

## Click words which isiXhosa, isiZulu and Afrikaans have in common

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### Abstract

The Khoekhoe-branch languages of the broader Khoe language family contributed to the lexicon and the phonology of multiple other languages in South Africa both prior to and during the colonial period. Despite a series of catastrophic shift events that have led to the extinction or endangerment of these languages, the outcomes of their considerable sociolinguistic influence endure to this day. Unfortunately, resources that offer ready access to the etyma of Khoekhoe loanwords are limited, and the few that do exist rely on outdated sources and employ inaccessible orthographies. This etymological paper explores the diffusion of Khoekhoe-branch loanwords across multiple unrelated languages, focusing specifically on click loanwords that entered both isiZulu and isiXhosa as well as regional varieties of Afrikaans documented during field research in the Northern Cape. Click loanwords into seTswana and seSotho are also compared as necessary. Comparison of how the same etymon was adapted into different languages allows for contrastive discussion of how click consonants behave under different contact conditions while also demonstrating the considerable areal expanse of the linguistic influence historically wielded by the Khoekhoe languages. Some preliminary discussion of click loan from isiXhosa into Afrikaans is also offered, highlighting how click consonants can continue to undergo productive diffusion long after the extinction of their original donor language. It is hoped that this exploration will encourage increased interest in click loanwords as an areal feature specifically of modern South Africa and in the development of more accessible etymological resources.

**Keywords:** Khoekhoe languages, click consonants, language contact, sociohistorical linguistics, southern African language contact, areal linguistics, Bantu languages

### 1. Introduction

The title of this paper is a reference to *Click Words which Xhosa, Zulu and Sotho have in Common* (Bourquin 1951). Seventy years old and relying on lexicographical resources that were outdated even at the time, it remains the most extensive comparison of seSotho click words with Nguni click words and is also the only serious effort to compare loanwords of Khoekhoe origin across three modern South African languages simultaneously. This paper aims to conduct a similar survey but by comparing the closely-related Nguni languages isiXhosa and isiZulu with varieties of a lesser-known language that use click consonants – the Northern Cape

varieties of Afrikaans that have gained loanwords containing clicks via substrate interference from Nama and Kora (Christie 2023; Links 1989).

Comparative examinations of this sort have been undertaken for the southwestern BANTU (SWB) click languages of Namibia and Botswana but remain lacking for the southeastern BANTU (SEB) click languages of South Africa. Thanks to investigations by North American and European researchers (i.e., Bostoen & Sands 2012; Gunnink 2020a; Gunnink, Sands, Pakendorf & Bostoen 2015; Sands & Gunnink 2019), the historical origins of the click consonants in the SWB click languages — most of them remote minority languages of the Okavango — ironically have been far better studied in recent years than those of the major urban SEB click languages isiXhosa, isiZulu, and seSotho. Updated historical linguistic scholarship of click consonants as an areal feature of South Africa in particular is required.

This exploratory paper continues an ongoing investigation into contrasting phonological outcomes of click loan across separate contact events, part of which involves updating and improving the accessibility of Khoekhoe-branch etymologies for loanwords in Afrikaans, S30 Sotho-Tswana, and S40 Nguni. Section 2 provides a brief overview of click loan, with special attention paid to the phonological behaviour of click ‘type’ during lexical borrowing. Section 3 outlines the data collection process and the comparative etymological method. To organise discussion, comparable loanwords have been sorted broadly into semantic categories as recommended by Tadmor (2009: 59). Section 4 discusses general loanwords shared by Afrikaans and Nguni and includes loanwords pertaining to body parts, food, agriculture, and cultural belief, while Section 5 focuses more narrowly on loanwords pertaining to the natural world, including botanical and zoological terms. Section 6 shows how AfrikaansNguni comparison can assist in the solution of certain long-standing etymological puzzles. Finally, Section 7 provides preliminary evidence to suggest that some varieties of Afrikaans have begun to borrow click items directly from isiXhosa.

## **2. A theoretical overview of click loan**

This section offers a brief review of the existing literature on click loan.

### **2.1 Phonological outcomes of click loan**

Click loan was historically a fairly common phonological outcome of language contact in the Kalahari Basin Area (KBA) and beyond (Sands & Gunnink 2019). Click languages in the families KX'A, TUU, and KWADI-KHOE (see Güldemann 2014), on coming into contact with clickless languages, donated lexical items containing click consonants, resulting in the transfer of a click lexis into an ordinarily clickless language. Languages in the BANTU (Maddieson & Sands 2019), CUSHITIC (Maddieson, Spajić, Sands & Ladefoged 1993), and GERMANIC (Links 1989) families have all gained click consonants in this way.

Thanks again to the attention of linguists based outside of Africa, the acoustic and phonetic properties of click consonants are now well understood (Ladefoged & Maddieson 1996: 247; Miller, Brugman, Sands, Namaseb, Exter & Collins 2009; Sands 2020: 2). Incorporating clicks into existing phonological frameworks, however, remains challenging (Bennett (2020) offers a review). For want of a better term, ‘click type’ is used to refer to the placement of the tongue during the formation of the anterior closure and is loosely equivalent to the [+PLACE] feature of

non-click consonants (Fulop & Wright 2020: 250; Ladefoged & Maddieson 1996: 247 – 257; Miller et al. 2009: 133; Sands 2020: 4). Phonemic modifications including nasalisation, voicing, aspiration, affrication, and linguopulmonic contours may also be added.

Three possible phonological adaptations may occur when a clickless language borrows a loanword containing a click. The first is ‘click loss’, by which the click consonant is rejected by the clickless host phonology and is realised instead by a pulmonic consonant. Ordinarily a velar stop or velar ejective is used, but nasal segments may substitute for nasalised clicks. This has occurred in all seTswana loans of KHOE-family lexical items (Gunnink 2020b) and also characterises the adaptation of click consonants in general Afrikaans and South African (SA) English. For example, the affricated dental click in Namibian Khoekhoe |*khǎrúb*<sup>1</sup> (Haacke & Eiseb 2002: 212) and Kora |*xarus* (Du Plessis 2019: 297) “walking stick” is rephonologised using a voiceless velar stop, yielding general Afrikaans and SA English *kierie*; the plain lateral click in Namibian Khoekhoe |*gǒréb* “*Aloe asperifolia*” (Haacke & Eiseb 2002: 257) is rephonologised in southeasterly dialects of seTswana as *segolobe* “*Aloe cryptopoda*” (Cole 1995: 205) using a voiced velar stop.

For the purposes of this paper, the second style of adaptation will be called ‘type neutralisation’. Phonemic contrast embedded in click type in the donor inventory are neutralised and collapsed during loan into the host language, such that a loaned click word may be pronounced using any click type (Bostoen & Sands 2012; Gunnink 2020a; Gunnink et al. 2015; Sands & Gunnink 2019), although the dental click seems to be the most common adaptation, followed by the alveolar. This phonological outcome characterises the great majority of click contact events that have occurred across the broader KBA, and “the lack of respect for place distinctions” has been called “[o]ne of the most striking things about clicks in BANTU” (Maddieson & Sands 2019: 106 – 107). The loss of phonemic contrast has been attributed to the positioning of these languages at the geographic extremities of the ‘core click area’ of the KBA (Sands & Gunnink 2019), although it also has been argued that type neutralisation should be associated specifically with instances of casual contact and substrate interference (Christie 2023: 343 – 346). Type neutralisation characterises all lexical retention of Khoekhoe click words in the Afrikaans lexicon (Christie 2023; Links 1989; Kilian 2020; Killian 2009; Mössmer 2021).

The third style of click adaptation will be referred to as ‘type maintenance’, as the phonemic contrast embedded in click type is maintained during loan. Given that click type is contrastive in isiXhosa and isiZulu, South African readers may be surprised to learn that the neutralisation of clicks is considered so characteristic of BANTU by international researchers. The maintenance of phonemic click type during lexical borrowing is in fact a fairly rare outcome of contact between a click language and a clickless language. Outside of S40 Nguni, it is known only from R41 shiYeyi (Gowlett 1997; Lukusa 2009; Sommer & Voßen 1992), a SEB click language of Namibia and Botswana. The shiYeyi click lexis seems to have originated from relatively recent contact with KX’A and Kalahari KHOE languages (Sommer 1995: 157 – 160; Sommer & Voßen 1992: 4).

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<sup>1</sup> The standardised Namibian Khoekhoe orthography is used wherever possible throughout this article. This includes the use of click orthographies that may be unfamiliar to the South African reader. The dental click, represented as // in the IPA, is the equivalent of isiXhosa and isiZulu ‘c’. The (post-)alveolar click, /!/, is the equivalent of isiXhosa and isiZulu ‘q’. The lateral click, /l/, is the equivalent of isiXhosa and isiZulu ‘x’. The palatal click, /#/, has no equivalent in the Nguni languages.

## 2.2 Click loan in isiXhosa and Afrikaans

Older theories concerning ‘Bantu overlords’ and ‘Khoisan slavegirls, such as those proposed by Faye (1925) and Bryant (1929), have now largely been discredited (Herbert 1990: 298 – 299; Ownby 1985: 32 – 33), and the *isihlonipha* system of taboo avoidance cannot be shown to have interacted meaningfully with the click loan process (Gunnink 2019). It is increasingly accepted that the relationship between the Khoekhoe and the amaNguni was probably “socially equal” (Pakendorf, Gunnink, Sands & Bostoen 2017: 26). The massive number of click words present in isiXhosa and isiZulu are, therefore, best considered the result of an intensive and sustained contact relationship between socioeconomic peers.

