis of these statistics, Botswana is considered a multilingual nation.

According to the estimated numbers of speakers of the languages listed in Table 1, Bantu languages have more speakers than Khoisan languages (Table 1). Bantu speakers are also more easily identified than speakers of Khoisan languages. However, it should be noted that the above tabulated list is far from being exhaustive for the following reasons: 1) the label *Sesarwa* (or Khoisan) is a generic term that is used in Botswana without regard for the necessary distinctions between language and ethnicity within the Khoisan of Botswana, i.e., the specific glossonyms (language names) and ethnonyms (ethnic names) are never used in official references to these communities; 2) the anthropological characterizations of their socio-economic patterns and lifestyles are merely regarded in official circles as “under-developed,” “remote area dwellers,” and “impoverished,” and therefore the issues of their ethno-linguistic characterization are evaded; and 3) in official hierarchies characterizing groups as gatherers, pastoralists, or agriculturalists, agro-pastoralists, who participate in “modern” economic activities, are favored (Chebanne, 2003), and as a consequence, gatherers are considered landless and unorganized. In all accounts, the Khoisan ethno-linguistic communities are generalized under one socio-economic label, and their ethnic and linguistic identities are overlooked in official reports.

BOTSWANA: A HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL PERSPECTIVE

As is the situation in many countries of Africa, the territory that is now Botswana has experienced population movements over many thousands of years. The current language situation presents Botswana as a country with an imposing Bantu population in relation to the San communities. The history of the Bantu is now quite well documented, and their arrival in Southern Africa dates to over a millennium ago. Historically, they are relatively new arrivals in the region (Parsons, 1993). The term Bantu is used to refer to African languages that are linguistically characterized by a common reference term for human (-ntu, -tho). According to most classifications, the Bantu languages are further subdivided into branches and clusters. Historians also unanimously agree that when the Bantu arrived, the Khoisan were already present (Parsons, 1993). Khoisan rock-paintings and other archaeological evidence attest to this (Dowson & Lewis-Williams, 1994). In Botswana, the Setswana, Shekgalagari, Sebirwa, Setswamong, and Silozi languages belong to the Sotho-Tswana cluster of the Southern Bantu Branch; Ikalanga (together with Nambya) belong to the Shona cluster of the South Central Bantu Branch; Shiyeyi and Ciikuhane (Subiya) belong to the Central Bantu; and ThiMbukushu, OtjiHerero, and RuGciriku belong to the Western Central Bantu languages. Although they are all historically related as Bantu languages, they have evolved differently over a thou-

sand years and are now mutually unintelligible. The Bantu peoples are historically sedentary farmers, but relocate to greener and safer pastures when necessary (Parsons, 1993). Their agricultural activities are therefore climate-dependent. In terms of population dynamics, it is the agro-pastoralists, that is, the Bantu of Botswana, who in the pre-colonial era dominated territorial claims through the land tenure systems linked to their agro-pastoral activities (Thapelo, 2002; Hitchcock & Holm, 1993).

Bantu socio-economic systems have also been consequential in their contact with non-Bantu and non-pastoralists, such as the Khoisan, who were either assimilated or pushed to the most inhospitable areas of the territory in search of peace. The consequences of contact with Bantu varied regionally. In the Okavango region, the Wayeyi and Gciriku seem to have had more harmonious relationships with the Khoisan as evidenced in the adoption of the phonetic phenomenon of clicks in their languages. As assumed by linguists in other contexts, linguistic adaptations of this nature only occur where social relationships are harmonious (Vossen, 1997). The Bakgalagadi, who were also antagonized and pushed into the desert by their Bantu cousins, incorporate limited usage of clicks, an indication that at some point in time they came into prolonged contact with the Khoisan (Chebanne & Monaka, 2005). However, for the rest of the Bantu communities of Botswana, evidence suggests that their relations with the Khoisan were neither close nor welcoming, with only instances of Khoisan servitude and exploitation by Bantu agro-pastoralists referenced in historical accounts (cf. Thapelo, 2002; Hitchcock & Holm, 1993).

THE KHOISAN: ETHNO-CULTURE AND THE QUESTION OF INDIGENOUSNESS

The Khoe (also referred to as the Khoi) and the San have historically been labeled Bushmen. Many myths and misconceptions have been imposed upon them in the name of civilization by settlers who came into contact with them. Their languages, which are characterized by the click phenomenon, have seldom been the subjects of scientific analysis. Even as researchers and language and culture activists engage in the difficult task of preserving Khoisan, there are often debates on what exactly these communities consist of and how they should be labeled. While the common origins of the Khoe and the San communities cannot be denied, the thousand years of separate evolution have created grammatical and lexical differences that set them clearly apart as separate languages (Güldemann & Vossen, 2000). It is important and interesting in this discussion to note the following position of Tom Güldemann (e-mail communication with W. le Roux, 16 May 2002):

“...The problem is not with linguistic terms. The main issue is that non-linguists appropriate linguistic terms (including “Khoisan” and “Khoi” (better Khoe)), but then use them in a different sense. There is indeed no unitary “Khoisan” identity. Scientific linguistic classifications do in principle not refer to

identity, culture, race, social status, or any other non-linguistic feature and are thus irrelevant for sociolinguistic and similar matters. There also exists a misunderstanding here regarding the two terms “Khoi” and “San.” They are conceptually not on the same level. Roughly speaking, one can say the following: San refers mainly to a sociocultural classification in Southern Africa, namely people who are traditionally neither agriculturalists nor pastoralists. That this has become a term used also in the sociopolitical discourse has to do with the fact that the San as a whole were and are subject to discrimination and marginalization and thus share common interests today. “San” does not refer to any linguistic affiliation. In fact, languages spoken by San belong to at least three different groups, which have not been shown so far to be related. With the term Khoi, you apparently refer here to a more specific ethnolinguistic group, which should better be labeled “Khoekhoe” (for which see the reason below). In traditional scientific terminology, this refers to South African and Namibian peoples with particular languages (Nama, !Ora, etc.) and a pastoral culture.”

