

Dimensions of variability in Northern Khoekhoe language and culture

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ABSTRACT

This article takes an interdisciplinary route towards explaining the complex history of Hai||om culture and language. We begin this article with a short review of ideas relating to ‘origins’ and historical reconstructions as they are currently played out among Khoekhoe groups in Namibia, in particular with regard to the Hai||om. We then take a comparative look at parts of the kinship system and the tonology of †Ākhoe Hai||om and other variants of Khoekhoe. With regard to the kinship and naming system, we see patterns that show similarities with Nama and Damara on the one hand but also with ‘San’ groups on the other hand. With regard to tonology, new data from three northern Khoekhoe varieties shows similarities as well as differences with Standard Namibian Khoekhoe and Ju and Tuu varieties. The historical scenarios that might explain these facts suggest different centres of innovations and opposite directions of diffusion. The anthropological and linguistic data demonstrates that only a fine-grained and multi-layered approach that goes far beyond any simplistic dichotomies can do justice to the Hai||om riddle.

KEY WORDS: Origins, kinship, naming, historical reconstruction, politics, ethnicity, tone, citation form, Tsumeb Damara, Outjo Hai||om, †Ākhoe, Mangetti West, !Ora, !Xoon, !Xun, Naro.

The †Ākhoe and Hai||om speak Khoekhoe varieties, but their culture (Widlok 1999) and genetics (Jenkins 1986, 1988) are more typically San. This apparent puzzle has inspired a long-standing controversy that is reflected also in this volume. While some hold that the Hai||om are the descendants of (non-Khoekhoe?) Central Khoisan speakers (Haacke this volume), others hypothesize that at least some †Ākhoe and Hai||om groups once spoke a North Khoisan variety (Güldemann this volume). Far from being a purely scientific debate, the question of †Ākhoe and Hai||om origins has also been instrumentalised in the political arena of modern Namibia, also by the †Ākhoe and Hai||om speakers themselves.

This paper attempts to contribute to this debate by adducing material from two specific anthropological and linguistic domains: †Ākhoe and Hai||om kinship systems and tonal systems. We sketch some recent uses of the †Ākhoe and Hai||om ‘puzzle’ in the public debate in Namibia and we discuss the mixed signals emerging from our research on kinship and tones.

ETHNOGRAPHY

The ‘original peoples’

There is an inverse relationship between the degree of attention that questions about the origin of cultures and languages receive in public debate (and in some quarters of African studies) and in mainstream present-day linguistics (again, including other quarters of African studies). This is not an entirely new situation, as Gordon (1997) has pointed out. The goal of the 1920s Denver Africa Expedition to find the “cradle of the human race” by visiting southern African Bushmen was already somewhat anachronistic at its time, but nevertheless helped to secure the funds to finance the expedition. Its

proximity to “a whole range of science fiction of that era” (Gordon 1997: 76) and its dearth of scientific results has not helped to further its course since then, but it matched the image politics of South Africa at the time to present itself as the cradle of mankind at events such as the 1925 World Exhibition (Gordon 1997: 111). The Bushmen continue to play an important role in this discourse as the prototypical ‘first people’ of southern Africa (see Marshall Thomas 2006) but what is new is that they now visibly and actively engage in this discourse themselves. It is this latter fact, namely, that our consultants in the field are beginning to engage heavily in debates about origins, that we have—reluctantly—decided to engage with these questions with regard to Khoisan culture in general, and the Hai||om language in particular, in an attempt to give the long-term questions a productive turn for present-day research.

Questions of origins and historical reconstructions have largely shifted from the academic domain to the public domain so that some remarks are in order to clarify how we may hope to reclaim those questions without falling into the traps that the current political discourse has in stall. This came back to us forcefully during field research in 2006 when a Hai||om man from Otjiwarongo requested a lift from us as we were going north from Windhoek to continue research with †Ākxhoe Hai||om. As it turned out, the man was a representative of the Original Peoples Party of Namibia, a Hai||om group that was already active in the 1980s before Namibian independence (see Budack 1981), but which never received any notable political power, neither under the old system of apartheid nor under the post-1990 rule of independence. The Hai||om representative of the Original Peoples Party, Theosophilus Soroseb, lamented in the 1980s that they were “not on the map” of the country. It continues to be the explicit aim of the Original Peoples Party after independence to change this. For that purpose the party members have created their own flag, their own list of political candidates and their own agenda. The man we accompanied to Otjiwarongo had been to Windhoek to request financial support from WIMSA, the regional San non-governmental organization, to organize party meetings and cultural festivals (the request was denied). His vision was that all San groups would organize themselves under the Original Peoples Party’s banner and under the leadership of the Hai||om, who the party considered the original people of Namibia—more so than any other San group. He emphasized that they were not exclusivist in their outlook since they would welcome anyone of any ethnic or social background as long as he or she acknowledged the ‘aboriginality’ of the Hai||om (and their consequent claims to affirmative action). Needless to say, many other San people we spoke to did not acknowledge what they saw as claims to “paramount chiefdom” by the Hai||om.

What is relevant in the context of the problems that we discuss here is that questions of ‘being first’, of ‘having preserved an ancient heritage’, have long left the circle of academic debate and are at the centre of political debate and conflict. The Original Peoples Party of Namibia and its representatives have armed themselves with academic books. In Otjiwarongo we were shown a party-owned copy of *The Bushmen of southern Africa* (Smith *et al.* 2000), which is regularly used in its claims to ‘a first people’ status. Conversely, the political elite of Namibia is turning similar arguments against the Hai||om and their neighbours: shortly after independence, the then paramount chief of the Damara refuted any claims by Hai||om to “first people status” by referring to materials of historical reconstruction provided by the former government ethnologist

Kuno Budack. He claimed that the Damara, “together with the yellow Bushmen” (i.e. not the Hai||om), are the ones who can legitimately claim first people status. Language, in particular the relationship between Hai||om on the one hand, and Nama and Damara on the other, are repeatedly used against Hai||om claims (see Widlok 1999: 25). Most representatives of the SWAPO government try to counteract any claims based on ‘originality’ or ‘indigenesness’, not only within the country but also on the international level where Namibia became the speaker for a group of African countries against the UN Declaration for the Rights of Indigenous People. Inside the country, tribal affiliation has been banned not only in the constitution and in laws that seek to implement liberal rights irrespective of ethnic alliance, but also in the national political process. This is clearly in reaction to the injustices of the divide-and-rule practises of the pre-independence colonial and apartheid administrations. However, ethnic affiliations are still powerful and, because the legislation has in some instances created a situation where ethnicity is a non-topic, ethnic prejudice is more difficult to challenge. The differences between ‘first comers’ and ‘later comers’, which were, for instance, recognized in pre-colonial Owambo kingdoms, are now collapsed into a dichotomy between ‘indigenous Africans’ (i.e. non-Whites eligible for affirmative action) and ‘Europeans’ (i.e. Namibian citizens of European descent). The discourse of ‘being first’, in which traits of culture and language are selectively highlighted, therefore plays a significant role both for the Hai||om and San groups as well as for their opponents.