The loan of Khoekhoe-branch items into Afrikaans, on the other hand, occurred primarily via a series of separate but interconnected language shift events in the Northern Cape. During these shifts, the socioeconomically marginalised Khoekhoe-branch languages were capable of exerting only fragmented substrate influence on regional varieties of Afrikaans, predominantly those used by Coloured communities of Khoekhoe descent (Christie 2023). Nama donated click words to Namaqualand Afrikaans and westerly Boesmanland Afrikaans, while Kora donated click words to Afrikaans as spoken in the southeast of Boesmanland and along the interior reaches of the Gariep River. Documentation of these loanwords is available, *inter alia*, from Links (1989), Killian (2009), Prinsloo (2008), Kilian (2020), Mössmer (2021), and Christie (2023).

Anecdotal observations by the author suggest that extinct and undocumented easterly varieties of Khoekhoe may have influenced the lexis of Coloured speakers of Afrikaans in the Eastern Cape, especially around Willowmore, Uitenhage, and the Baviaanskloof, where some click words are still used. However, formal documentation is required.

## 3. Data collection and comparative method

This section details the data collection process and provides an overview of the comparative method used to etymologise click words.

### 3.1 Data collection

The majority of isiXhosa items used for comparison were sourced from the three volumes of the *Greater Dictionary of isiXhosa* (Tshabe & Shoba 2006; Mini 2003; Pahl 1989) (GDX) with additional plant names taken from Dold and Cocks (1999) and Opland (2021). The majority of isiZulu items were sourced from Doke and Vilakazi (1949) with some additional plant names taken from Koopman (2015). Where necessary, comparisons are drawn with seSotho (Mabille & Dieterlen 1950) and seTswana (Brown 1965; Cole 1991; Cole 1995; Gunnink 2020b). Older resources have deliberately been used in order to capture archaisms that may have been omitted from more recent editions.

Afrikaans lexical items of Khoekhoe-branch origin are present in a variety of sources from the past century. Very few of these sources are linguistic (Boshoff & Nienaber 1967; Links 1989), and most are ethnobotanical (Archer 1994; Le Roux 1981; Marloth 1917; Nortje & van Wyk 2015; Powrie 2004; Smith 1966) or lay (Pettman 1913; Prinsloo 2008). Several of these in turn sourced items from early editions of the *Woordeboek van die Afrikaanse Taal* (Schoonees 1957)

(WAT). All sources use a host of unscientific orthographies to represent loaned clicks, typically <t'> or variations thereon, making them phonologically unworkable. Nonetheless, they demonstrate lexical retention of Nama and Kora in the repertoire of monolingual speakers of Afrikaans across the Northern Cape, primarily in Namaqualand and Boesmanland. For an extended review of these resources, see Christie (2023: 109 – 116).

Loanwords which contain click consonants, or 'click loanwords', have also begun to surface in Afrikaans-medium posts on social media, particularly on Facebook community pages for towns in the Northern Cape. Some examples of common loanwords frequently posted to public-facing Facebook pages are used to supplement discussion below. The <t'> convention used by ethnobotanists and lay authors to represent click consonants is often employed, but <xh> is also increasingly common. Since the only click orthography known to most Afrikaans speakers seems to be the aspirated lateral click <xh> used in <isiXhosa>, it has apparently been adopted as an informal orthography to capture loaned clicks. Similarly, <nx> is used to spell any loaned Damara click in the Afrikaans-matrix *kasietaal* spoken at Windhoek (Stell 2020: 60). Here it must always be understood that <t'>, <xh>, and <nx> indicate the presence of any non-contrastive click, usually but not always a dental click, not a specific phonemic click type.

During data collection between November 2020 and April 2022, click loanwords were recorded from 25 monolingual speakers of Khoekhoe-influenced Afrikaans. In order to compare the loaned click lexis with its origins, the etyma of the loanwords were recorded from seven L1 speakers of Nama at Steinkopf, Port Nolloth, and Pella during the same survey period. Some coding of consultants has been adapted for the purposes of this paper. The majority of monolingual Afrikaans consultants were interviewed in the Namaqualand region of the Northern Cape where the donor language was Nama, but some data also were collected from Carnarvon where the donor language was Kora. A detailed overview of the data collection method and process is available at Christie (2023: 134 – 151).

Several of the monolingual Afrikaans consultants independently verified the use of <t'> and <xh> as makeshift click orthographies and noted the ubiquity of these spellings on Facebook and WhatsApp. The L1 Nama consultants, however, all commented that they found these spellings deeply offensive and upsetting and strongly preferred the use of the standardised orthography developed for Namibian Khoekhoe. Informal orthographies using <t'> and <xh> are used in this article solely for the sake of the linguistic record, and the appropriate Namibian Khoekhoe or Kora orthography is supplied wherever possible. Tone, although not ordinarily marked in everyday usage, is also supplied when known, and geminate vowels are written out in full.

Some of the loanwords present in the lexicographic record are so localised and so archaic that they could not be recollected, and so no modern pronunciation is known. Wherever possible, however, contemporary pronunciations were obtained, and these are used to facilitate comparison and discussion below.

### 3.2 Comparative etymological method

The process of assigning Khoekhoe-branch etymology to an Afrikaans loanword is often fraught, as the phonemic contrast ordinarily supplied by click consonants (and by tone melodies) has been stripped. The high functional load of click consonants means that the

identification of the click type is crucial in retrieving the etymology of a loanword. Both type neutralisation, by which the etymological click is replaced by any click, and click loss, by which the etymological click is replaced by a pulmonic consonant, collapse phonemic contrasts, yielding extensive homophony in loan. While reasonable semantic judgements can usually be made, there are certain instances in which the etymology simply cannot be determined without confirmation of the original click type, which obfuscates the history of certain loanwords.

Some of these difficulties can be mitigated. In the comparative process employed for this paper, Khoekhoe-branch loanwords that have undergone click neutralisation in regional Afrikaans are checked against the same loanwords in isiXhosa and isiZulu, which have retained the historical click type. This functions as a safeguard against guesswork and can be used to ensure accuracy when assigning etymologies to click loanwords in click-neutralising languages.

Finally, it is acknowledged that many of the click or click-derived items in the isiXhosa, isiZulu, seTswana, and seSotho lexicographic record are regional, archaic, and possibly obsolete. To conduct a historical comparison, historical forms of the language must be used. However, it is acknowledged that such items may be unfamiliar, or else may seem very old-fashioned, to present-day speakers. A lexicographic reference is therefore supplied for every item compared.

#### 4. General click loanwords

This section discusses parallel Afrikaans and Nguni loanwords that contain click consonants and that fall into generalised semantic categories such as body parts, food, agriculture, and cultural belief.

##### 4.1 Body parts, food, and everyday actions

Among the most ubiquitous loanwords resulting from Khoekhoe substrate interference with Afrikaans is *norrakop* “back of the head” and variations thereon. It is discussed as *norro*, *t’norra*, *ghnorra* “occiput, neck” (Boshoff & Nienaber 1967: 451); *norratjie* “nape of the neck” (Bosman, van der Merwe & Hiemstra 1984: 496); *tnorro* “occiput” (Links 1989: 66); and *tkjorro*, *tknorro*, *t’norro*, *norra* “hollow between the two tendons of the neck at the back of a person’s neck where the skull comes into contact with the spine” (Prinsloo 2008: 486). It remains in widespread usage among monolingual speakers of regional Afrikaans across Namaqualand and Boesmanland. This item derives from Namibian Khoekhoe *!nòrǒs* (Haacke & Eiseb 2002: 367), Kora *!norob* (Du Plessis 2019: 317), “occiput, back of the head”, using the nasalised alveolar click.

Pronunciations of *!nòrǒs* collected in Northern Cape Afrikaans include, but are not limited to, /<sup>ʙ</sup>lǒrǒ/, /<sup>ʙ</sup>ǂǒra/, /<sup>ʙ</sup>!ǒra/, /lǂǒra/, /lǂǒra/, /!ǂǒrǒ/, and /ǂǂǒrǒ/, with both click type and click modification varying considerably between speakers and between different tokens of the same item from the same speaker. This accords with observations of click type neutralisation in the SWB click languages: any click type may feasibly be employed, and click type is not phonemic. In isiXhosa, however, only the alveolar click may be used, just as in Khoekhoe. The phonemic contrast embedded in the alveolar click type survived loan and remains contrastive today. Numerous doublets of this item exist, including *inqolo* “back part of head” (Louw 1977: 84;

not present in the GDX), *isingqolontsi* “the back of the head” (GDX 2.722), and *isingqoloma* “the first vertebra” (GDX 2.722).<sup>2</sup>

Another loaned term for a body part, *tkoenie* “elbow” (Prinsloo 2008: 486), remains in widespread everyday usage in regional Afrikaans and is often diminutivised, *-tjie*. It may undergo click loss and be completely rephonologised as *koenietjie* /kunica:/, but in the majority of tokens collected, it retained a non-contrastive click in a monolingual Afrikaans context. It derives straightforwardly from Nama and Kora reflexes of the Namibian Khoekhoe *!ùníb* “elbow” (Haacke & Eiseb 2002: 303), using the prenasalised glottalised alveolar click /<sup>h</sup>!ʔ/. This click type is maintained in the isiXhosa loan *ingqiniba* “elbow” (GDX 2.463) and is a contrastive phoneme, although the alveolar click has gained breathy-voiced homorganic nasalisation through environmental proximity to the CL9 prefix.