In talking about the Khoisan, an important issue that has often been raised (especially in official circles in Botswana) is that the Khoisan have no unique right to regard themselves as the sole indigenous communities of Botswana, and that moreover all people in Botswana are, in fact, indigenous (cf. Chebanne, 2002; Eide, 2001). Before discussing sociolinguistic situations, it is important to attempt to clarify the concept of “indigenous” in order to clarify the political agenda concerning the ethno-cultural status of indigenes of the Khoisan. There are several considerations to be made in the definition of the terms of minority and indigenous people in Africa, especially in Botswana. The common understanding of the term is that indigenous peoples distinguish themselves from other groups by: 1) their prior settlement in the territory in which they live; and 2) maintenance of a separate ethnic and linguistic culture that is closely linked to their particular ways of using land and natural resources (cf. Schultze, 1928; Taylor, 2000; Chebanne, 2002; Saugestad, 2001; Eide, 2001). The ideal type of “indigenous peoples” focuses on aboriginality, ethnicity, and certain territoriality, e.g., as the Khoisan characterize themselves by their unique adaptations to the desert region of Botswana. Another issue affecting their aboriginality is their marginalization and pauperization by social developments that endanger their historical and ethnic ways of life (cf. Silberbauer, 1965; Tanaka, 1980) as well as their environmental adaptations. As minority groups and aboriginals, developments often put them at greater disadvantages in that they become invariably characterized by: 1) social and economic powerlessness; 2) subordination; 3) lack of territoriality; and 4) vulnerability due to lack of self-determination in matters of linguistic and cultural life (Cassidy et al., 2001; Chebanne, 2002; Mazonde, 2002). The Khoisan in Botswana therefore set themselves apart as indigenous, without prejudice to whoever may wish to consider any other ethnic group “indigenous.” In this situation of aboriginality and social marginalization, their sociolinguistic experience takes a unique and critical position. For these people, the debate over their objective identification can only underline their aboriginality. They do not have social structures by which they

can collectively engage other communities or defend their separate development. The magnitude of their vulnerability is demonstrated by their rapid disappearance in their settlement areas.

However, the current Botswana government development programs, in which these groups are generalized as dwellers in remote areas that lack basic amenities, have threatened their patterns of life. Socially, they have lacked status and have very often been victimized by their more organized neighbors in the new settlements, and consequently their ethnic and linguistic cohesion has been damaged. The government refutes their indigenesness, and also espouses the view that human culture is dynamic and that therefore there can be no compelling argument to maintain a rural and “primitive” culture (cf. Botswana Government, 2006). Under these circumstances and this social development agenda, the Khoisan can no longer maintain their social structures according to their cultural values. Therefore, the most significant effect of their marginalization has been the neglect of their languages and culture and the concerted effort by the government to assimilate them into so-called modernity (Chebanne, 2002; 2003). As the example of the |Nu of the Southern Khoisan demonstrates, the Khoisan people adopt other languages at the expense of their own when faced with extreme social and economic predicaments.

In the current socio-political context of Botswana, therefore, the term indigenous is considered problematic especially from the viewpoint of historical and socio-political processes (cf. Hitchcock & Holm, 1993). The strict consideration of geographical autochthons seems to imply a cut-off date in the chronology of settlement or colonization of the country. However, in the nature of issues affecting autochthons, there are essentially two considerations: 1) the view that makes a distinction between those who have espoused cultural exoticism with the associated talk of “modernism” and consider the rural and the remote as typically primitive; and 2) those that have resisted it or who have failed to make a transition to “modernism” and who consider the natural resources of their geography and environment as their means of sustenance (cf. Hitchcock & Holm, 1993). Indigenous peoples consequently are reduced to socio-economic marginalization and ethno-cultural endangerment (cf. Chebanne, 2002; Nthomang, 2004). As in socio-economic studies, the following sections of the discussion will demonstrate that their socio-linguistic situation is generally characterized by linguistic marginalization, stigmatization, and language shift and abandonment, even language extinction.

KHOISAN LANGUAGES AND POPULATION: CURRENT DISTRIBUTION AND SOCIOLINGUISTIC DYNAMICS

Research on Khoisan languages is ongoing. What has emerged thus far is the determination of language families (as shown in the Khoisan classification, above). However, the current determination of languages is essentially based on ethnic identities (cf. Güldemann & Vossen, 2000; Nakagawa, 2006; Traill, 1986).

Table 2. Khoe and San languages by district (adapted from Chebanne & Nyati-Ramahobo, 2003: 399)

| District | District Number | Region | Regional Number | Possible Speech Community | Remarks & Sub-family | |
|------------|-----------------|--------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------|--|
| Central | 9,540 | Boteti | 4,491 | Shua | EK | |
| | | Tutume | 3,765 | Cire-Cire, Cua | EK | |
| | | Serowe Mahal | 1,284 | Kua ; Cua | EK | |
| Ghanzi | 10,678 | Ghanzi | 10,141 | Naro, Jun ^h hoa | CK; Ju | |
| Kgalagadi | 2,240 | CKGR | 537 | Gui, Kua, Gana | CK | |
| | | South | 547 | !Xoon (Tshasi) | S NK San | |
| Kweneng | 906 | North | 1,693 | !Xóô | S NK San | |
| | | East | 107 | #Hoa | E NK San | |
| North West | 6,341 | West | 799 | #Hoa, Gui | E NK San, CK | |
| | | Ngami | 1,460 | Buga | WK | |
| | | East | | | | |
| | | Ngami | 4,366 | Buga, Ani, Ju ^h hoan | WK; Ju | |
| West | | West | | (Kaukau) | | |
| | | Chobe | 503 | Buga | WK | |
| | | Delta | 12 | Buga, Ani | WK | |

Code: EK (Eastern Khoe); CK (Central Khoe); WK (Western Khoe); S NK (Southern Non-Khoe); E NK (Eastern Non-Khoe); Ju (Jn^hhoan; Kaukau) or Northern Non-Khoe

On that basis, Table 2 presents the ethno-linguistic communities of Botswana; hopefully, future research will ultimately provide their objective language status and the relations between various dialects. The history of encroachment by other population groups and Khoisan communities' own movements (voluntary or involuntary) as well as difficult historical and social attitudes and the current inappropriate socio-economic development policies have resulted in disruptions in the lives of Khoe and San communities (Chebanne & Monaka, 2005). This has also contributed to their current distribution patterns (Chebanne & Nthapelelang, 2000). For instance, Cashdan (1979: 39) reports significant changes in settlement patterns and migrations that are geographically and ethnically different from accounts by Westphal (1971). Table 2 presents an approximate list of existing Khoisan languages in Botswana.

