

23th KUASS
(Kyoto University African Studies Seminar)

Updating Khoisan Phonetics

Date: Mar. 26, 2014 (Wed.), 15:00 – 18:00

Venue: Small Seminar Room I, 3F Inamori Center,
Kawabata Campus, Kyoto University

1. Cross-Khoisan phonotactics: a typologically uncommon feature of Khoisan phonology
Prof. Hiroshi Nakagawa (Tokyo University of Foreign Studies)
2. The phoneme inventory of Taa
Dr. Christfried Naumann (Max-Planck-Institut für evolutionäre Anthropologie Leipzig & Universität Leipzig)

Title 1. The phoneme inventory of Taa

Dr. Christfried Naumann

(Max-Planck-Institut für evolutionäre Anthropologie Leipzig & Universität Leipzig)

The phoneme inventory of Taa / West !Xoon is extremely large mainly due to the distinctive use of twelve different oral configurations (including double closures for lingual ingressive stops), several laryngeal settings for stops, and different phonation types for vowels. Several novel stop phonemes and obstruent clusters are presented, partially confirming predictions by Nakagawa (2006) and thus supporting his cluster analysis. According to the most conservative version of unit analysis, Taa would have more than 160 consonants, about twice as many as in the cluster analysis (about 85 consonants), and, likewise, twice as many as in the most complex consonant inventories outside the realm of Khoisan. Outstanding questions for the phonological analysis concern first of all phonation types in vowels. It is not excluded that palatalised obstruents, or perhaps lateral fricatives under the influence of Setswana, could play some marginal role, but they would probably be restricted to idiolects.