A number of shared items pertain to food and drink. For example, the loanblend <tʰkabbabrood> derives from Namibian Khoekhoe *!hàbá* (Haacke & Eiseb 2002: 397), Kora *!hàbà* (Du Plessis 2019: 321), “flat”. Per a Springbok consultant, who pronounced it /<sup>h</sup>ʔabòbru:t/, it refers to flatbreads baked “*sonder suurdeeg, net so in die pot*” or “without leavening, just as it is in the pot”; an Okiep consultant preferred the pronunciation /!q̄ababru:ət/. This loanblend appears frequently in social media posts discussing Namaqualand cuisine in public-facing groups on Facebook where it may also be spelled <xhabbabrood>. The etymon *!hàbá* was also loaned very productively into both isiXhosa and isiZulu, and, as seems to be ordinary for the Khoekhoe palatal click, it was adapted as a dental click, giving rise to items including the ideophone *ukuthi caba* “of flatness”, “to be flat” and a derived noun *isicaba* “any flat object” (Doke & Vilakazi 1949: 97; GDX 1.256).

An easterly reflex of the Namibian Khoekhoe *!gàbú* “tasteless, insipid”, appears in isiXhosa as *igqwaba* “coffee or tea without sugar; a tasteless drink” (GDX 1.640). In Namaqualand and Boesmanland, this term is very widespread, but it is often realised with the vowel-breaking (or ‘diphthongisation’) characteristic of recent sound changes in more southerly Khoekhoe varieties (Christie 2023: 228 – 231). Spelled *ghouboe*, *ghaboe*, or *kouboe* in the lexicographic record (WAT 3.248), and appearing as <tʰgouboe> or else <xhouboe> on social media, recorded pronunciations included /!q̄œubu/, /<sup>h</sup>q̄œubu/, /!œubu/, /!q̄œubu/, and /!²abu/. Again, click type varied both inter- and intraspeaker, as is normal under type-neutralising conditions. That the isiXhosa form does *not* feature this vowel-breaking pattern at all implies that it was loaned from an older reflex that preserved the historical Khoekhoe form *!gàbú*.

A particularly productive loan from Khoekhoe into Nguni is *!gǎé*, literally “to tie”, “to fasten”, but with a secondary sense of ‘to bind with a contract’, hence “to hire”, “to employ” (Haacke & Eiseb 2002: 306). This secondary sense entered isiXhosa as *ukuqesha* “to hire”, “to rent”, “to employ” (GDX 3.25) and isiZulu as *ukuqasha* “to hire”, “to rent” (Doke & Vilakazi 1949: 690), both of which in turn spawned multiple derivatives. The Khoekhoe vowel sequence /ae/ is ostensibly adapted to the strictly \*VV structure of Nguni by deleting either of the vowels (see further, Louw 1977: 54 – 55). The same item appears in the serial verb *!gǎé-ǎm* “to tie up”, loaned into Namaqualand and Boesmanland Afrikaans as the noun *tʰkaaiampie* “a bundle”,

<sup>2</sup> This item is historically separate from *umqolo* “backbone”, which derives from Namibian Khoekhoe *!hùrīb* “backbone” (Haacke & Eiseb 2002: 338), as correctly noted by Louw (1974: 51), although some conflation may have occurred.

here with the vowel sequence /ae/ adapted as the diphthong /a:i/ and with the ordinary diminutive allomorph /-pie/ applied in the environment of the word-final bilabial.

The following recording from Concordia in the Northern Cape contextualises its usage. Two monolingual Namaqualand Afrikaans consultants, coded CDA\_2 and CDA\_3, define the term in discussion with a research assistant, coded RA. Both used an alveolar click with an audible dorsal release, or ‘linguopulmonic contour’ (Miller et al. 2009), the same click they used for the majority of their Nama loanwords.

(1)

CDA\_2: *As ek kom kuier by Hatta<sup>3</sup> vir die weekend, so Hatta moet vir my 'n [!q̣a:ijəm] maak. 'n Hoendertjie, 'n vleisietjie, 'n rysietjie, 'n bietjie suiker.*

CDA\_3: *Dis nou 'n [!q̣a:ijəm] daai.*

CDA\_2: *'n [!q̣a:ijəm] maak.*

RA: *'n Pakkie.*

CDA\_2: *'n Pakkie.*

RA: *Dis eintlik padkos.*

CDA\_2: *Yes, 'n pakkie vir die huis, yes. 'n [!q̣a:ijəm̩pi:], dis 'n [!q̣a:ijəm̩pi:].*

CDA\_2: *If I'm coming to stay with Hatta for the weekend, then Hatta has to make a [!q̣a:ijəm] for me. A bit of chicken, a bit of meat, a bit of rice, some sugar.*

CDA\_3: *That's a [!q̣a:ijəm].*

CDA\_2: *Make a [!q̣a:ijəm].*

RA: *A little parcel.*

CDA\_2: *A little parcel.*

RA: *It probably means padkos.*

CDA\_3: *Yes, a little parcel for the house, yes. A [!q̣a:ijəm̩pi:], that's a [!q̣a:ijəm̩pi:].*

The same distinction in the adaptation of Khoekhoe vowel sequences is visible in the loan of #n̩i ‘to catch with birdlime’; ‘to cling to’, ‘to stick to’; ‘to be very sticky’. This appears in isiXhosa as the ideophone *ukuthi nca*, *ukuthi ncatsha* (GDX 1.441) ‘to adhere’, ‘to stick to’ with derivations that include the relative stem *-ncangathi* ‘sticky’, ‘adhesive’ and the noun *isincanlalala* ‘something that cannot be removed’. It also appears in isiZulu as *ukuncasha* ‘to cling to’, ‘to cleave to’ (Doke & Vilakazi 1949: 528). As in the loan of !gǎé as *ukuqasha*, V<sub>2</sub>, here *-i-*, is deleted. This item #n̩i is also a frequent loan in Namaqualand Afrikaans, in which it may be inflected using the Afrikaans past participial prefix *ge-*, and in which it carries the sense ‘to stick to’, as in the example sentence “*die stroop kaai vas aan my hande*” or “the syrup *kaais* tight to my hands” (Prinsloo 2008: 174). This item was very broadly known to consultants with pronunciations including /<sup>ʙ</sup>a:i/, /<sup>ʙ</sup>||a:i/, /<sup>ʙ</sup>!a:i/, /||q̣a:i/, /||q̣'a:i/, and /#q̣a:i/; all forms loaned the Nama vowel sequence /ai/ as the Afrikaans diphthong /a:i/.

<sup>3</sup> CDA\_2 referred to her older family member, CDA\_3, using a kinship term /hata/, here spelled <hatta>. This is likely the same term *adda* recorded by Carstens (1966: 89) for the eldest sister in a family who undertakes childrearing duties. The other sororal terms recorded by Carstens for Namaqualand, *lala* and *nana*, are used across South Africa as familiar-polite forms of address between women, probably of isiXhosa or isiZulu origin, but *adda* or *hatta* is unique to Namaqualand Afrikaans, and its derivation is unclear. Carstens tentatively associates it with *ápà* ‘to carry on one’s back’ (Haacke & Eiseb 2002: 16), as the referent is ‘the person who carried her brothers and sisters on her back’ (Carstens 1966: 93), but it should perhaps be compared instead with *äikáís* ‘maternal aunt’ (Haacke & Eiseb 2002: 3).

## 4.2 Livestock & agriculture

Several examples of Khoekhoe loanwords pertaining to livestock and coat colours are present in isiXhosa and isiZulu, speaking to the socioeconomic significance of cattle across both cultures (as noted by Harinck (1969: 147) and Herbert (1990: 299)). A selection of such loanwords is shown in Table 1, with most derived using the Nguni augmentative suffix *-kazi*. Noteworthy is the derivation of isiXhosa *inqombokazi* ‘a dark-red beast’ from Namibian Khoekhoe *!nàǔb*, literally ‘red ochre’.

**Table 1.** Khoekhoe loanwords.

| Gloss                    | isiXhosa           | isiZulu            | Nama   | Kora  |
|--------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------|-------|
| red-and-white beast      | <i>incokazi</i>    | <i>inco</i>        | hòò    | hooku |
| ewe, dam                 |                    | <i>ilixukazi</i>   | !gǔùs  | !ũus  |
| freemartin               | <i>ingqabakazi</i> |                    | !gǎmá  |       |
| beast with a white blaze | <i>ingqabe</i>     |                    | !nààb  |       |
| dark-red beast           | <i>inqombokazi</i> |                    | !nǎǔ.b | !naub |
| grey-dappled beast       | <i>-ngqoqo</i>     | <i>umqungokazi</i> | ‡hòà   | !noa  |

Fewer items pertaining to stockherding have survived in Afrikaans, perhaps because of the loss of stockherding as a ubiquitous cultural practice during the social assimilation that attended language shift in Khoekhoe communities, or else because of the restrictions on land access and grazing rights implemented in the Northern Cape under Apartheid (see discussions, Emmett 1987: 36; Rohde & Hoffman 2008: 195). Here it should be noted, however, that dedicated linguistic surveys of *veewagters* (“stockherders”) in Namaqualand and Boesmanland have not been carried out. These groups of farm labourers, who spend lengthy periods of time in the veld, have historically been associated with linguistic conservatism; among bilingual residents of the Richtersveld who normally prioritise Afrikaans, “even young people will switch to Nama as soon as they arrive at the stockpost” (Berzborn 2003: 350). Afrikaans click words pertaining specifically to stockherding may be in use only in these discourse contexts. A South African ‘Yan Tan Tethera’ may yet await documentation.