No historical accounts are available regarding inter-Khoisan socio-linguistic dynamics (cf. Köhler, 1981). What happened when two or more Khoisan groups speaking different languages came into contact? How did they regard each other? What happened to groups such as the Khwe-Kwadi (made up of the Khokhoe, Nama pastoralists, and the Kalahari Khoe, who were gatherers), which reveal a linguistic common history, but are made up of pastoralists and gatherers? Some possible scenarios can be assumed, because in all human communities, languages that come into contact for a sufficient length of time tend to incorporate common vocabulary. In this regard, research findings by Traill (1986), Vossen (1997), and Sands (1998a; 1998b) clearly suggest inter-ethnic relationships and linguistic diffusion of vocabulary items. This could have

gone on for many millennia. The |Gui and !Xóǀ vocabulary and phonetic complexity of clicks observed by Nakagawa (2006; 1995) clearly attest to a sociolinguistic situation that facilitated harmonious interactions. The assumption made here is that the inter-Khoisan sociolinguistic situation is as ancient as the people themselves, and the present situation could have arisen from: 1) avoidance of social and linguistic conflicts; 2) maintenance of appropriate distance and territoriality among communities to ensure ethnic preservation for many years; and 3) the arrival of non-Khoisan, that is, the Bantu or the Batswana, in Botswana could have made them stand together and adopt similar strategies to defend their socio-historical identity. The current socio-cultural situation of the Khoisan seems to show facilitation of the generalization of their ethnic and linguistic identities by those who had no vested interest in understanding them (Janson, 2000).

To draw a general picture of Khoisan sociolinguistic dynamics, it is important to make quick observations of their individual ethno-linguistic situations according to their current ethno-linguistic distributions (cf. Janson, 2000). While surveys have been made by various researchers (cf. Hasselbring, 2000; Güldemann et al., 2000; Vossen, 1997; Köhler, 1971), actual language use situations are just beginning to emerge (cf. Batibo, 2005; Chebanne & Monaka, 2005; Visser, 1998).

1. The sociolinguistic situation of the !Xóǀ

!Xóǀ is a Southern Non-Khoe, i.e., a Southern San, language belonging to the Taa branch, whose closest languages were once spoken in what is now South Africa but are now extinct. Incontestably, it has some affinity with !Kui (|Xam, ||Xegui, and *Komani; Güldemann et al., 2000). The speakers of !Xóǀ are scattered over a large area stretching from western Botswana to the eastern Namibian border (Andersson & Janson, 1997). Hasselbring et al. (2001) reported that !Xóǀ is also spoken in some parts of the Northern Cape province of South Africa, and some eastern parts of Namibia. The !Xóǀ live in small groups without much contact with each other, but share a dialect continuum. Research by Traill (1985) suggests that !Xóǀ has two main varieties, namely *Ama Pfam (Western variety), and !Gwaa Pfam (Eastern variety). The other name referring to !Xóǀ is !Aa. The estimated number of speakers is 4,000. Linguistically, !Xóǀ is the language in the Khoisan family with the most elaborate click phenomenon, which can have as many as 200 combinations (Traill, 1985), and which presents daunting challenges in the development of its writing. This has impeded the development of !Xóǀ literacy.

The !Xóǀ language is still spoken in the contexts of cultural activities of family, settlement, and village interactions at community meetings, albeit with some interpretation if there is a non-!Xóǀ present. All age groups use it in most daily communication. However, school children are not allowed to use it on school grounds, and this has adversely affected its vitality among the youth (Chebanne & Monaka, 2005). Most people are not literate in their language.

Some, however, use the inadequate Setswana-based orthography to write letters and messages. Most !Xóǀ speakers are multilingual, speaking another language according to whom they are in contact with, and these are typically |Gui (north and east), Nama (south west), and Shekgalagadi (Chebanne & Monaka, 2005). However, this multilingualism does not include Setswana (Andersson & Janson, 1997), which they encounter only in the official administration and in the education of their children. Therefore their multilingualism with other marginalized languages does not provide sociolinguistic or economic advantages.

2. The sociolinguistic situation of the Ju|'hoan and !Xǀ cluster

Ju|'hoan, the language of the Ju|'hoansi people, is also commonly known as Kaukau and is spoken mainly in northwestern Botswana and Tsumkwe in Namibia. Ju|'hoan is the main language which together with !Xǀ (or !Xun) forms the Northern Khoisan. This language sub-family stretches into southern Angola. It forms a continuum with #Kx'au||'ein (the southern branch of Northern Khoisan). However, the Ju|'hoan spoken in Tsumkwe is not intelligible to those who speak #Kx'au||'ein, and should be considered a dialectal variety of Ju|'hoansi of northwest Botswana. From the research by Hitchcock & Holm (1993), surveys by Batibo et al. (2000), Hasselbring (2000), Hasselbring et al. (2001), and the Botswana census analysis by Chebanne & Nyati-Ramahobo (2003), the population of Ju|'hoan speakers can be estimated at between 7,000 and 10,000 people in Botswana and Namibia. Geographical and social conditions are the basis of the differences between the Namibian and Botswana varieties. Ju|'hoan has been studied extensively by Snyman (1974), who wrote a grammar guide and dictionary. Its orthography has been in place since 1969 and was updated in 1987 and 1991. Another dictionary on Ju|'hoan was published by Dickens (1994).

The Ju|'hoan language is mostly used for local village and family communications, as well as at community meetings (with interpreters). There are many native speakers who can now read and write Ju|'hoan. This is mainly because of the efforts of the Nyae-Nyae Development Foundation of Namibia and also due to sustained linguistic and cultural anthropology research and missionary work (cf. Takada, 2007). With the assistance and cooperation of the Namibian Institute for Educational Development (NIED), which is publishing Ju|'hoansi texts for school usage, much is happening for the preservation of this language. The orthography by Dickens (1994) has been adopted as official. However, much of this work has been realized in Namibia through the Nyae-Nyae Development Foundation at Tsumkwe, which has managed to prepare school books and texts. These socio-cultural activities have promoted the language at the expense of other San and Bantu languages. However, the adoption of economically powerful ethnic languages of Batswana and OvaHerero threaten some of the community-based gains.