The domain of kinship and naming

When one of us first published on the Hai||om kinship system, he could not help but provide two diagrams of kinship terminology (Widlok 1999: 181–2) where ethnographic monographs usually provide only one. The †Äkhoe Hai||om practice was simply too diverse to be covered by a single diagram. Moreover, the kin terminology was immediately complemented by two further diagrams outlining Hai||om practices of cross-descent naming (Widlok 1999: 196–7). The local categorisation of kin terms suggested that there was one set of kin terms which were considered to be †Äkhoe and ‘more original’, whereas the other set was ‘just Hai||om’. In practice, both systems were mixed and, at the same time, were not considered to be ‘really’ different. Structurally there were differences. For instance, the ‘Hai||om version’ would have the kin term (||nuri), which would appear in two different generations (in the grandchildren generation and in ego’s generation, namely for mother’s brother’s children and father’s sister’s children). This feature is also found in Korana (!Ora) (Barnard 1992: 171) and in Nama (Barnard 1992: 187), and structurally also in N(h)aro, although different terms are involved here (Barnard 1992: 149), as well as elsewhere in the cultural region. Moreover, †Äkhoe Hai||om may use the ‘old’ †Äkhoe terminology (which does not conflate the kin categories like ||nuri does), but treat kinspeople as one would expect from the Hai||om terminology, for example, by treating all those labelled ||nuri in Hai||om as prime joking partners with whom one would have preferential exchange relations and particularly expect to consider in inheritance (see Widlok 2005). In other words, there is no easy route from the complexities of current kin term usage to historical reconstruction. As anthropologists have long been pointing out, kinship terminology and exchange relations are two frames of reference that are related but which need not necessarily form a single autocorresponding system. In fact, contradictions between labelling and

other kin-related actions may be of particular interest and they may serve particular functions in the construction of social relationships. Considering kin-labels and actions such as exchange or inheritance together is often only the first step in a long process of combining related frames of reference. Another related frame of reference that comes to mind in the Hai||om case is their cross-sex naming (see Widlok 2000).

‡Ākxhoe Hai||om cross-sex naming as it is practised today, again does not deliver unequivocal evidence for determining whether we are dealing with San who took on a Khoekhoe practice or vice versa. Moreover, it questions whether these are really the most productive questions to ask, or whether we should not instead be trying to place various observed instances of naming on a larger Khoisan (or even broader) spectrum and, then, to relate that placement to other placements on other scales in what would be a second-order comparison.

To illustrate the point, let us consider some details of our particular case. Structurally, ‡Ākxhoe Hai||om cross-sex naming is very similar to what Hoernlé (1985) and others reported for Nama and Damara groups, with the main difference that none of these groups actually practise it anymore. Furthermore, the Nama and Damara practice of adding 'son of' to the *kai/ons*, the second names, at least partly counteracts the tendency of cross-sex naming systems to be gender-neutral (or, to put it differently, gender equality affirmative) and to counter the formation of linear descent groups. In the Nama and Damara case, the male line was highlighted and probably, not only distinguishable, but also distinguished. With no similar system of *kai/ons* or family names in place, the practice of most 'San' groups is very different, as they 'recycle' first names from earlier generations (see Barnard 1992; Marshall 1976). One could argue, however, that the effect is similar to that of the ‡Ākxhoe Hai||om case in so far as no lineages are formed and that gender is structurally not relevant when establishing relations on the basis of naming.

We can now attempt to link the pattern found in the naming frame of reference to that found with regard to the kinship and the exchange frameworks. We take 'descent-orientation' and 'gender equality' to be two dimensions along which we can scale the practices that are observed. Hai||om practices seem to cluster with what has been reported by Barnard (1992) for the N(h)aro and by Marshall (1976) for the Jul'hoasi, and not with what Hoernlé has reported for the Nama and Fuller (1993) for the Damara. Note, however, that this does not preempt the question of origins. It is plausible to hypothesize that the hunter-gatherer way of life has moulded a kinship and naming terminology that Hai||om have taken over from other Khoekhoe, but it is equally plausible and possible that the Hai||om and their Khoekhoe neighbours rely on shared original forms, which they have developed in different ways to produce the variability that is found today. Cultural diffusion alone may simply not be enough to explain what determines the position on the spectrum of possibilities. A more detailed micro-analysis may reveal the circumstances (demographic growth or decline, external pressure or benefits, changes in resource availability, social stability or mobility etc.) under which individuals tend to chose kinship and naming strategies that either foster or counter the emergence and maintenance of descent groups and gender inequality. Such an analysis also makes it possible to envisage situations in which there are contradictory tendencies or pressures which can produce the clustering that we observe today. There is sufficient reason to assume that these processes are not restricted to the distant past and that they might continue into the present or recent present.

Given that naming and kinship data broadly speaking fall into the same domain, there is a danger that what we have outlined as different frames of reference are, in fact, only a single frame of reference, informed by the stipulations of a single body of theory, namely anthropological kinship studies. In order to create a more robust argument, we turn to a more distant domain, that of language tonology, a domain that is fairly independent of the kinship domain.

TONE

This section investigates the basic tonology of three Northern Khoekhoe varieties and compares them with Central ('Standard') Khoekhoe in order to contribute to an understanding of the complex interplay of language change and contact in northern Namibia. Based on new data on these little known peripheral varieties, we attempt to show similarities as well as differences across the Khoekhoe cluster in the specific linguistic domain of word prosodic systems. Secondly, we propose a first diachronic scenario that links the various tonal patterns attested in these varieties. As will be argued below, the data contains mixed signals with regard to innovations and retentions even within the restricted linguistic domain investigated here.

Khoekhoe has long been seen as a monolithic entity, without much internal diversification. In a pioneering article, however, Haacke *et al.* (1997) surveyed lexical variation in 95 diagnostic concepts, from which they drew a dialect map of Khoekhoe (Fig. 1). This is a 'Greater Khoekhoe' map in the sense that it disregards other languages spoken in the area that is claimed to be Khoekhoe-speaking—compare with the map in König and Heine (2001) of North Khoisan varieties. In northern Namibia, for example, there are !Xun speakers in Tsintsabis, Bravo, Ombili and Ekoka (all in contact with speakers of varieties of Khoekhoe) (Fig. 2). Fifty years ago, there were still many more bands of !Xun in Mangetti West (Snyman 1997: 21).

Haacke *et al.* (1997: 134, our emphasis) note a "*clear hiatus* between the ... *continuum*" formed by the varieties 5 to 10 on Figure 1 on the one hand and the northern Khoekhoe varieties †Ākhoe, Hai||om, Ghaub Damara and Sesfontein Damara on the other hand. Within the latter group, †Ākhoe and Hai||om are again the most divergent members, as seen in Figure 3.