Two obscure items occur only in the lexicographic record and are probably now obsolete. The term *ghamma* “freemartin (of animals)” (Boshoff & Nienaber 1967: 248; WAT 3.239) and “animal, especially a ewe, which does not breed because it is barren” (Prinsloo 2008: 90) derives *ex* Namibian Khoekhoe *!gǎmáb* “sterile animal” (Haacke & Eiseb 2002: 309) and is paralleled in isiXhosa by *ingqabakazi* “barren woman or animal” (GDX 2.552). The loanblend *orrabok* “goat which is in milk, but whose kid is dead, or has been taken away, or perhaps has already been weaned” (Prinsloo 2008: 449) is on record *ex* Namibian Khoekhoe *òrós* “animal which has lost its offspring” (Haacke & Eiseb 2002: 104), but this item was not encountered during fieldwork and does not appear in Nguni.

Only one Namaqualand Afrikaans loanword in this category was rerecorded during field research. The item *‡nǎ̀ni* “to scrounge leftover milk” (Haacke & Eiseb 2002: 421), sometimes spelled *ghoenie* in loan (Boshoff & Nienaber 1967: 254; Prinsloo 2008: 95; WAT 3.245), was used with a click by fifteen monolingual Afrikaans consultants with a sense of “to milk the last

few drops from a goat”, “to struggle to melk”; pronunciations included /luni/, /!uni/, /<sup>ɱ</sup>luni/, /#quni/, and /!quni/. Assuming the slight fronting that often attends Khoekhoe /u/ in Nguni loans, and the ordinary adaptation of the Khoekhoe palatal click as a Nguni dental click, this item is probably connected with the isiXhosa verb *ukucinta* (GDX 1.315) “to milk to the last drop”, “to obtain very little milk” and with the isiZulu noun *umncinzo* (Doke & Vilakazi 1949: 432), or *umncunze* (Doke & Vilakazi 1949: 535), “the milking of a cow more than the regular twice a day”.

### 4.3 Cultural beliefs

The massive cultural assimilation that attended language shift from Khoekhoe to Afrikaans means that loanwords pertaining to cultural beliefs and traditions are few and obscure. This is not to say that no elements of historical Khoekhoe culture survived into the 20<sup>th</sup> century; instances are certainly documented from across the Northern Cape. Carstens (1966: 182 – 185), for example, described the mid-century belief at Steinkopf in a supernatural springhare termed the *has*, ostensibly derived from the Namibian Khoekhoe *!óàs* “hare”.<sup>4</sup> If this word does indeed derive from *!óàs*, then this is a valuable early attestation of click type neutralisation, with the Namibian Khoekhoe pre-nasalised glottalised alveolar click being neutralised to a non-contrastive dental click in Afrikaans. This item is also present in the isiZulu *ingqwangi* “small species of rabbit” (Doke & Vilakazi 1949: 564) where the alveolar click is maintained, but here it is used without supernatural connotations.

For the most part, however, this semantic sphere was not a particularly productive source of loanwords for Afrikaans (on the adoption of Khoekhoe cultural beliefs into isiXhosa, see Harinck (1969)). Older Khoekhoe terms instead seem to have been replaced in the 20<sup>th</sup> century by Afrikaans neologisms, possibly as a form of circumlocution or taboo avoidance. Both *blikdraer* “tin-carrier”, or someone who keeps harmful medicine in a tin or box (Carstens 1966: 178), and the better-known *nagloper* “nightwalker” (Engelbrecht 1936: 180) historically served as euphemisms for practitioners of witchcraft and seem to have precluded the loan of any Khoekhoe term. Likewise, the neologism *bossiedokter* “doctor who uses bushes” is the preferred term across Namaqualand for community members who are respected for their knowledge of healing plants.

Only one item in this category overlaps in both Afrikaans and isiXhosa. The Kharkams loanblend *ntwangweer*, meaning “a sort of dark, misty weather that, according to superstition, indicates that something is about to happen, e.g., someone is about to die” (Links 1989: 65), suggests cultural retention until at least the 1980s. This same word seems to recur with *tkjwa* “a sort of weather that predicts death” (Prinsloo 2008: 484). The loan derives from a Namibian Khoekhoe term *|hòà*, most literally “to form cirrus clouds” (Haacke & Eiseb 2002: 206), in other words, the high ice clouds that herald a cold front and, hence, precede rain on the west coast. Two particular use cases are of interest; firstly, the phrase *khoeb ge ra |hòà*, literally “the [death of the] man is causing cirrus clouds”, which the dictionary entry notes is “said when sky becomes overcast on occasion of death”, and secondly, the compound noun *|hòà||àmmi*, which refers to “(especially unseasonable) rain linked to a death” (Haacke & Eiseb 2002: 206).

<sup>4</sup> However, comparison should also be drawn with *lhàǎs*, ‘a mythical jackal’ that behaves in much the same way as the Steinkopf springhare and is specified to be a Nama dialectal term (Haacke & Eiseb 2002: 198). It is possible that, with *!óàs* having lost both its contrastive click and tone after being retained in Namaqualand Afrikaans, it was reborrowed back into southerly Nama as *lhàǎs*.

Precisely the same cultural association is recorded in the GDX. The CL5 nouns *ilinco* and *ilincwe* are considered variants on the same lemma, and both mean “a light cloud that releases or might release a drizzle while the sun is still shining; a light rain that falls while the sun is shining” (GDX 2.451). Appended to this definition is the note that “some amaXhosa believe that this rain signals the death of an adult man, others that it indicates a death in general” (GDX 2.451). This semantic similarity implies that the particular association of unseasonable or unexpected rainfall with death was, firstly, shared among Khoekhoe-speaking communities on either side of the Karoo in both the Northern Cape and the Eastern Cape; and, secondly, that this association was sufficiently entrenched into both amaXhosa culture and Coloured Afrikaans culture to motivate the loan of |hòà.

## 5. Click loanwords concerning the natural world

That natural terminology associated with a particular region is often a prime candidate for loan has been discussed in the context of click loan (Gunnink et al. 2015: 217) as SWB communities moving from drier savanna and grassland into the Okavango region do seem to have loaned items pertaining to local wetland plants and animals as well as to fishing and canoeing technologies. This section discusses some similar examples in which specific geographic and natural features of the Karoo landscape motivated loan into Afrikaans and Nguni.

### 5.1 Geographic features

The hills of Namaqualand are conspicuous for their flat, smooth expanses of sandstone (see Fig. 1). The very common loanblend *tkaubank* (Prinsloo 2008: 486), often seen as <xhaobank> on social media, is generally applied to these landscapes and derives from the Namibian Khoekhoe *!hàòb* “a shelf, ridge, or layer of rock”, or, in the feminine *!hàòs*, “dome-shaped rock” (Haacke & Eiseb 2002: 331). Here the uniqueness of these geographic features may have motivated loan. Additionally, CDA\_2 cited a regional expression containing this item and associated it explicitly with the *grootmense*<sup>5</sup> “elders”, indicating that idiom may have assisted in the preservation of lexical archaism.

*Die grootmense het altyd gesê, ‘Op ’n [ʔa:ubaŋk] groei nie gras nie.’ En dan is it, wanneer ek ’n seun sal sê, miskien hy’s jonk, hy kry nie baard nie, sien jy, dis ’n [ʔa:ubaŋk].*

The elders always used to say, ‘Grass doesn’t grow on a [ʔa:ubaŋk].’ So that’s, if I want to describe a boy, maybe he’s young, his beard hasn’t come in, do you see, that’s a [ʔa:ubaŋk].

Several variations on *!hàòb* appear in isiXhosa, all maintaining the expected alveolar click. The most immediately visible is *iqawuka* “an elevated, stony place with a sparse covering of grass” (GDX 3.19), in which labiovelar glide epenthesis has been used to resolve the Khoekhoe vowel sequence. There exists also the reduplicated form *uqaqa* “a flat, rough, rocky place on top of a mountain; a flat-topped koppie of the Karoo” (GDX 3.14) in which V<sub>2</sub> -o- has been deleted. This, again, suggests that the loan of *!hàòb* was motivated by necessity and was required to describe unique geographic features of karoooid terrain.

<sup>5</sup> A Northern Cape regionalism, literally “greatfolk”, for community elders, replacing the more general *oumense* “oldfolk”, and probably calqued from *káikhòèn*, literally “greatfolk”, used of senior community members (Haacke & Eiseb 2002: 60).