3. The sociolinguistic situation of #Hoan

Speakers of the #Hoan language reside in southeastern Botswana (in the Kweneng and Kgatleng Districts). #Hoan falls into the Northern Khoisan language sub-family, together with Ju|'hoan and !Xũ. It is considered the southern branch of this sub-family, while the Ju|'hoan is part of the northern branch (Traill, 1973). However, there are some debates (Güldemann, 1998; Güldemann et al., 2000) that suggest that it could be a language family in its own right. This language comprises an eastern variety and a western variety, which is much closer to the northern sub-family of Northern Khoisan. However, excluding its own dialects, #Hoan has no mutual intelligibility with the languages it is purportedly related to. With the sole exclusion of the linguistic classification studies by Westphal (1971) and Traill (1986), there has never been a comprehensive linguistic study of the language. No non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have worked among the #Hoan. This situation means that, unlike other Khoe and San groups, there is the risk that this language will become extinct without any record of it. The statistics derived Cassidy et al. (2001) puts the total #Hoan population in the districts of Kgatleng and Kweneng at 2,500 speakers. The speakers are multilingual with Setswana and also with Shekgalagarhi, and there has been a strong language shift towards these two languages (Batibo, 2003; Hasselbring, 2000).

4. The sociolinguistic situation of the |Nu

The |Nu language died out some decades ago (cf. Vossen, 1997). However, information from Sands et al. (unpublished) indicates that as of 2006 there were fewer than ten speakers who claimed partial knowledge of |Nu. They could recall some words, but were unable to construct grammatically valid structures. The speakers are found far apart in farms and settlements (in South Africa and Botswana) and do not readily interact to keep the language alive. The two research groups, i.e., Vossen (1997) and Sands et al. (unpubl.) have also reported that two of the ten speakers are living in a remote area in southern Botswana. Whichever side of the border they find themselves on, Afrikaans is their main language of communication. As a Southern San language, |Nu would be related to !Xóǀ, which is spoken in southwestern Botswana. The !Khomani, who are ethnically and historically related to the |Nu, also reside around the Northern Cape district. However, they no longer use a San language. Practically speaking, with only ten speakers of an average of 60 years of age, |Nu is linguistically dead. The children of these few speakers do not know it and there is no possibility that the speakers could come together to practice the language. The current linguistic effort is for the purpose of recording it only.

5. The sociolinguistic situation of the Nama (Khoekhoegowab)

The languages that fall under the Khoekhoegowab categorization are the Nama, Damara, Hai||om, and the !Ora (cf. Haacke & Elderkin, 1997), which are mainly Namibian languages. However, in Botswana they all identify themselves as the Nama. Historically, they have had an influence on the other Khoisan languages, as some speakers of !Xóǀ, Naro, and Ju|'hoan, according to their region, have been reported to also use Nama. This is an instance of Khoisan bilingualism, and is definitely neither unique nor a new sociolinguistic situation. In Botswana, Nama varieties are referred to with Setswana names such as Sekgothu, Sekhikwe, and Seqhanakwe (Batibo et al., 2003). Nama has long been codified and its orthography and dictionary date as far back as 1889, as developed by Kroenlein (cf. Haacke, 1999). The Nama orthography has inspired those working on other Khoisan languages. A new dictionary was recently published by Haacke and Eiseb (2002), and there are also grammar guides for the language (Batibo et al., 2003). Books and texts are available to foster literacy in primary schools. According to Namibian language policy, the first 3 years of education (grades 1-3) should be in the mother tongue, and Khoekhoegowab has been advantaged by this provision. This is a positive policy in Namibia, as it fosters maintenance of the mother tongue by young speakers.

Nama is the only language from the Khoisan family that has been adopted by Bantu ethnic groups, especially those that fled German colonial repression in the early 1900s (Molosiwa, 2000). Currently, Nama is also spoken by people with Herero and Banderu ethnic affiliations (Molosiwa, 2000; Smieja & Batibo, 2000; Batibo & Tsonope, 2000) who, except for their names, have completely lost their own languages. It seems also that Nama has absorbed most of the Southern San languages such as the Taa~Tuu languages, most of which are now extinct with the notable exception of the still-vibrant !Xóǀ language. Other ethnic communities who speak Nama but are non-pastoralists are most likely to be those who were linguistically assimilated by the Nama (Chebanne, 2003). However, in certain parts of Botswana, such as the desolate areas of the Kgalagadi and Ghanzi Districts, some ethnic Nama who have come to live among the !Xóǀ now speak the language of the !Xóǀ, and have completely adopted the culture and lifestyles of these hunter-gatherer communities. Similarly, in the Ghanzi area, some Nama who live among the Ju|'hoansi people have adopted the Ju|'hoan language. This is an interesting development and may shed light on some possible historical socio-linguistic dynamics of these Khoisan communities. Impoverished Nama speakers who find themselves minorities among the !Xóǀ and Ju|'hoansi lose their pastoral ways of life and adopt the hunter-gatherer lifestyle.

6. The sociolinguistic situation of the |Gui and ||Gana

The |Gui and ||Gana belong to the Central Koisan, together with Khoekhoegowab. According to Barnard (1986), there are at least 5,000 speakers of |Gui

and ||Gana, of which probably 2,000 are |Gui speakers and 3,000 are ||Gana. The |Gui and the ||Gana languages are mutually intelligible, although the speakers see themselves as different. This situation is also one instance of bilingualism in which speakers of the two languages live side by side in a dual lingual situation. The |Gui consider ||Gana to be “black Khoe” because of their rather darkish skin and their adoption of Shekgalagari cultural ways (Chebanne, 2003), though the people are still generally positive towards their language. Despite the fact that they have lived alongside !Xóǀ speakers, there are only lexical borrowings, but no language switch from |Gui and ||Gana to !Xóǀ. However, the speakers use Naro and Shekgalagari as lingua franca (Chebanne, 2003), which poses a threat to the currency of their own languages. Like most of these languages, there is no practical orthography on which to base any literature. However, Nakagawa (1996) provided an International Phonetic Association-based description of |Gui click consonants, and also initiated the development of a lexical database. Some descriptive and socio-historical studies, particularly by Tanaka (1991) and Nakagawa (1996), have also been conducted. Linguistic anthropological works by Sugawara (2001) and Takada (2006) are also available and provide updates on these Khoisan communities as well as interesting insights on prospective and retrospective accounts of their lives and means of livelihood.