We focus on the three northern varieties (see Fig. 2) †Ākhoe, Hai||om and the Damara variety spoken in Tsumeb, and compare them to Central Damara and Central Nama. †Ākhoe is the northernmost Khoekhoe variety and has about 1000 speakers. Formerly spoken around Otyolo in eastern Owamboland, many speakers were forced to migrate South around 1989. The data used here were collected on a resettlement farm at Mangetti-West, |Gomais, which today hosts one of the highest concentration of †Ākhoe speakers. Given that these speakers have been in contact with Hai||om, it cannot be excluded that the †Ākhoe variety still spoken around Otyolo yields a somewhat different picture. The Hai||om data was provided by two speakers from Outjo with roots in the Etosha pan. According to Haacke *et al.* (1997: 139), Hai||om is the Khoekhoe dialect that best preserves Proto-Khoe lexical material. Tsumeb Damara, finally, belongs to a transitory dialect between Hai||om and Central Damara in Haacke *et al.*'s dialect map (1997: 131, 141), termed 'Gaub Damara' in Figure 1. The data for this variety are from two speakers; the one represented in the graphs below grew up in Otavi, which is part of the same dialect area, and came to Tsumeb as a teenager. Given the dominant status of Central

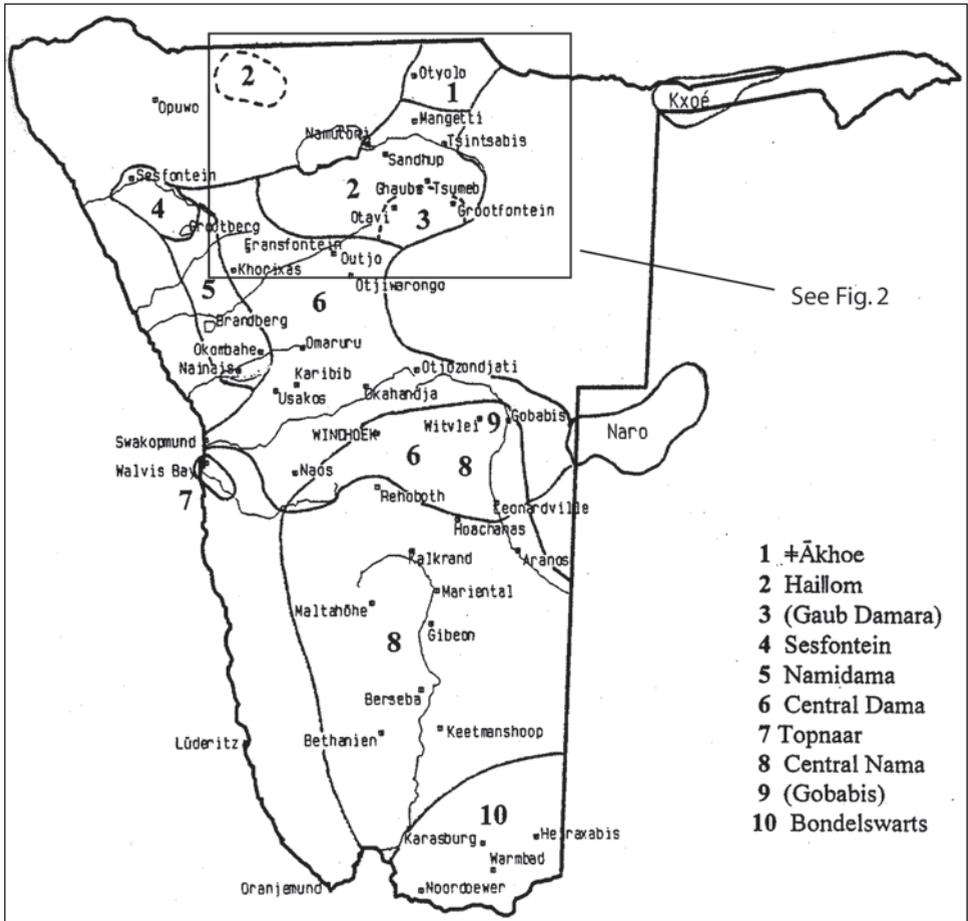


Fig. 1. Approximate dialect areas of Khoekhoegowab (based on Haacke *et al.* 1997).

Khoekhoe (consisting of Central Nama and Central Damara) in the radio, the informants of all three varieties had contact with the Standard Khoekhoe variety to some extent.

Previous treatments of tone in Khoekhoe

The major previous treatments of tone in Khoekhoe all focussed on the central varieties (Central Nama and Central Damara), as the following list shows:

author	informants' origin	variety (Fig. 1)
Beach 1938	between Gobabis and Hoachanas	Central Nama
Hagman 1977 (1973)	Usakos Windhoek	Central Dama[ra] Central Dama[ra]/Central Nama
Haacke 1999a (1992)	primarily Okahandja area	Central Dama[ra]

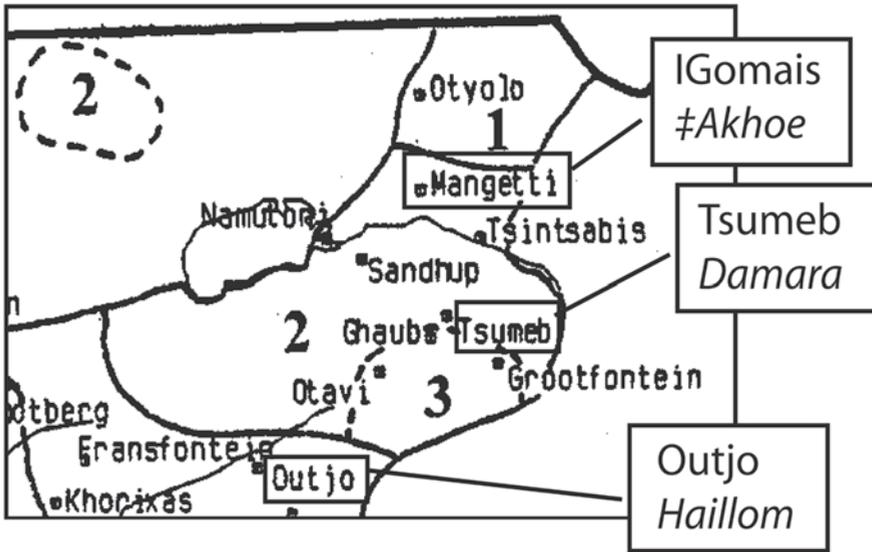


Fig. 2. Northern Khoekhoe varieties.