**Figure 1.** An example of a !hàòb, or flat expanse of rock, in the Kamiesberge.

Other terms for the Namaqualand landscape that persist into Afrikaans include the Kharkams record *ntgwa* “a stony rand where livestock graze” (Links 1989: 63), repeated as *kwa* “rocky ridge” (Prinsloo 2008: 379) and rerecorded as /!oa/, /#oa/, /!qoa/, and /!qoa/. This term is derived from the Namibian Khoekhoe *!hòáb* “cliff, overhang” (Haacke & Eiseb 2002: 392) and appears in isiXhosa *umxawuka* “a steep, stony hillside or mountain which is difficult to climb” (GDX 3.567) with the lateral click intact. The *hapax* Kharkams record *ntgoeroetjie* “a small hill with loose stones” (Links 1989: 63), *ex* Namibian Khoekhoe *!hòròb* “steep riverbank”, “steep slope” (Haacke & Eiseb 2002: 311, 337), was not rerecorded but is paralleled in the isiXhosa item *ugqolo* “a steep ascent, a perpendicular hillside” (GDX 1.628) and the isiZulu *uqolo* “precipitous hill” (Doke & Vilakazi 1949: 710) and *umqolomba* “edge of precipice” (Doke & Vilakazi 1949: 710). A declicked form is shared by seTswana as *mokolo* “a steep bank”, “a descending slope” (Brown 1965: 208) and by seSotho as *khohlo* “glen, gorge, kloof” (Mabille & Dieterlen 1950: 162).

## 5.2 Fauna

Animal terminology includes some calques (for Afrikaans calques in Namibian Khoekhoe, see Haacke (2015: 66 – 67)). One example is the isiXhosa *isaqhomolo*, the “black steenbras” or *Cymatoceps nasutus* (GDX1.51), which loans a reflex of *!òm* “to pollard” and references the Namibian Khoekhoe *!òm+gùis*, literally “pollard-nose”, used of the *stompneus* fish *Rhabdosargus globiceps* (family Sparidae) (Haacke & Eiseb 2002: 301). The Afrikaans *stompneus*, literally ‘stump-nose’, is a common term for several fish species in the genus

*Rhabdosargus* and thus directly calques !òmǀgùis ‘pollard-nose’. That !òmǀ must have been used in names for these fish species in Khoekhoe before widespread colonial contact, and, hence, that Afrikaans calqued the Khoekhoe rather than the reverse, is demonstrated by *isaqhomolo*.

Less defensible is a putative relationship between the Afrikaans term *blesbok* (lit., ‘blaze antelope’) for the *Damaliscus pygargi* subspecies *phillipsi* and the Kora !naberib (Du Plessis 2019: 358) for the same. The Kora term must derive, through the suffixing of the -rè- morpheme typically used to create animal names, from an unattested cognate of the Namibian Khoekhoe !nààb “a blaze on an animal’s face” (Haacke & Eiseb 2002: 355), and it is this form that appears in the isiXhosa *ilinga* for both subspecies of *Damaliscus pygargus* (GDX 2.700). Certainly, this word may have influenced the Afrikaans *blesbok*, but the name is so self-evidencing that it was more likely an independent coinage.

The same is true of isiXhosa *inxala* (GDX 2.836), isiZulu *inxala* (Doke & Vilakazi 1949: 614) “rhebuck” (*Redunca arundinum*), which was in turn loaned from isiZulu into seSotho (which neutralises all clicks to an alveolar) as *leqala* or *leqoala* (Mabille & Dieterlen 1950: 313). This item must originate in an easterly reflex of Namibian Khoekhoe !khàà “to bound or leap, esp. as of prancing springbok” (Haacke & Eiseb 2002: 278) with influence from the derived noun !khààsès “klipspringer” (*Oreotragus oreotragus*); the same item is also present in the unrelated click language !Xam, probably having been loaned from Kora, as !ko “*Oreotragus [oreotragus]*”, as provided by !Han #Kass'o in Lloyd (1878). Whether this association between “antelope” and ‘leaping’ influenced such Afrikaans names as *springbok* (literally, “jumping antelope”) and *klipspringer* (literally, “rock-jumper”) is moot, but unlikely.

One animal name that is clearly shared between Khoekhoe, Afrikaans, S30 Sotho-Tswana and S40 Nguni refers to *Proteles cristata*, the *aardwolf*, often termed *maanhaarjakkals* or *weerwolf* in the Northern Cape. It appears in the lexicographic record as *gheip*, *neip* “*maanhaarjakkals*” (Boshoff & Nienaber 1967: 250; WAT3.241), *ntgie* “*maanhaarjakkals*” (Links 1989: 63), and *t'gie* “*maanhaarjakkals*” (Prinsloo 2008: 484), and it was rerecorded from both Namaqualand and Boesmanland. The Nama is regularly |gǀib (Haacke & Eiseb 2002: 189), while the Kora was recorded both as |gib and, with ‘vowel-breaking’, as |gaib (Du Plessis 2019: 356). The older form is reflected in isiXhosa as *ingci* and in isiZulu as *isinci* (as noted in Meinhof (1905: 60)) and so must have entered both languages fairly early, prior to the sound change that saw the development of the form |gaib. With click loss, it appears in southerly seTswana as *thukhwi* (Cole 1995: 56). This item remains current in Afrikaans in communities of the Gariiep at least in part because of the medicinal use of the tail and some internal organs of *Proteles cristata* in a remedy for infants and children. A Carnarvon consultant, coded CVN\_1, noted:

*Die weerwolf se stert, soos die mense sê die [ǀq̥eip] se gat, word gebruik vir kinders wat daai styfe besigheid het, daai wat hulle so styftrek.*

The tail of [*Proteles cristata*], the arse of the [ǀq̥eip] as people say, is used for children that have that stiff business that pulls them so stiff.

The same item was also recorded from a monolingual Afrikaans consultant with lexical retention of Kora as /!eip/ *se gat*, with a similar medical usage, at Prieska (Kilian 2020: 105). An older observation describes a similar practice in Namaqualand.

Infantile convulsions must have given the old women much work. A favourite prescription for this complaint was, and still is ... the dried kidney of the *D/aie jackal* ... . [A] powder is made which is worked into a linen band (in old days, a strip of hide) and fastened round the neck of the small patient. Small doses are then given internally mixed with mother's milk.

Laidler (1928)

Laidler's idiosyncratic orthography used <D/> to capture the dental click, suggesting that the item he heard was indeed a reflex of |g*aib*. The reference to "infantile convulsions" certainly accords with the Carnarvon reference to *styre besigheid*. This suggests that this remedy was historically widespread among Khoekhoe communities of the Northern Cape and that it contributed to the longevity of the loanword.

Even outside of a medical context, |g*ïib* is still used by monolingual Afrikaans farmers in Namaqualand. A consultant from the Hondeklipbaai area, coded WKL\_1, recalled it in the context of local idiom.

*'n Man kan nie van die huis af weggaan. Hy moet sy vrou oppas, want enige tyd moet sy kooi toe gaan. Hy kan nie weggaan nie, da' sê ôs, 'Hy sit voor 'n [li:xat]'. En dit kom van die [ʰli:xat]. Dis 'n [ʰli:jakts], dis 'n maanhaarjakkals. Hy wag sy tyd af vir die kind se geboorte. Vroeër jare, die maanhaarjakkals is gejag en geëet. Nou sit en wag die man tot hy uitkom, en hy sit so 'n entjie van die gat af. Da' hou hy hom dop, daar kom hy nou uit, hy kom skemeraand uit, en dan sit hy die honde, staan hy voor die gat en die honde hom kan vang. Dit wil sê, hy wag sy tyd af. En dis waar die gesegde, 'Hy sit voor 'n [li:xat]' kom.*

A man can't leave his house. He has to look after his wife, because any time now she's going to have to go her lying-in. He can't leave, so we'll say, 'He's sitting in front of a [li:] den.' And that comes from the [ʰli:] den. It's a [ʰli:] jackal, it's a maned jackal. He's biding his time before the child's birth. In the olden days, the maned jackal was hunted and eaten. So the man sits and watches until it comes out. He sits a little way away from the den. So he keeps watch, and then it comes out, it comes out in the evening, and then he lets the dogs loose, he stands in front of the den so that the dogs can catch it. That is to say, he bides his time. And that's where the saying, 'He's sitting in front of a [li:] den' comes from.

Here the phrase 'to sit before the |g*ïigat*', historically with a literal meaning originating in veldcraft, has taken on an idiomatic sense of 'to wait anxiously for a birth'. As with *!hàòbank*, discussed in Section 4.1 above, this parallels the general cross-linguistic tendency of lexical archaisms to persist in compound nouns and fixed phrases long after they have ceased to be productive elsewhere. The terms *maanhaarjakkals* and *weerwolf* are ubiquitously used in general Afrikaans for *Proteles cristata*, implying that there is no pragmatic necessity to loan |g*ïib*, but archaic idiom and persistence of historical medical practices have both served to anchor Khoekhoe-branch items in Afrikaans.

### 5.3 Flora

The majority of Khoekhoe-branch items to have entered Afrikaans are plant names. Their particular persistence in Coloured Afrikaans communities following language shift was noted as early as the 1930s by Rademeyer (1938: 101 – 102). Discussion of how the particular floral diversity of the Cape may have served to anchor Khoekhoe plant names in Afrikaans as an archaic lexical set is available from Christie (2021), and similar motivations may underlie the loan of at least some plant names into isiXhosa and isiZulu.

One especially valuable ethnobotanical indicator of shared areal semantics is the widespread overlap of terms referring to plants used in the production of incense, perfume, and cosmetics. Several S-zone languages use a cognate term meaning “wind”, “air”, “breath” for fumigatory plants. isiXhosa and isiZulu share the term *impepho*, literally “wind”, “breath”, for sweet-smelling shrubs in the genus *Helichrysum* (family Asteraceae) burned as incense; seSotho uses *phefo* for several species of *Helichrysum* (Philips 1917: 126 – 129), while seTswana uses *phehó* for *Helichrysum nudifolium* (Cole 1995: 244). This is paralleled in the Khoekhoe-branch languages by the Damara use of *†oas*, literally “wind”, “storm”, for several fragrant plants in the genus *Aptosimum* (family Scrophulariaceae) in reference to their fumigatory properties (Sullivan 1998: 74 – 75). This shared conceit underlies the development of a series of Northern Cape compound names premised on *-storm* for aromatic shrubs historically used in the production of *sāb* (“cosmetics”, “perfume”, “medicine”), including *rooistorm*, *swartstorm*, and *witstorm* (Du Plessis 2019: 366). This suggests parallel Khoekhoe-branch influence on the ethnobotanical semantics of several S-Zone languages and on Afrikaans.