7. The sociolinguistic situation of the Naro

Naro is also a Central Khoisan language, together with |Gui, ||Gana, and Khoekhoegowab. Naro speakers in Botswana (mainly in the Ghanzi District) number from 6,000 to 8,000 (Hasselbring, 2000). Visser (personal communication) estimated the number at 10,000, whereas Andersson and Janson (1997) put the figure at 9,000 (5,000 in Botswana and 4,000 in Namibia; cf. Chebanne & Nyati-Ramahobo, 2003). Naro speakers are found mainly in Botswana, but there are some in eastern Namibia. Many Naro speakers now live and work on Ghanzi farms. However, they have maintained their ways of life. Naro has been studied by many scholars including Barnard (1985), Bleek (1928; 1942), and Visser (personal communication). The Naro spoken in the west near the Namibian border is said to be slightly different, as it has been substantially influenced by Nama. Historically, Naro is classified with |Gui and ||Gana, but except for some lexical items, there is not much mutual intelligibility between them. Naro shows differences in grammatical and phonological structures, which suggest that either it retained the historical forms while others lost them, or it acquired them after it separated from |Gui and ||Gana.

Visser (personal communication) indicated that there is no intelligibility between Naro and Nama. However, some research indicates that this may not necessarily be correct, as their historical proximity and socio-historical relationships are quite evident (cf. Nakagawa, 2006). The Dutch Reformed Church at the Kuru Development Trust has also contributed to the documentation through its efforts to codify the Naro language and develop its literacy materials. These

materials include booklets on religious stories, excerpts from the Bible, phonological studies, socio-linguistic discussions, and a revised Naro-English dictionary, compiled in the late 1990s by Visser (personal communication). There is also a monthly magazine and a handbook on phonology, tonology, morphology, and syntax of Naro. These activities make Naro one of the most dynamic Khoe languages, enabling its speakers to face the challenges of future linguistic developments (cf. Visser, 2000).

8. The sociolinguistic situation of Eastern Kalahari Khoe languages

The Eastern Kalahari Khoe is related to the Central Kalahari Khoe (||Gui; ||Gana; Naro) and the Northern Kalahari Khoe (Khwe-dam – Buga and ||Ani). Research by Andersson and Janson (1997) and Chebanne (2002) designated Eastern Khoe as comprising the Khoe speech communities of Shua, Tshua, and Kua. Dornan (1917) was one of the earliest researchers to record some related speech communities of Eastern Kalahari Khoe. Surveys by Hasselbring et al. (2001) and analysis of census data (Chebanne & Nyati-Ramahobo, 2003) indicate that there are about 10,000 speakers in the entire eastern Botswana area where the Eastern Kalahari Khoe are found. Small numbers are also found in northwestern Zimbabwe. Ethnically and linguistically, these communities have been assailed by major socio-economic forces from their neighbors, the Tswana and the Kalanga, who employ them in their farming and domestic activities. The speakers of the languages of Eastern Khoe are now adopting Setswana and Ikalanga even in family communication situations, and are consequently rejecting and abandoning their own languages. This is a serious situation of possible language extinction.

9. The sociolinguistic situation of the Khwe-speaking communities: The ||Ani and Buga

The Northern group of Kalahari Khoe is made up of the ||Ani, Buga, and the ||Ganda (also known as Khwe). In the many research undertakings by German linguists, they have been grouped under the label Kxoe (pronounced Khoe, cf. Vossen, 1997). The northwestern Kalahari Khoe communities occupy the Okavango Delta of Botswana and are sometimes referred to as the flood-plain (or river) Khoe. They are essentially linguistically homogenous, due to their geographical location and their shared history in and around the delta, which have characterized their lives for thousands of years. The ||Ani and the Buga are the main Khoe communities in the area. Their languages are mutually intelligible. By their own accounts, their main difference is that the ||Ani prefer fishing and arable farming while the Buga and the ||Ganda have historically remained hunters and gatherers. However, the current socio-economic situation seems to neutralize these differences.

Population estimates put the number of Khwe-dam speakers in Botswana at around 15,000, while an equal number may also be found in the Caprivi region

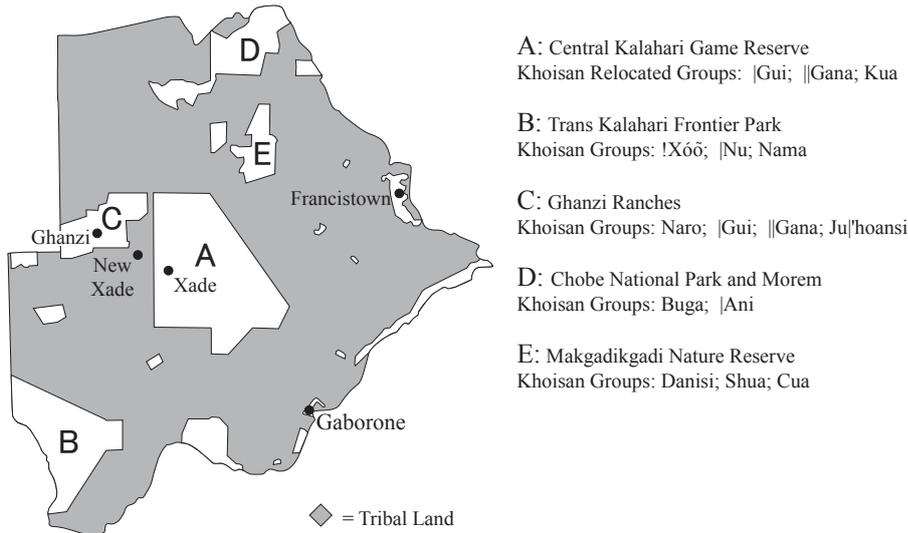


Fig. 2. Khoisan groups of Botswana and tourism and commercial areas associated with their historical habitation