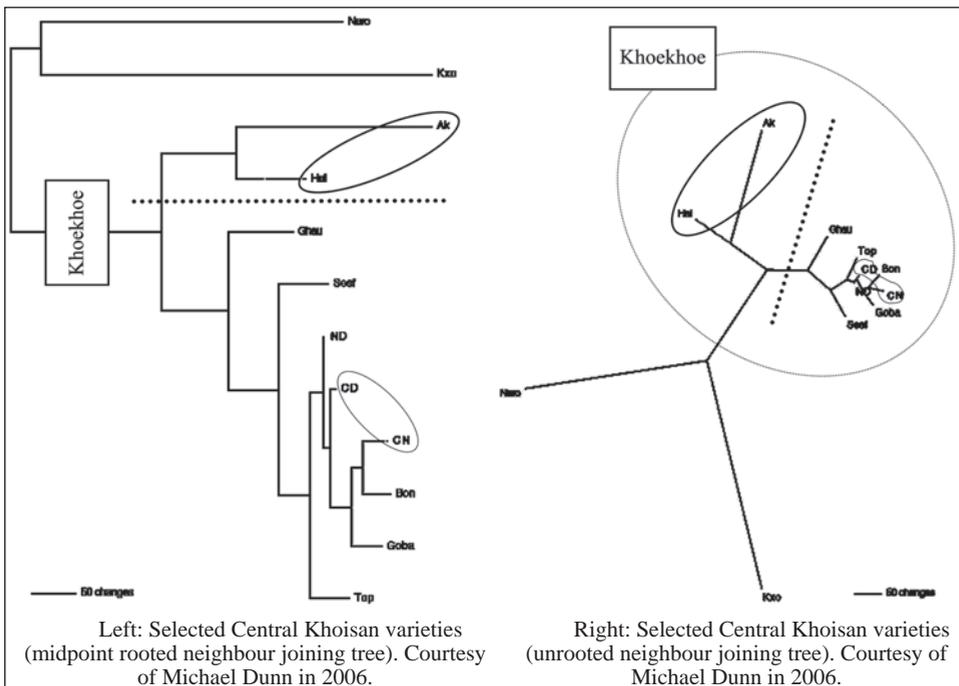


Fig. 3. Lexical proximity between selected Central Khoisan varieties (based on the proximity matrix in Haacke *et al.* 1997: 134). Kxo: Kxoe^s; Sesf: Sesfontein; Top: Topnaar; Ak: #Akhoe; ND: Namidama; Bon: Bondelswarts; Hai: Hai||om; CD: Central Damara; Goba: Gobabis; Ghu: Ghaub Damara; CH: Central Nama (Naro and Kxoe belong to the Kalahari Khoe languages, the sister branch of the Khoekhoe cluster within Central Khoisan (cf. Fig. 1). The varieties discussed in this paper are underlined.

Following the authors listed, and as described in detail by Haacke (1999a), each Khoekhoe stem of most lexical categories has two main tone patterns, whose distribution is mainly conditioned by the position of a word in a tonological phrase. The Citation form mainly occurs in initial position in a tonological phrase, while the so-called ‘Sandhi’ form is found in non-initial position. The Citation melody can be shown to be the basic form, from which the Sandhi melody is derived. The Citation melody occurs among other contexts in isolation, in identificational sentences of the type __ gè, ‘It is a/the __’, as in the example below, and in direct objects in phrase-initial position.

- (1) †khàní-sgè.
 book-3SG.F DECL
 ‘It is a book.’

Due to limitations of space we concentrate on the Citation melody here. As in many other Khoisan languages, the canonical CV shape of lexical stems is bimoraic and has the shape C₁V(C₂)V, where in the case of Khoekhoe C₂ = /p, r, m, n/. This means that, depending on the analysis, most lexical stems bear two tones or a contour tone. Table 1 contrasts the analyses of (major) citation form melodies in the most important previous treatments of Khoekhoe tone.

TABLE 1
 (Major) citation form melodies in bimoraic stems.

		Beach (1938)	Hagman (1977)	Haacke (1999a)
	tone type	unitary contours	sequence of level tones	sequence of level tones
	TBU->	root	mora	mora
tone pattern	A	high-falling	HH	4 3
	B	mid-falling	HM	3 2
	C	high-rising	MH	2 4
	D	mid-rising	LH	1 3
	E	low-mid level	MM	2 2
	F	low-rising	LM	1 2

Beach (1938) and Haacke (1999a) agree on the basic shape of the melodies at the phonetic level, but differ in their phonemic interpretation. For Beach, these shapes are unitary contours tones, while for Haacke they are sequences of two level tones. Like Haacke, Hagman (1977) adopts a compositional approach, but since he posits only three levels, the phonemic specifications of his melodies have to be different. For reasons that cannot be discussed here, we follow Hagman and Haacke in adopting a compositional approach of the tone melodies in bimoraic stems. Note also that irrespective of the theoretical value of each description, Beach and Haacke’s analyses are phonetically more accurate than Hagman’s (1977).

In addition to the melodies in Table 1, Hagman mentions a pattern HL found in “two words which are not obviously borrowed words” (Hagman 1977: 12–13). Haacke (1999a) lists more additional melodies, though many of the words in which they are attested are either loan words or segmentally irregular. These additional melodies are all marginal in terms of number of items in the lexicon (Table 2).

TABLE 2
 Minor citation melodies in bimoraic stems (Haacke 1999a).

tone sequence	number of attestations
2 3	33
1 4	8
3 1	1
4 2	5
4 1	8

Note that while it can be debated whether the minor or exceptional melodies should be taken into account for establishing the basic tone inventory, they are the main reason for postulating four distinctive tone levels in Haacke (1999a: 52–3). On the other hand, if only the more frequent exceptional melody, 2 3, is to be accounted for, in addition to the six major melodies, a three level tone system would be powerful enough while still maintaining a reasonable degree of naturalness (e.g. 1 2 = LL, 1 3 = LM, 2 3 = LH, 2 4 = MH (cf. Haacke 1999a: 53 for a different view).

For the sake of comparison, we focus on the six major patterns identified in Table 1, although each of the Northern Khoekhoe varieties investigated here also has other patterns in bimoraic stems. Each of these six patterns has an equivalent in the Northern Khoekhoe varieties, which can be easily identified because there are numerous cognates across Central and Northern Khoekhoe varieties. In many cases, the cognates have identical segments and differ only in their tones. To be able to refer to corresponding tonal sequences, we use the labels ‘pattern A–F’. It may be added that there are a few mismatches in the tonal patterns of some cognate words, but the great majority of cognates belonged to the same tonal pattern in all the varieties investigated. Finally, the following discussion is limited to nouns, but verbs behave in exactly the same way tonally.