Some calques are present, but, as with animal names, certain features are so obvious that proof is difficult. One at least is quite clear. The Kora *|'uisāb* (lit., “stone medicine”) “a lichen obtained from rocks” (Engelbrecht (1936: 107), brought forward to Du Plessis (2019: 369) with an incorrect botanical identity) is directly calqued by the Afrikaans *klipboegoe* (lit., “stone medicine”) used of “an aromatic lichen found growing on granitic outcrops in Namaqualand” (Smith 1966: 297). The correct identity is apparent from a description by Schultze (1907: 208) of the use of the lichen *Parmelia hottentotica* in Nama *!uǀkhaob* (literally, “stone-scrapings”, “stone-rind”). The verb *!khao* “to scrape clean”, “to descale a fish” is likely the etymon of the isiXhosa noun *ixolo* “peel”, “rind”, “scale”, “tree bark” (GDX3.605), which is also used in the loanblend *amaxolo amatye* (literally “peelings of the rocks”) for *Parmelia* species.

Most semantic commonalities shared with Afrikaans, however, are of independent origin. The isiXhosa *umunchu* “*Oxalis corniculata*”, *umncwane* “*Oxalis semiloba*, *O. smithiana*” (Dold & Cocks 1999: 141) are derived from the relative stem *-muncu* “sour” (GDX 2.405), and so are ultimately from Namibian Khoekhoe *|ùú*, Kora *|'uu* “to be brackish”, “to taste sour or sharp”. As plant names, they were likely influenced by the southerly Nama *|ūrobis* “*Oxalis* species” (Schultze 1907: 194, 202); both *umncwane* and *|ūrobis* literally mean “little sour [plant]”, and both use diminutive morphemes (the suffix *-ane* and the infix *-ro-*, respectively). The Afrikaans *suuring*, literally “sourling” is of a separate origin, however, as the Dutch usage of *zuuring* for several European species of sorrel predates colonial contact.

True loaned plant names show influence far more transparently than calques. The palatability of berries from bushes in the genus *Grewia* (family Malvaceae), for example, probably underlies an areal diffusion of the Khoekhoe term into surrounding languages. The Northern

Cape loanblend *n'loubessie* “*Grewia flava*” (Van der Walt & Le Riche 1999), for example, derives from the Namibian Khoekhoe  $\text{†}áú\text{s}$  “*Grewia flava*” (Eiseb, Giess & Haacke 1991: 23), Kora  $\text{†}áub$  “raisinberry bush” (Du Plessis 2019: 373). The same word is present in isiXhosa as *umnqaza*, *umnqabaza* “*Grewia occidentalis*” (Dold & Cocks 1999: 131; GDX 2.699), meaning that it must also have been used by speakers of easterly Khoekhoe. A form with click loss appears in seTswana as *kgopho* “a small bush with edible fruit” (Brown 1965: 129; Cole 1995: 219).

Similarly, the ubiquitous Afrikaans item *kareebos* is broadly used of berry-producing bushes in the genus *Searsia* (family Anacardiaceae). That it is a loan from Namibian *!khàrib*, Kora *!xarib* “honey beer” is a popular misconception (Christie 2022), and it is better derived simply from Namibian Khoekhoe *!àrěb* (Haacke & Eiseb 2002: 295), Kora *!xareb* (Du Plessis 2019: 371) “*Searsia lancea*”. This word appears also in isiXhosa as *iqwela* “*Searsia lancea*” (Dold & Cocks 1999: 94; GDX3.105), faithfully preserving click type rather than undergoing click loss. A very similar term for berries in general, but typically applied to *Searsia* berries, appears in Afrikaans as *garrabessie* “[*Searsia*] *undulata*” (Marloth 1917: 30); *gharrabos* “[*Searsia*] sp.” (WAT3.240); *t’gharrabos* “[*Searsia*]” species (Boshoff & Nienaber 1967: 351); and *t’narrabos* “*Searsia undulata*” (Le Roux 1981: 242). As has been shown (Christie 2022), this loanword is entirely distinct from *kareebos*, derived from *!àrěb*, and originates instead in Nama  $\text{!}garas$  (Schultze 1907: 200), Kora  $\text{!}gana-$  (Engelbrecht 1936: 118), “berries of [*Searsia*] spp.”.

An Afrikaans plant name that does loan *!khàrib*, *!xarib* “honeybeer” is *kareemoer* (Smith 1966: 280) or *kirriemoer* (Smith 1966: 290), literally “mead-dregs”, for several species of succulent used in fermenting honeybeer, but particularly the species of *Trichodiadema* (family Aizoaceae) and *Anacampseros* (family Anacampserotaceae). The form *kirriemoer* is not a “corruption” (Smith 1966: 290) but in fact reflects the ordinary phonological process of schwa reduction, by which the  $\text{/a/}$  of *!khàrib* centralises to  $\text{/ə/}$  in connected speech. Schwa reduction has been noted to occur in several Khoekhoe varieties (Beach 1938: 198–199; Du Plessis 2019: 64) and is captured in the isiXhosa doublets *iqhilika* “honeybeer” (GDX 3.43) and *iqina*, used of *Mesembryanthemum aitonis* and *Psilocalon parviflorum*, both in Aizoaceae (Dold & Cocks 1999: 94; GDX 3.69). Worth noting is that the genus *Khadia*, also in Aizoaceae and used for similar purposes, is a neo-Latinisation of the seTswana *kgadi* “honeybeer” (Cole 1991: 184) and is also a declicked loan either of the Khoekhoe *!khàrib* or of a Kalahari-branch cognate (Gunnink 2020b: 37).

A fairly well-attested item is *kaboom* “[*Vachellia*] *haematoxylon*” (Smith 1966: 263); *t’ghaboom* “*Parkinsonia africana*” (Powrie 2004: 64); *tkaboom* “*vaalkameeldoring*”, or *Vachellia haematoxylon* (Prinsloo 2008: 486), all in the mimosoid subfamily of Fabaceae. However, this was rerecorded only from one consultant, at Springbok, as  $\text{[}^{\text{h}}\text{ã:bòm]$ . Deriving from the Namibian Khoekhoe *!khàás*, used of both *Vachellia haematoxylon* and *Parkinsonia africana* (Eiseb et al. 1991: 23), it has passed also into isiZulu as *umnqawe* “[*Vachellia nilotica*]” (Doke & Vilakazi 1949: 591), preserving the alveolar click.

Despite homophony following the loss of phonemic contrast from the clicks, *kaboom* as used of *Parkinsonia africana* is completely distinct from *ghaboom* “species of rockfig, *Ficus [ilicina]*” (Boshoff & Nienaber 1967: 247), and *kaa* “*Ficus natalensis*” (Smith 1966: 462) in the family Moraceae. *Kaboom* is still in use among older speakers in Namaqualand, both at

Komaggas and Hondeklipbaai. It is typically pronounced /la:buəm/ or /<sup>h</sup>la:buəm/ and was used by a Hondeklipbaai consultant to innovate a compound [la:bu:mkɔpi:] (“a figtree-hill”), emphasising the productivity of blended compound nouns across Khoekhoe and Afrikaans (see Haacke 2015: 65 – 66). The Nama etymon ǀgaus “*Ficus ilicina*” (Eiseb et al. 1991: 21) is present also in isiXhosa *umngxam* ‘*Ficus* [species]’ (Dold & Cocks 1999: 131), retaining the Nama lateral click.

An easterly reflex of Namibian Khoekhoe |hǎǎb (Eiseb et al. 1991: 20), Kora |haab (Du Plessis 2019: 369) “wild cucumber” must have supplied the etymon for a fairly obscure isiXhosa term *unonca* “a plant whose deeply-fixed root is dug up and eaten in time of hunger” (from Godfrey’s *Notes on Vocabulary* as cited in Opland (2021: 214); not brought forward into the GDX), almost certainly a wild cucumber species in the family Cucurbitaceae. The starchy roots and palatable leaves of several cucurbits, including the *Kedrostis* and *Cucumis* species, have historically been used as a food source across southern Africa (Olarewaju, Fajinmi, Arthur, Cooposamy & Naidoo 2021). From |hǎǎb derives also an old Afrikaans loanblend *haarwortel* “*Kedrostis* [species]” (Nienaber 1963: 294; WAT 4.21) or *haap* “*Kedrostis africana*” (Smith 1966: 241). The Khoekhoe appears also in seTswana with several declicked variants, including *mogapu* (Cole 1995: 202) and *mokapa* (Cole 1995: 215), all referring to cucurbit species including *Acanthosicyos hispidum*, *Cucumis myriocarpus*, and *Cucumis metuliferus*. The form *mogapu* then passed into Afrikaans in the loanblend *bitterkeboe* “*Cucumis myriocarpus*”, “name unexplained” (Smith 1966: 109), creating a doublet on *haarwortel*.