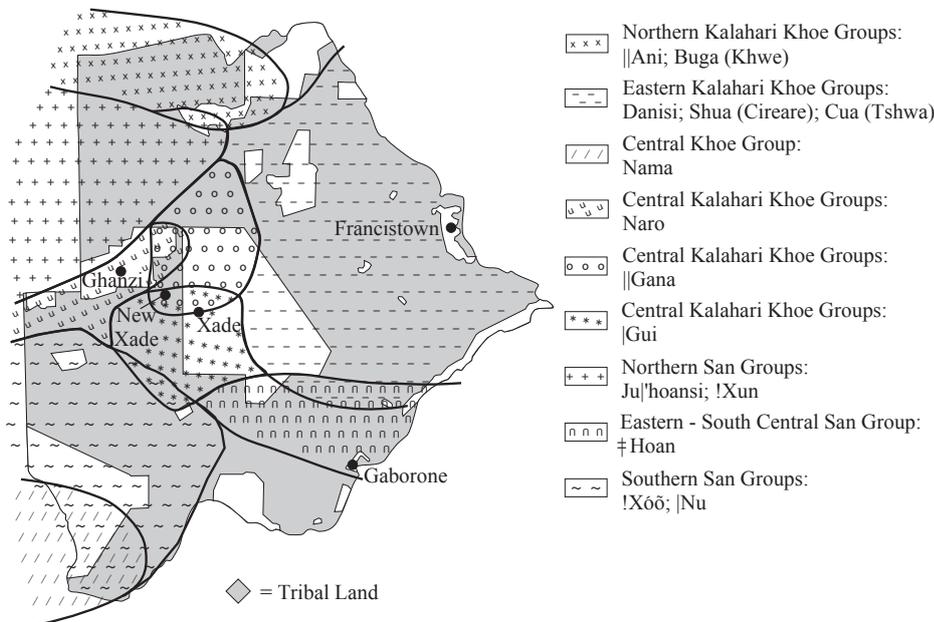


Fig. 3. Khoisan ethnolinguistic groups and their localities and habitation in Botswana
 Sources: Anderson & Janson, 1997; Chebanne & Nyati-Ramahobo, 2003; Güldemann & Vossen, 2000; Köhler, 1971; Nakagawa, 1996; 2006; Silberbauer, 1965; Tanaka, 1980; Trail, 1986; Westphal, 1962.

of Namibia (Cassidy et al., 2001; Chebanne & Nyati-Ramahobo, 2003). These speakers have had much contact with the Wayeyi, who call them Wawusa, as well as with other ethnic groups such as the Mbukushu, Gciriku, Ciikuhane, and the Tawana. There are also some Ju|'hoan, called Kaukau in their area, who came to live among them and adopted their language. While Khwe-dam has absorbed other Khoisan languages, it is itself assailed by the main languages of the Namibia Caprivi Strip and northwestern Botswana. The fact that Khwe-dam speakers are multilingual, with knowledge of most of the languages spoken in the delta region, is causing them to become marginalized linguistically.

Substantial descriptive studies by German linguists and anthropologists have been conducted on the ||Ani under the label Kxoe (e.g., Güldemann et al., 2000). The literacy efforts associated with the Penduka Declaration shows ||Ani lumped together with Buga, and/or contributing to the Khwe-dam. Such efforts will require careful planning and an awareness of how the languages contributing to Khwe-dam will benefit it in terms of literacy development and linguistic studies (WIMSA, 2001; Figs. 2&3).

FROM SOCIOLINGUISTIC TO SOCIO-POLITICAL: WHAT ENDANGERS THE KHOISAN?

The preceding sections clearly present difficult sociolinguistic situations for the Khoisan in Botswana. Part of the explanation of the situation seems to be that, historically and socially, the Khoisan in Botswana have been in situations of disadvantage (Batibo, 2005). Two important anthropological observations may be made with regard to these communities (with the exception of the Nama-Damara in Namibia): 1) they have had difficulty adapting to the national socio-economic and political culture; and 2) they have remained in autochthony or aboriginality with little means to pursue a specific and fruitful culture even for purposes of self-preservation. They have therefore in the past decades remained in the periphery of socio-economic and political processes that have contributed to the modernization of Botswana.

What is the problem with the Khoisan? Is it their autochthony – their aboriginality and indigenesness? A fair response would be that they are, in the current situation, at risk of annihilation by the neglectful forces of a globalizing modernity and their incapacitated aboriginality, because they remain in indigenous situations (cf. Solway, 1990). They are not readily able to make choices that would preserve their cultures and lifestyles. In Africa, the term indigenous seems to be ominous and problematic especially from historical and socio-political viewpoints. This means that, practically speaking, indigenous communities are prohibited from self-determination as particular ethno-linguistic groups. In strict ethnographic and anthropological terms, they are autochthons, and their choice of habitat has made them victims of ill-advised development policy decisions. There are essentially two prevailing perspectives of their situation. The first one is external to them, what we may term the attitude of

the others towards them. Historically, other Black Africans have viewed the Khoisan aboriginality or autochthony as primitive. This is the colonial view (cf. Nthomang, 2004) and it persists unabated (cf. Botswana Government, 2006). It acquired a certain racial character by ascribing some linguistic and cultural superiority to the colonizing communities, including the Bantu. The second is what we may term internal; their aboriginality operates at the level of a clan, which makes them inadaptable to an elaborate socio-political structure that can fit into or remain comparable to other communities' socio-economic modes of production (cf. Hitchcock & Holm, 1993).

In the current socio-cultural and sociolinguistic situation, Khoisan values do not match those of other groups. Thus, there is a distinction between those who have espoused cultural exoticism (the Bantu agro-pastoralists) with the associated talk of "modernism" and those who have resisted it or who have failed to make a transition to it (the Khoisan hunter-gatherers). This difference in itself should be inoffensive, but a problem arises when they are inappropriately qualified as rural, remote, and typically primitive and therefore become viewed as targets for modernization. Their land usage and cultural expression are considered non-issues in development (cf. Saugestad, 2001; Solway, 1990; Nthomang, 2004). Their ethnic differences, and historical rights and justification to territoriality, are predicated on autochthony rather than on economic productivity, and are therefore not recognized. Thus, the lack of understanding of their socio-cultural and ethno-linguistic realms often results in abuses of their human rights of self-determination and autonomy. The current unmanageable language shift that characterizes their contact with other ethno-linguistic groups is a serious indication that the negative attitudes towards them make them suffer an irreparable inferiority complex about their culture and language (cf. Batibo, 2005; Smieja, 1996).