Notes on the method

Before presenting the data, a note on the method is in order. We adopted an integrated approach in which informants, researcher and technical tools each play a distinctive role in the tonal analysis according to the following scheme:

Informants:	production (speech, whistling) speaker judgements (e.g. whether melodies are ‘same/different’, ‘higher/lower’, ‘rising/falling’)
Researcher:	perception probing analysis
Instruments:	acoustic measurements

If any of these three aspects is neglected, the analysis can turn out very different. For instance, Von Essen (1955) did a pioneering, but purely instrumental analysis of Khoekhoe tone based on an enormous amount of recordings. He did no less than 645 measurements of the declarative particle *gè*, and his material also included minimal pairs. Yet he concludes that there are only two distinctive tones in Khoekhoe—possibly with an additional mid tone—rather than three or four tones as posited by later researchers (Table 1).

In the following tone graphs, we trace the pitch of whistled tonal melodies. Whistling eliminates segmental influence on pitch, such as higher pitch on high vowels, or lower pitch after voiced stops, nasalised and aspirated clicks, which all have been identified as depressor consonants in Khoekhoe (Haacke 1999a: 62, 64¹). Of course, whistling by itself is only a realisation of underlying tonemes, which still needs to be interpreted, but it provides a much clearer window on what might be distinctive than normal speech.

We present one telling aspect of the tonology of each of the three northern varieties, rather than presenting three full-fledged tonal systems that show many resemblances, which would be beyond the scope of this paper. The first two cases (on Tsumeb Damara and |Gomais †ǀKkhoe) are easily compatible with a historical scenario of an evolution from a Central Khoekhoe type of situation to that found in the northern varieties. The third case (on Outjo Hai||om), by contrast, might suggest a reverse direction of language change, with the northernmost variety, †ǀKkhoe as the starting point.

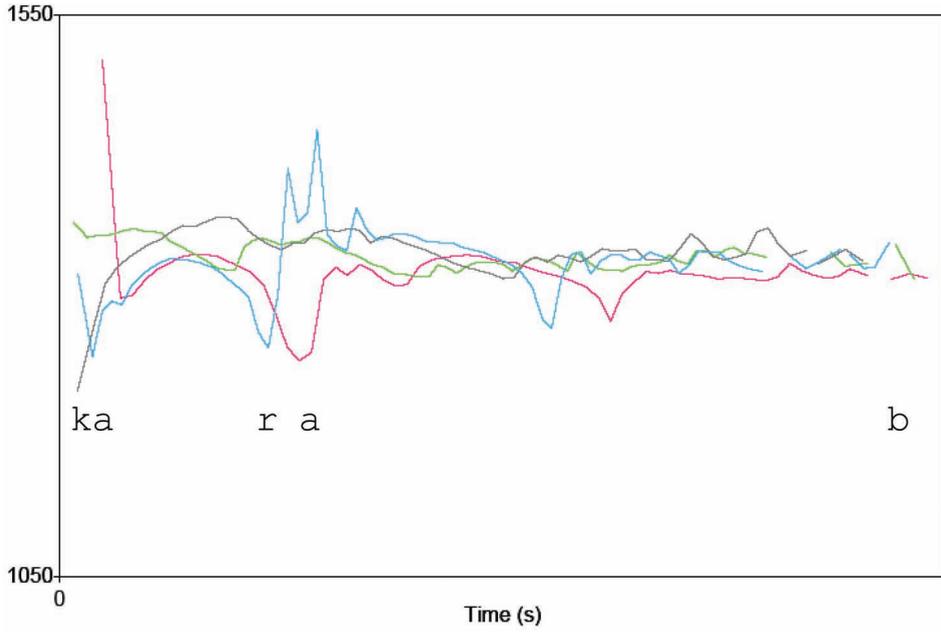
Tsumeb Damara: level melodies

This section is devoted to the level tonal melodies of bimoraic Tsumeb Damara nouns whistled in isolation. Each item is represented by several realisations produced during one or more elicitation sessions by the same informant. All graphs represent the fundamental frequency (F_0) of the words whistled in isolation. For the analysis, the words listed in the Appendix were used, but here we illustrate each pattern with two randomly selected words only. We include both a CVCV and a CVV word for each pattern, since although the former tend to feature more turbulences, they are helpful to distinguish the two underlying tones in a sequence more clearly. In reading the graphs (Graphs 1–7), it must be borne in mind that more abrupt and much quicker pitch changes can be made in whistling than in speaking. A phonemic interpretation will thus abstract away from abrupt and quick oscillations in the frequency graphs. For each graph the corresponding Central Khoekhoe realisation is indicated in parentheses according to Haacke (1999a) and as confirmed by Beach's earlier study (1938). The word layouts below the frequency graphs give a very rough indication of the corresponding segments if the words were pronounced. That representation is in the official orthography, except that sequences of identical vowels are written as digraphs (e.g. ā = aa).

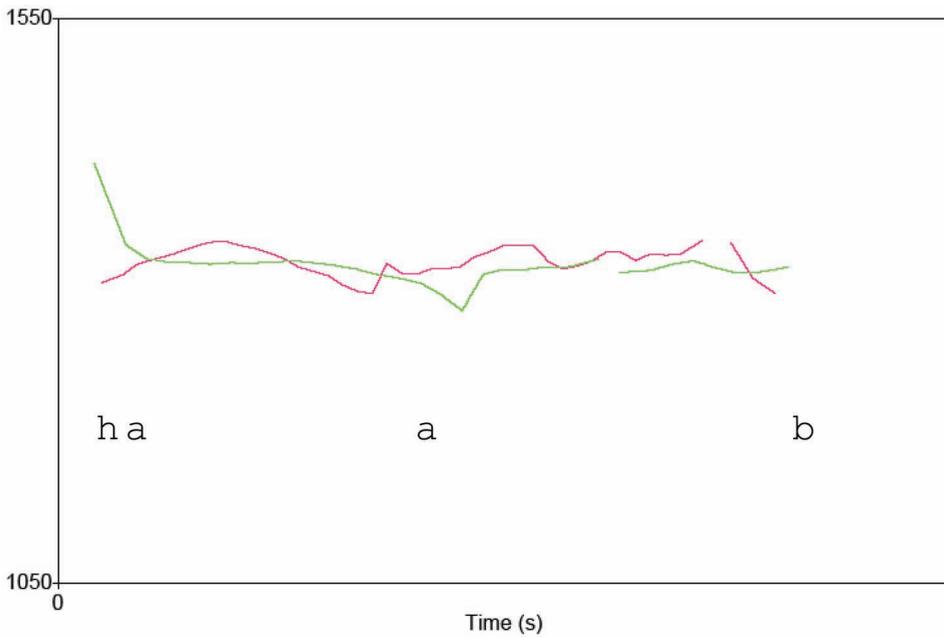
It may be noted that the more level melody (cf. <http://sites.google.com/site/northkhoekhoetone> for a clearer version) is more frequent in pattern F than the 'lower-higher' melody featured in Graph 7. Even where the latter occurs, it always varies with the all-level melody, even with the same speaker. Moreover, the 'lower-higher' melody does not occur in a fixed subset of words with pattern F. These observations suggest that the basic melody here is level, with an optional higher second phase.