Finally, another rare term, possibly now obsolete, is the loanblend *kokoboom* for “*Maytenus undata*” (Smith 1966: 304; WAT 6.698). The same item was also loaned into isiXhosa as *umqaqoba* (Dold & Cocks 1999: 134) for “*Maytenus heterophylla*”, preserving the alveolar click and implying the historical existence of a South African Khoekhoe cognate of the contemporary Hai ǀOm !gòó!gòòb “*Maytenus senegalensis*” (Eiseb et al. 1991: 23).

## 6. Some comparative solutions

This section discusses the historical linguistic usefulness of conducting mass comparison of loaned click words across languages with different styles of click adaptation.

### 6.1 Retrieving lost clicks

In the following examples, the Khoekhoe-branch etymon is lost from the present-day record, and the Afrikaans does not retain contrastive clicks, making it impossible even to guess the original shape of the word. The contrastive clicks retained in isiXhosa and isiZulu, however, can at least offer some insight.

For example, the widespread Afrikaans plant name *t’kobovy* (Le Roux 1981: 307), *ghounavy* (Smith 1966: 227), *t’gaukum* (Smith 1966: 460), or *ghoenavy* (WAT 3.245) always refers to the large vye or vygies (“mesembs”) *Carpobrotus edulis* or *Carpobrotus deliciosus* (Aizoaceae). It is still used with a click consonant by both White and Coloured speakers of Afrikaans as far afield as Namaqualand in the Northern Cape and the Baviaanskloof in the Eastern Cape, suggesting that it was broadly distributed across the Khoekhoe-branch languages, although isiXhosa may have served as the direct donor to Afrikaans in the Eastern Cape. This item is closely connected with the isiZulu *igcukumuva* (Doke & Vilakazi 1949: 238) and isiXhosa

*igcukuma* (Dold & Cocks 1999: 78; GDX1.577) for *Carpobrotus edulis* and the isiXhosa *igcuthuma* for *Carpobrotus deliciosus* (Dold & Cocks 1999: 78). With type neutralisation, it was historically present also in seSotho, via isiZulu, as *leqhoaba* “name of several small plants of the *Mesembryanthemum* genus” (Mabille & Dieterlen 1950: 309). No suitable etymon is available, but the isiXhosa and isiZulu loans do suggest that the original Khoekhoe-branch item must have used the dental click.

The tree name *koebobessie* (Smith 1966: 263; WAT 6.546), *kabobessie*, or *kububessie* (Smith 1966: 302, 316) is always used for *Mystroxydon aethiopicum*. Historical data available for the usage of this item implicate a region between Bredasdorp in the southern Western Cape and Humansdorp in the Eastern Cape (Smith 1966: 302), where Cape Khoekhoe may have served as the donor language, but also Uitenhage (where Ecklon and Zeyher (1835: 127) recorded the name *kubu*) and Alexandria (WAT 6.546) in the Eastern Cape, where isiXhosa may equally well have been the donor. In this case, the direct etymon would be *umgxube*, the ordinary term for *Mystroxydon aethiopicum* (Dold & Cocks 1999: 20; GDX1.698). As the tree’s distribution is limited to the southern and eastern coasts, it does not appear within the range of Damara, Nama, or Kora, and so no Khoekhoe etymon is available; however, the original Cape Khoekhoe or easterly Khoekhoe item must have used the lateral click.

The item *t’koeobe* “*Diospyros ramulosa*” (family Ebenaceae) (Le Roux 1981: 337) is perhaps not as well-known today as it once must have been; it has a varied history as *!kanobe* “*Diospyros ramulosa*” (Archer 1994); *tkounebie* “a species of bush very abundant in this region” (Links 1989: 61); *kanobe* “*Diospyros austro-africana*” (Smith 1966: 277); *kalouwep* “*Diospyros*” species (Smith 1966: 271); and *!ganube* “*Diospyros*” species (Smith 1966: 394). A very early southerly Nama record of *kanobe* was taken by van der Stel’s scribe (as in Waterhouse & de Wet 1979: 248 – 249), but no modern equivalent survives in Namibian Khoekhoe or in Kora. In loan, this item is still used by older monolingual Afrikaans farmers in the Kamieskroon region of Namaqualand (Christie 2020: 83), and it has been rerecorded from one elderly Afrikaans consultant outside Hondeklipbaai (Christie 2023: 185).

The immediate point of an isiXhosa comparison is *iqunube* (Dold & Cocks 1999: 194; GDX 3.96), used not of any *Diospyros* species, but rather for non-native mulberries (*Morus* species) and brambles (*Rubus* species), implying recent transfer from an older indigenous referent. The alveolar click rules out the Namibian Khoekhoe *!khúrúbèb* “berries of *Searsia marlothii*” (Haacke & Eiseb 2002: 217) as an etymon; the dental click in the latter term is faithfully received in isiXhosa *umgcunube* as a general term for berries, including several species of bramble in *Rubus*. Instead, *iqunube* suggests that a separate term that used an alveolar click must historically have existed both in southerly Nama and in the unknown Khoekhoe languages of the Eastern Cape.

A fairly ubiquitous Khoekhoe loanblend in Afrikaans is *koeniebos*, used to refer to several *Searsia* species, which are large berry bushes in the family Anacardiaceae. Spellings include *kuni* “*Searsia mucronata*” (Marloth 1917: 53); *kunibos*, *t’koeniebos* “[*Searsia*] *undulata*” (Smith 1966: 582); *koenie*, *kuni* “[*Searsia*] *mucronata*” (Boshoff & Nienaber 1967: 360); *koeniebos*, *kunibos* “[*Searsia*] *burchellii*” (Powrie 2004: 101); and *ghoeniebos*, *tnoeniebos* for an unidentified shrub with a description that fits a *Searsia* species (Prinsloo 2008: 312, 487). No clear Khoekhoe-branch etymon can be offered, but the isiXhosa *unongqutu* “[*Searsia*] *incisa*” means that it must have carried an alveolar click. The seSotho *lekolitsane* “[*Searsia*]”

species (Mabille & Dieterlen 1950: 182) and the seTswana *mogoditshana* “[*Searsia tenuivernis*]” (Cole 1995: 324) should both be considered forms with click loss.

Finally, the old loanblend *kouboom* “*Pappaea [capensis]*” (Sapindaceae) (WAT 8.29) has long been a point of confusion. A comparison has been suggested (Boshoff & Nienaber 1967: 368) with a very obscure Nama item *lkhou-*. This is not a headword, but appears as a *hapax* item at Kroenlein (1889: 144) in a sentence exemplifying the use of the headword *hàré* “to collect”, “to gather”: *geise hare lkhoun xa lnuië ta ū hã tama xui gye ã ta khõna tsoutsou*, or, in the orthography accessible to modern speakers, *kaitse hare lkhoun xa, lnuië ra ūhã tama xui gye, i ra khõna tsautsau*. A full gloss of this source sentence appears in (2), partially to emphasise the importance of transferring older records into the standardised orthography during contemporary etymological discussion and partially to encourage engagement with the Nama language itself.

(2) Kroenlein (1889: 144)

|                  |        |                |                     |      |           |
|------------------|--------|----------------|---------------------|------|-----------|
| kai=tse          | hare   | <b>lkhou-n</b> | xa                  |      |           |
| let=2MSG         | gather | lkhou-3NPL     | POSTP               |      |           |
| lnui-e           |        | ra             | ūhã                 | tama | xui gye   |
| fat-INDF;OBLIQUE |        | 1SG            | have                | NEG  | since     |
|                  | î      | ra             | khõ-n-a             |      | tsautsau  |
|                  | so     | 1SG            | ‘hide’-3NPL-OBLIQUE |      | soft\CAUS |

‘Please gather some **lkhou**, since I don’t have any fat, so I can soften the hides.’

The botanical identity of these ‘*lkhou* kernels’ is unclear, although they are likely connected with the Damara record *lnoun* “*Frucht der Wasserwurzel*” (“fruit of the water-root”, an unidentified plant), which are “*benutzt als Pflanzenfett beim Gesehmeidigmachen gegerbter Felle*” (“used as vegetable oil in the softening of tanned hides”) (Vedder 1923: 67). Associating this word arbitrarily with *kouboom* (used exclusively for *Pappea capensis*) without any certain identification is risky, especially since the Nguni equivalent of *kouboom* suggests that this item cannot, in fact, have originated in a Khoekhoe word containing a lateral click. The isiZulu *umgqogqo* “*Pappea capensis*” (Doke & Vilakazi 1949: 265) implies instead that the search should be for a Khoekhoe-branch etymon that used an alveolar click.

## 6.2 Corroborating suggested clicks

There is one example in which the particular propensity of the Khoekhoe palatal click to ‘split’ into *both* the dental *and* the alveolar click in isiXhosa and isiZulu can be used to corroborate an etymology. As has been noted (Bourquin 1951: 61; Louw 1977: 14; Sands 2001: 13), only the Khoekhoe-branch palatal click displays this adaptive pattern; detailed exemplification and discussion is available from Christie (2023: 401 – 404).

The loanblend *ghoembos* (Powrie 2004: 32) is used in the Karoo Afrikaans name for several large shrubby species of daisy (Asteraceae) that produce a strong-smelling resin (see Fig. 2). Variations on this loan include *numbos* “[*Felicia filifolia*]” (Marloth 1917: 62); *ghoembos*, *numbossie* “*Felicia filifolia*” (Smith 1966: 352); and *noembos* for an unidentified shrub in

Asteraceae (Boshoff & Nienaber 1967: 448). Several descriptions of the resin's usefulness in the manufacture of buchu in a Namibian context are available.