The sociolinguistic dynamics of Botswana, a vast, sparsely populated desert country with numerous ethnic languages, also means that the factors that account for language maintenance and loss are peculiar and diverse. For instance, the Botswana government, eager to avoid costly development in sparsely populated areas, sometimes espouses inappropriate development programs that change socio-economic and cultural dynamics (Cassidy et al., 2001; Nthomang, 2004). By pursuing these programs, the fragile national ethnic and linguistic diversity has experienced the neutralization of ethnic and language diversity and the stigmatization of ethnic languages. Practically speaking, what this means is that the concept of the national homogenous ethnicity development, as represented by Setswana (Botswana-country, Motswana-citizen), only privileges the majority ethnic groups and their language. Even though all children go to school for a basic minimum period "as equals," some do not continue with education because they cannot manage the requirements of an imposed common language at an early age, and they are marginalized in terms of their own linguistic and cultural identities (Chebanne & Monaka, 2005). Most importantly, the linguistic trauma for children whose home language has no relation to the languages spoken in school is acute when starting school at

a young age. When they are not capable of linguistic competence in the school language, they are marked as “school misfits” (cf. Nyati-Ramahobo, 1997); such instances mark the onset of the language shift and loss of diversity (Batibo, 1997: 243). For such children, it is easy to see that all social situations could become burdensome, negative attitudes could persist towards the marginalized, and complexes of superiority and inferiority could become entrenched, due to the sociolinguistic conditions.

The sociolinguistic realities of Botswana, where the weak languages lose out in social processes, negatively impact the theory and practice of democratic development. The emphasis on the concept of national homogeneity and the uneasiness with ethnic and language differences is incompatible with the most basic and noble ideal underlying democracy, that of freedom of self-identity and practice of one’s own culture. The lack of facilitation of the use of a self-chosen language and the disregard of self-actualizing cultural expression in the national domain do not augur well for the Khoisan. The ideal situation would be one in which the country creates tolerance by accommodating diversity, even catering for manageable community-based language choices at school, and allow transition to languages of wider communication.

In sociolinguistic terms, there is no equity in ethnic and language neutralization in Botswana. What is apparent and regrettable is that there is marginalization of ethnic and language identities, which, for the Khoisan, have the tragic consequences of language extinction. This has come about for Khoisan ethnic and language communities because of their small numbers, their indigenous means of production, and their general poverty and proneness to negative socio-economic relations. Publications on the Khoisan by some academics at the University of Botswana (cf. Selolwane & Saugestad, 2002) revealed that Khoisan communities experience powerlessness, marginalization, disintegration, exploitation, pauperization, and deprivation with the net effect of social and economic exclusion from the main development programs of the state. The Khoisan face these socio-economic hardships (Cassidy et al., 2001) due essentially to this marginalization, which negatively impacts their socio-economic integration. As impoverished and illiterate communities, they cannot even present their cases on their own when talking to the government, necessitating the inclusion in their affairs of outside activists who, in making a case for the indigenous people, sometimes create further conflicts as government representatives feel dictated to or preached at (Mphinyane, 2002).

This vague and unconstructive Botswana language use policy is a vestige of its colonial heritage, and has been perpetuated by post-independence choices that were meant to destroy diversity and entrench ethnic and linguistic homogeneity (Nyati-Ramahobo, 1997; 2002). While independence for Botswana brought remarkable infrastructural and social amenities development, the domain of ethnic languages has generally regressed, if not altogether negating social development. Before independence, the Khoisan ethno-linguistic communities were almost monolingual and were fervently attached to their aboriginal cultures. Clearly, their numbers and the sociolinguistic situations made them somewhat

Table 3. Current language use domains in Botswana

| Domains | Languages qualifying | Comments |
|----------|--|---|
| Official | English | Justified by 80+% of use inter-ethnically |
| National | Setswana | Justified by 80+% of use inter-ethnically; also Setswana is intervening in official domains |
| Communal | Setswana; Ikalanga; Shekgalagari | Justified, but also imposed by monopolistic language use policy |
| Familial | Otjherero; Isindebele; Chishona (Zezuru); Nama (Sekgothu; Khoekhoegowab); Gciriku; Thimbukushu; Ciikuhane; Silozi; and all other San languages (Gui, Gana,; Khwedam (Buga & Ani) | For all other languages other than Setswana a liberal policy could raise them to the next level in early levels of education; community affairs Justifiable for all languages as a cultural and free choice right. |
| Personal | Cua (Cire-cire); Kua | For all other languages other than Setswana a liberal policy could raise them to the next level in early levels of education; community affairs (medical and commercial adverts) Justifiable as a personal choice for all known languages of the individual |

Language use domains derived from data of Chebanne & Nyati-Ramahobo (2003)

precarious, at risk of linguistic extinction. Instances of majority languages annihilating minority languages are a common occurrence in the whole region (Chebanne, 2003). Also, because of the attitude of the non-Khoisan, most Khoisan speakers believe that their languages are difficult to write because linguists suggest unconventional symbols, and this has impeded informal writing even by the literate Khoisan (Visser, 1998). Table 3 captures this current sociolinguistic situation and demonstrates that the policy of language use has effectively put all indigenous languages except Setswana in the situation of being dysfunctional even among speakers in their private domains.

As Table 3 suggests, languages are rendered irrelevant even within speakers' communities and programs of regional development (Table 3). This situation arises from the current language practice policy in Botswana (Nyati-Ramahobo, 1997; 2002; Batibo, 1998; Chebanne, 2003), which excludes all other languages apart from English and Setswana from public domains. The only likely scenario is that the marginalized languages will decline and disappear (cf. Batibo, 1996; 2003; Batibo & Smieja, 2000). In view of the facts presented in the table, it is imperative to argue for language access for all indigenous languages in all domains. A revised and objective language use policy is needed in Botswana (Nyati-Ramahobo, 2001).