To summarise the graphs of the preceding patterns in Tsumeb Damara, Graph 9 replicates one realisation of a CVV noun for each pattern. Based on speakers' judgements and our own perception, all four patterns of Graph 9 have level melodies. It will be noted

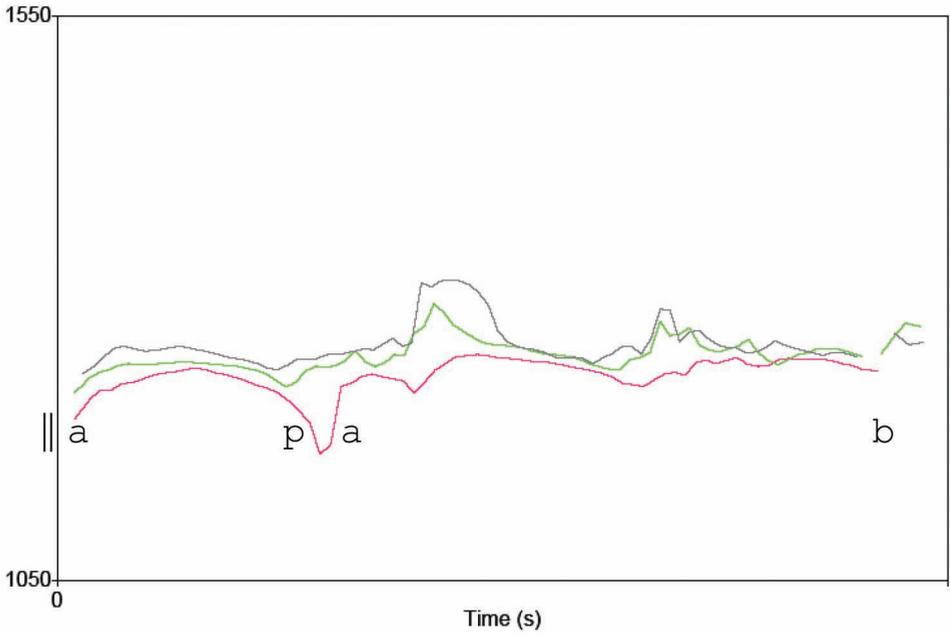
¹ After submitting this paper, Wilfrid Haacke kindly shared with us a copy of his forthcoming paper on tonogenesis and tonal depression in Khoekhoe, Hai||om, †ǀKkhoe and Naro (Haacke n.d.). Unfortunately, his findings could not be incorporated into the present paper anymore.



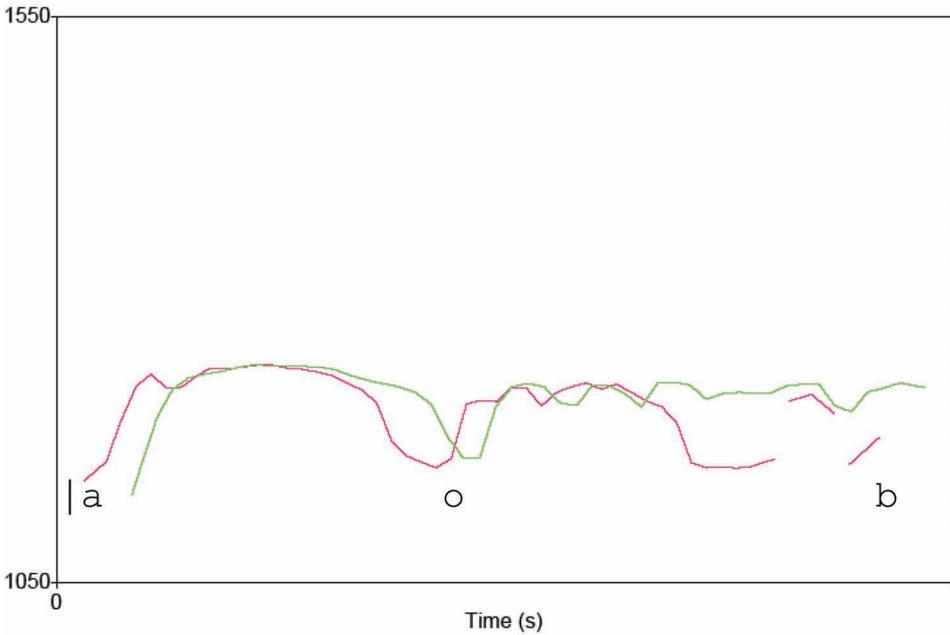
Graph 1. Pattern A (Central Khoekhoe 4 3) CVCV: karab 'necklace'.



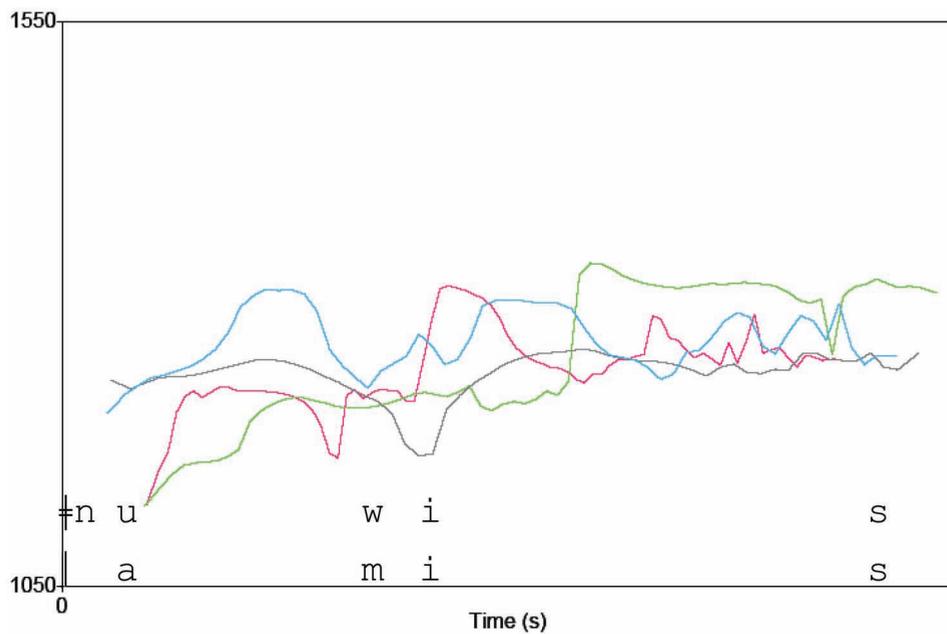
Graph 2. Pattern A (Central Khoekhoe 4 3) CVV: hāb 'horse'.