†gūë †nuwi: *Buchuharz formen, kneten. †gūi xa †nuwiba te re êsase ra †nuwi xuiɣye: knete mir bitte Buchuharz zu Perlen, weil du sie so schön zu bilden verstehst!*

†gūë †nuwi: to shape or knead buchu resin. †gūi xa †nuwiba te re êsase ra †nuwi xuiɣye:<sup>6</sup> Please knead the buchu resin into pearls for me, since you know how to do it so well!

Kroenlein (1889: 148)

*Das gelbe Harz einer Othonna-Art (†gūs) wird mit der kalten Kohle des Herdfeuers verrieben. Dieses Gemisch (ein Pulver) wird mit einem brennenden Holzspahn erwärmt und mit der anderen Hand gleichzeitig geknetet.*

The yellow resin of a species of *Othonna* (†gūs) is rubbed into the cooling coals of a cookfire. This mixture (a powder) is then warmed with a burning stick of wood and kneaded with the other hand until it is even on all sides.

Schultze (1907: 252)

This item is today considered obsolete and so has not been brought forward into Haacke & Eiseb (2002), but it was in use in 19<sup>th</sup>- and early 20<sup>th</sup>-century Nama as a term associated with shrubby resiniferous asterids. These records accurately capture the palatal click, thus providing an etymology †guu- for *ghoembos* with expected click loss during loan. Many inanimate Khoekhoe noun stems may be inflected in either gender, depending on the shape and size of the referent (Du Plessis 2019: 121; Haacke 2013: 326); so it can be extrapolated that the stem †guu- would historically have been used in both the attested feminine †guus and the hypothetical masculine \*†guub. Some varieties of Kora are known to have used a 3SGM suffix *-m* in place of the Namibian Khoekhoe *-b* (Voßen 1997: 343), thus suggesting that *ghoembos* may originate in a fairly old instantiation of this item from a Kora-like variety of Khoekhoe, approximately \*/#uum/.

The same Khoekhoe-branch item also appears as a reduplicated loanword in isiXhosa as *uqobaqoba* (Dold & Cocks 1999: 148) and isiZulu as *uqoboqobo* (Doke & Vilakazi 1949: 709), both used for *Osteospermum grandidentatum*, a large shrub in Asteraceae that produces resin. An isiZulu variant *umqopheqophe* is also on record for an unidentified 'composite shrub' in Asteraceae (Doke & Vilakazi 1949: 712). In all three of these loans, the ordinary Khoekhoe 3SGM suffix *-b* has been fossilised and is clearly visible. Valuably, a second isiZulu variant form *ingcobangcoba* "*Senecio latifolius*" (Asteraceae) is also on record (Doke & Vilakazi 1949: 551). Here, however, the dental click (environmentally nasalised following the CL.9 prefix) is used instead of the alveolar click. Only the palatal click may be adapted in isiXhosa and isiZulu as both an alveolar click and a dental click. This confirms that the etymon of *uqobaqoba* must have carried a palatal click in the Khoekhoe donor language and so corroborates the selection of †guu- as the etymology of *ghoembos*.

<sup>6</sup> In the standardised orthography: †gūi xa †nuwiba te re, îsase ra †nuwi xuiɣe.



**Figure 2.** An example of t̡gūe, or resin from large daisy bushes, in the Kamiesberge.

## 7. Afrikaans-isiXhosa interaction

This final section offers a brief word on the capacity for click items to outlive their donor languages and to be diffused into new hosts long after the initial period of contact. Anecdotal observation suggests that Afrikaans-isiXhosa bilingualism may be on the rise in Coloured Afrikaans-speaking communities in the Eastern Cape and, hence, that a new click loan event may be in development. Despite the original donor languages having been extirpated from the Eastern Cape for at least a century and a half, they continue to influence the contemporary linguistic landscape and to contribute click material to Afrikaans, albeit indirectly.

Perhaps the best-known example of a click finding its way into SA English is *nca* “just right”, “good”, “lekker” (Mesthrie 2017: 529 – 530); it has been described as the only click loanword to have entered general SA English (Bennett 2020: 94). During 2023, it was featured prominently in English-medium advertisements for both the Savanna cider brand (see Fig. 3) and the KFC fast food chain, indicating its current productivity. In these contexts, it is always spelled <nca>, using an appropriate isiXhosa click orthography. Codeswitching from L1

isiXhosa into L2 English is *de rigueur* in urban environments, and the use of an isiXhosa loanword in English-medium advertising is not at all unusual.



**Figure 3.** The isiXhosa word *nca* ‘nice’ used in English-medium advertising.

The loan of L2 isiXhosa into L1 Afrikaans, however, is understudied. On Afrikaans social media, the isiXhosa *nca* is more normally spelled <nxa> and is used with almost the exact sense as “*lekker*”. Again, it must be understood that <nx> does not represent the isiXhosa lateral click but is in keeping with the informal orthography that uses <x> to represent any Afrikaans click; <nxa> is almost always pronounced /<sup>h</sup>!a:/ and only very occasionally /<sup>h</sup>!a:/, never /<sup>h</sup>!a:/.. One Namaqualand consultant, CDA\_2, volunteered the alternative spelling <ndja>, which she used on WhatsApp, and which she noted L1 Namaqualand Afrikaans children often used while writing essays at school. This item was very broadly collected from Coloured Afrikaans communities in Namaqualand in the Northern Cape. Anecdotally, *nca* is in widespread usage in Coloured Afrikaans communities in the Eastern Cape, although here formal surveys are lacking. It is typically used of food or drink but has also been heard describing enjoyable social events or even, at Makhanda, ’n *nca rokkie* (“a pretty dress”).

*Nca* also is widespread in Afrikaans beyond the borders of South Africa. In a Namibian context, an especially interesting specimen of Windhoek Kasietaal documents the loan of an adverb *nca*, with a sense of ‘easily’, ‘properly’, ‘well’, pronounced using a click in the Afrikaans-matrix sentence.

*Aaye, maar daardie ene hulle kan nie nca kwata nie, hulle sal-ie kan nca weg hit-and-run.*

No, but that one, they can’t easily snatch it. They won’t be able to grab it easily and run.  
Stell (2020: 61)

Stell (2020: 55) does note the presence of immigrant amaXhosa communities at Windhoek, providing a possible vector for the diffusion of this item into Namibian Afrikaans; although, its sheer ubiquity in the Northern Cape suggests that transfrontier interaction between Namibian and South African varieties of Afrikaans is culpable. Also worth comparing, in the KX’A-family click language Ju’hoan of eastern Namibia, is the verb *n|a’ng* ‘to be good’, ‘to be nice’ (Dickens 1994: 239), as used, for example, in the sentence *n|aisi okaa n|a’ng*, ‘fruit tastes lekker’ (Jones, |Kunta & Paulos 2021). Given the high degree of Afrikaans bilingualism in Ju’hoan communities and the entry of multiple other Afrikaans loanwords (Bennett 2020: 116 – 117; Miller-Ockhuizen 2003: 111 – 113), *n|a’ng* was likely borrowed directly from Namibian Afrikaans *nca*.

The isiXhosa ideophone *ukuthi nca*, as discussed above, formally means ‘to stick to’ and derives from an easterly Khoekhoe reflex of *†nǎi* ‘to cling to’. The contemporary use of *nca* is better considered to be a slightly informal variant spelling on *ukuthi ncam* ‘to fit exactly’, ‘to be satisfactory or pleasing’ (GDX 2.443). All Khoekhoe etymologies for the *Greater Dictionary of isiXhosa* were written by Louw, who, for this verb, suggests a connection with Namibian Khoekhoe *|nǎm*, properly a transitive verb meaning ‘to love [x]’ (Haacke & Eiseb 2002: 220). This connection is questionable as the semantic scope does not suit and the valency does not match. An alternative origin would be *|gǎú*, literally ‘to sip’, ‘to taste in small quantities’, with a figurative sense of ‘to be abstemious’, ‘to be fastidious in eating’ and, hence, with an adjectival sense of ‘appropriate’, ‘well-suited’, ‘fitting’ (Haacke & Eiseb 2002: 185).

Regardless of the precise etymon, the broad diffusion of this item — first from historical Khoekhoe into isiXhosa, then from isiXhosa into so many varieties of Afrikaans, and then even into Ju’hoan — qualifies it as an incipient wanderword. It also motivates for the increased scrutiny of regional Afrikaanses for signs that further borrowing of isiXhosa click words may be in development.

## 8. Conclusions

The comparison of click loanwords across separate but parallel contact events offers a vital opportunity to compare and contrast how these unusual sounds behave during loan. However, insights to be gained from such comparative exercises are not limited to the phonological. That so many languages adopted so many clicks so differently speaks to the varied nature of precolonial sociolinguistic interaction and the multilingual richness of the southern African historical linguistic landscape.

Given the broad diffusion of loanwords across so many languages, the socioeconomic role played by languages in the Khoekhoe-branch during precolonial and early colonial language contact events was likely far more prestigious and complex than most existing examinations admit. A clearer understanding of precolonial sociolinguistic history could be gained if detailed inventories of loanwords, properly sourced and rigorously etymologised using modern orthography, were more broadly available. It is hoped that these observations will spur new comparative and historical linguistic investigations into click consonants as an areal feature of South African languages.

## Notes

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