The important sociolinguistic point to emphasize in terms of this discussion is that the Botswana model of social development does not favor linguistic diversity. Yet, when development is qualified democratically, it should accommodate ethno-linguistic diversity in the pursuit of unity and progress. How this can be achieved in Botswana is already a topic addressed in various official documents. The National Commission on Education of 1993 recommended that

a third school language choice should be available to allow Khoisan language access in schools in appropriate regions. The National Vision 2016 (1997: 10), which enjoins the nation to be tolerant, democratic, and united in diversity of languages and cultures, is another significant milestone in the evolution of this thinking. In the National Vision, the issues of ethnic and language realities of Botswana are alluded to in pillars 8 and 9, that, “no Motswana will be disadvantaged as a result of ... ethnic ... language,” and “the country will still possess a diverse mix of cultures, languages, traditions and peoples.... We will harness all that diversity.” However, by themselves these documents are not statutes and are unable to effectively make the nation achieve those ideals of preserving diversity and promoting languages, without fundamental constitutional change and modernization in the vast area of human rights.

Social matters are of paramount importance in the minds of the people and in the government’s goals of social harmony and unity in development (cf. Reaume, 2003). Developments and policies have had the unfortunate effects of causing social strife and disunity. As critics have observed (Chebanne, 2003; Saugestad, 2001), national development programs, with their recommended specific actions aimed at empowering and promoting Khoisan ethnic communities, have resulted in marginalization and the creation of negative attitudes towards ethnic identities resulting from forced assimilation. However, it is important that at the level of governance these issues should be taken into account in development plans in order to eliminate the trauma and disquiet that are byproducts of such programs, as indeed has been witnessed among Khoisan communities (Batibo & Smieja, 2000). Botswana must be proactive as well as innovative; constitutionally liberal as well as responsible; diverse as well as unified; and thriving culturally as well as linguistically. This is the only effective means by which to prove to outside activists and advocates for ethnic and linguistic groups that Botswana respects and cherishes its ethnic and linguistic diversity (Selolwane & Saugestad, 2002; Visser, 1998; cf. Webb, 1995). Experts who have examined issues raised in ethno-anthropological studies (cf. Solway, 1990; Saugestad, 2001) have bemoaned the likely evolution of the lives of the Khoisan; scrutiny of the Botswana constitution has likewise revealed its inherent inequities and inequalities (cf. Nyati-Ramahobo, 2002; successively modified by the author)⁽¹⁾. The Botswana constitution clearly deemphasizes linguistic and cultural determination of the nation in terms of its ethnic history and reality. The general timidity and vagueness of policies or laws relative to language meant and still means that outside the definition of ethnic territories, no other statutory obligations specifically refer to linguistic rights. This situation, intended or not, has had the assimilating consequences of encouraging the establishment of ethnic and language homogeneity. By protecting linguistic diversity legally, the problems of the marginalized can be addressed better, and their rights to language usage can also be preserved. Without this change, the sociolinguistic situation of the Khoisan is bleak and gloomy, and as time passes, the language shift from diversity to stronger and socially empowered languages such as Setswana and English will continue (Batibo, 2005; Batibo & Smieja, 2000).

CONCLUSION

This sociolinguistic discussion has endeavored to provide an overview of the ethnic and linguistic situation within the current socio-political context of Botswana. A deliberate distinction has been made between the language and ethnic groups to show how the ethnic and linguistic ecology of Botswana has favored stronger languages, that is, those languages that have broader domains of usage. Particular attention will have to be paid to the facilitation of disempowered ethno-linguistic groups to engage in national arenas and also to retain their cultural and linguistic distinctiveness. Without positive actions to promote ethnic languages and cultures of indigenous Khoisan groups, these communities will disappear. In Botswana, as elsewhere in the world, modern social developments (land use changes, sedentarization, commercialization, favorable language-use planning in the onset of mass education) need to be managed so that they purposefully contribute to preserving ethnic and language diversity from negative change (Nyati-Ramahobo & Chebanne, 2003–2004). Ethnic and linguistic diversity contributes positively to human development and enhances the meanings and practice of democracy. The antithesis of human development is to believe that, in social dynamics, the strength of the majority is always the right choice for a country. Khoisan communities need protection and the promotion of their languages so that the Khoisan can continue to exist as Khoisan.

NOTES

- (1) Nyati-Ramahobo (2002): *Sections 77-79* of the Constitution guarantee ex-officio membership to the House of Chiefs to eight Setswana-speaking tribes only; consequently, their culture and language are only once used in the national local affairs. The recent amendments do not address the issues that caused the amendments. The *Chieftainship Act* (Cap. 41: 01 - 03), which in its statements defines tribal entities by ascribing such privileges to the Bamangwato Tribe, the Batawana Tribe, the Bakgatla Tribe, the Bakwena Tribe, the Bangwaketse Tribe, the Bamalete Tribe, the Barolong Tribe and the Batlokwa Tribe, effectively and ethnically recognizes them and their language to be constitutionally prominent in ethnic and national affairs in all socio-cultural domains. The *Tribal Territories Act* is the basis of tribal territory determination of and administration by those tribes that feature in (Cap. 32: 03), i.e., the eight tribes who form the core and permanent and ex-officio members of the Statutory consultative body, the *Ntlo ya Dikgosi*, and guarantees group rights to land and its administration. All other ethnic groups, subsumed or not with the eight, have only individual rights at only the level of Land Boards allocations. Effectively ethnic communities of the North-East, Chobe, Ghanzi, and Kgalagadi, can be relocated without consideration of their ethnicity and attachment to land. *Sections 3 and 15* of the Constitution are deemed a source of ethnic discrimination, as they uphold Cap. 41: 01 of the Chieftainship Act and render sacrosanct Cap. 32: 03 (Tribal Territories Act); thus they are irrevocable and cannot be subjected to any piecemeal reforms that could be intended to eliminate tribal discrimination and the attended denial of linguistic and cultural rights of those ethnic groups that do not have Setswana as their mother tongue (full text available from Nyati-Ramahobo, University of Botswana).

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