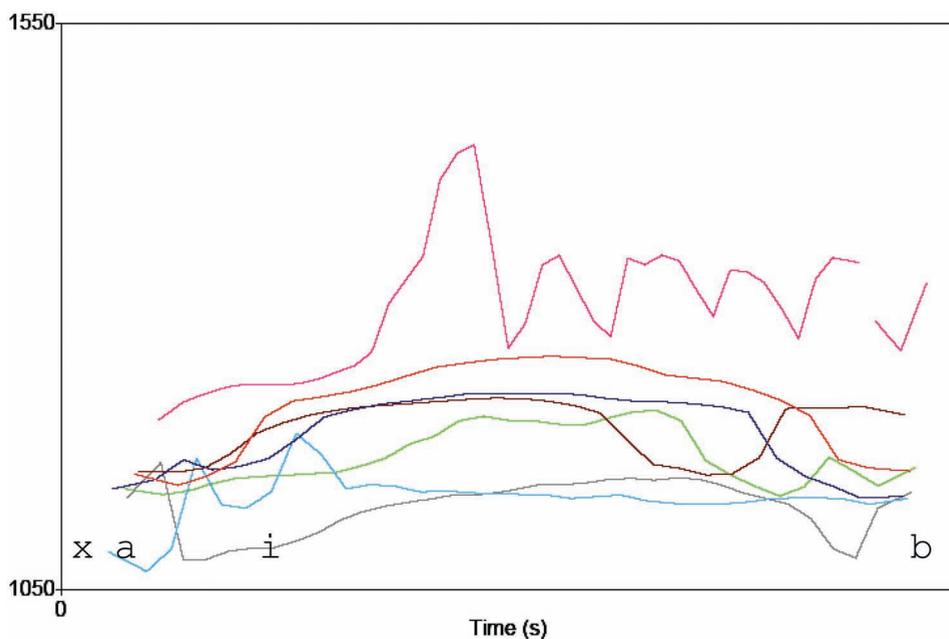
Graph 3. Pattern B (Central Khoekhoe 3 2) CVCV: ||apab 'thread'.



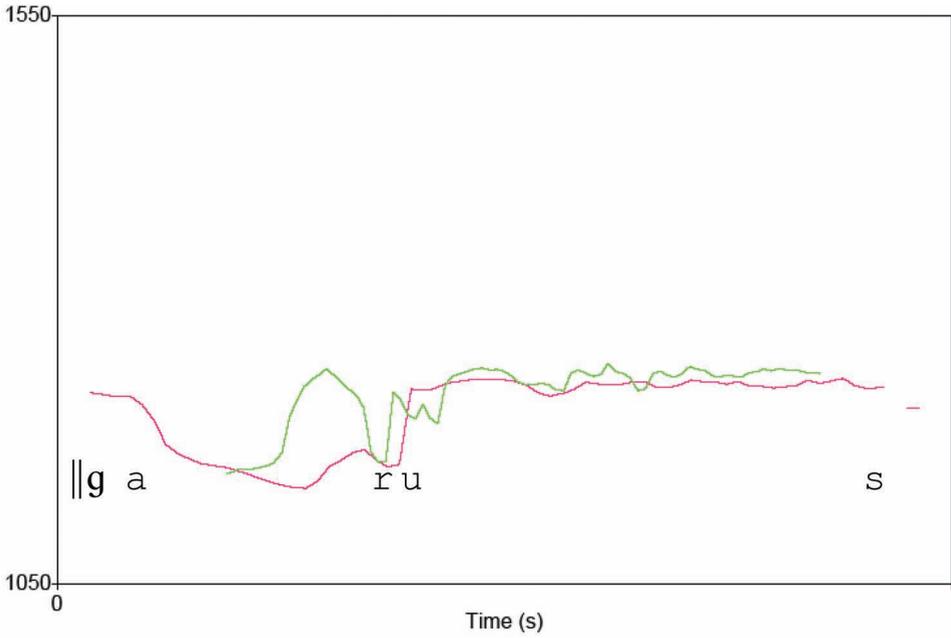
Graph 4. Pattern B (Central Khoekhoe 3 2) CVV: |aob 'blood'.



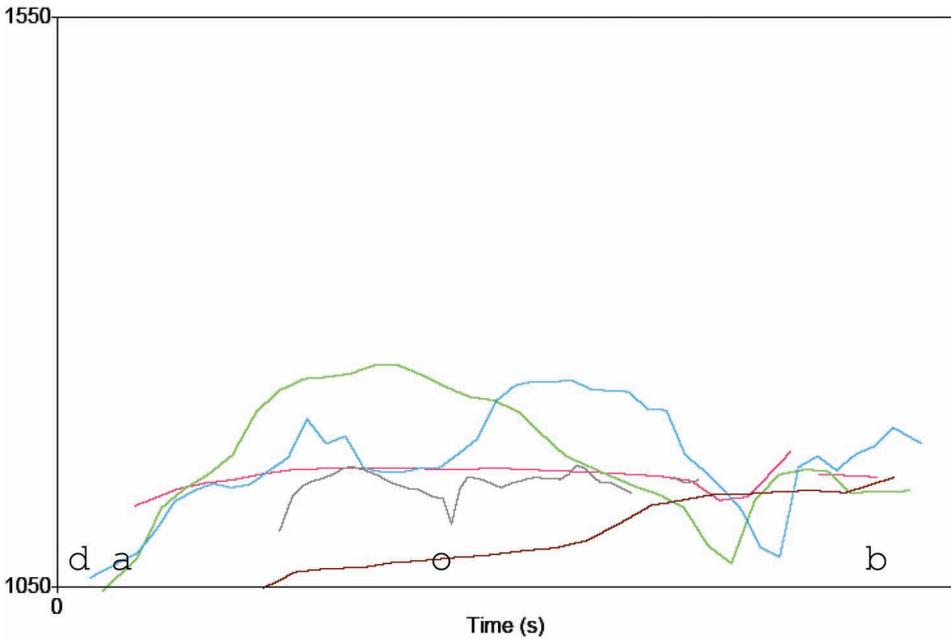
Graph 5. Pattern E (Central Khoekhoe 2 2) CVCV: †nuwis ‘large intestine’, |amis ‘ostrich’.



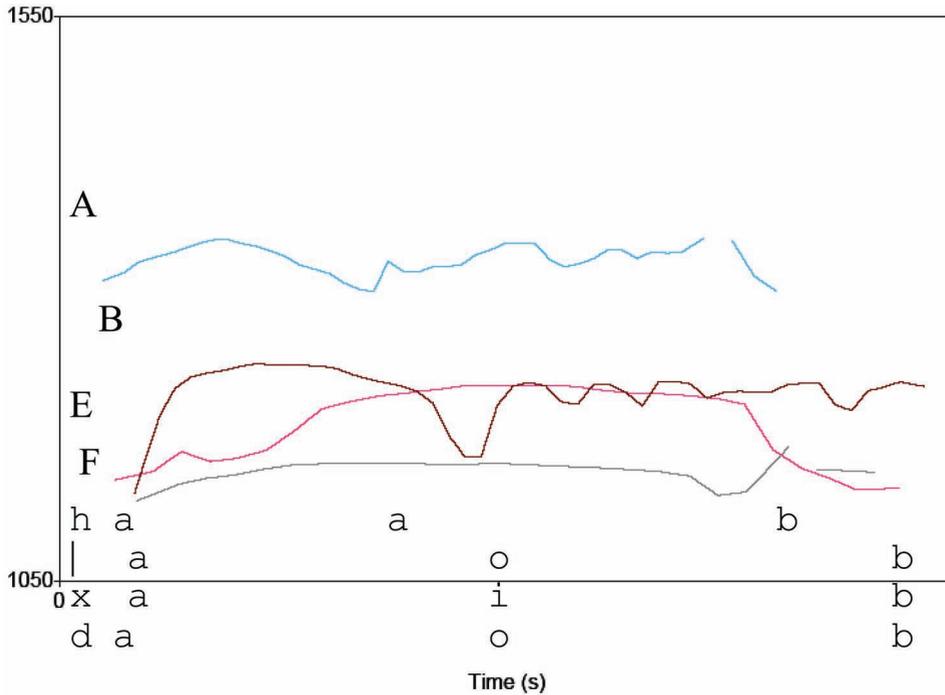
Graph 6. Pattern E (Central Khoekhoe 2 2) CVV: xaib ‘kudu’.



Graph 7. Pattern F (Central Khoekhoe 1 2) CVCV: ||garus 'bag'.



Graph 8. Pattern F (Central Khoekhoe 1 2) CVV: daob 'way'.



Graph 9. Patterns A, B, E, F: CVV: hâb (pattern A), |aob (pattern B), xaib (pattern E), daob (pattern F).

that the particular realisations of the patterns B and E in Graph 9 (the two middle pitch traces) are phonetically very close, although B peaks higher. Informants consistently insist that words with pattern B are ‘higher’ than those with pattern E, and this is clearly heard when contrasting words of the patterns B and E. This is a clear example where instrumental phonetics alone would not lead to an adequate phonological analysis, at least, if based on a moderate amount of tokens.

Without evidence to the contrary that may yet be discovered, these four level melodies are best interpreted as phonemically level. With four level tone melodies, Tsumeb Damara contrasts with Central Khoekhoe, which has been described as having only one (Haacke 1999a; Beach 1938) or two (Hagman 1977) level melodies (Table 3).

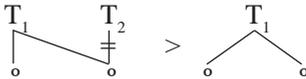
TABLE 3
Citation form melodies in Tsumeb Damara.

		Central Khoekhoe		Tsumeb Damara
		Hagman (1977)	Haacke (1999a)	
tone pattern	A	HH	4 3	4 4
	B	HM	3 2	3 3̄
	C	MH	2 4	rising melody
	D	LH	1 3	level melody
	E	MM	2 2	2 2
	F	LM	1 2	1 1̄

As mentioned above, Haacke's main argument to posit four distinctive level tones in Central Khoekhoe is based on the exceptional, 'minor' tonal melodies (Table 2). By contrast, the data presented in Graphs 1–9 suggest that whether one chooses to include these marginal melodies or not, we need four tonal levels for Tsumeb Damara, even if only the six main patterns ('the big Six') are taken into consideration. Exactly the same level realisations are found in the †Ākhoe and Hai||om for the patterns A, B, E and F, although they are not illustrated here for lack of space.

Comparing the Central Khoekhoe with the Tsumeb Damara (and †Ākhoe and Hai||om) melodies, it will be noted that in order to derive the former from the latter, two rules would be needed, plus the specification of one exception (Pattern E). By contrast, the Tsumeb Damara melodies can be derived by a single tone spreading rule from their Central Khoekhoe equivalents:

Rule 1 (R1)



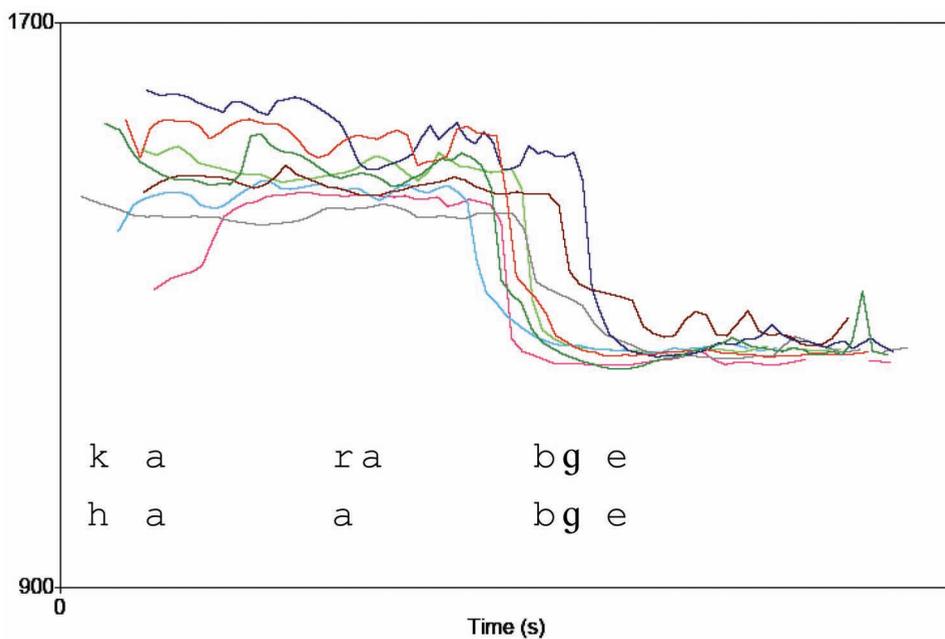
At this stage of our knowledge of Khoekhoe and Central Khoisan historical tonology, this rule (R1) cannot claim any diachronic significance and is not more than a descriptive device that links two phenomena in Central Khoekhoe and in Tsumeb Damara, †Ākhoe and Hai||om, although all things being equal the situation in the Northern Khoekhoe varieties is more likely an innovation. In any case, the four distinctive tonal levels of these varieties are interesting because they seem to fit in an areal context: !Ora, Khoekhoe's closest tonally documented kin, and Western !Xoon (South Khoisan), have been claimed to have just two tone levels. Further north, Naro (Central Khoisan), spoken east of Central Khoekhoe, has been analysed as having three tone levels, while !Xun (North Khoisan), spoken mainly to the north of the Khoekhoe cluster, is generally claimed to have four tone levels. The three northernmost Khoekhoe varieties thus pattern with !Xun, whereas Central Khoekhoe can be analysed either with three or with four tone levels. While the reconstruction of tone in Proto-Central Khoisan and Proto-Khoekhoe is still being debated (Elderkin 2006; Haacke 1999a, b; Honken 2006; Winter 1981), this geographic distribution of tone levels is likely to have been at least partly caused by historic language contact.

(2) Number of tone levels

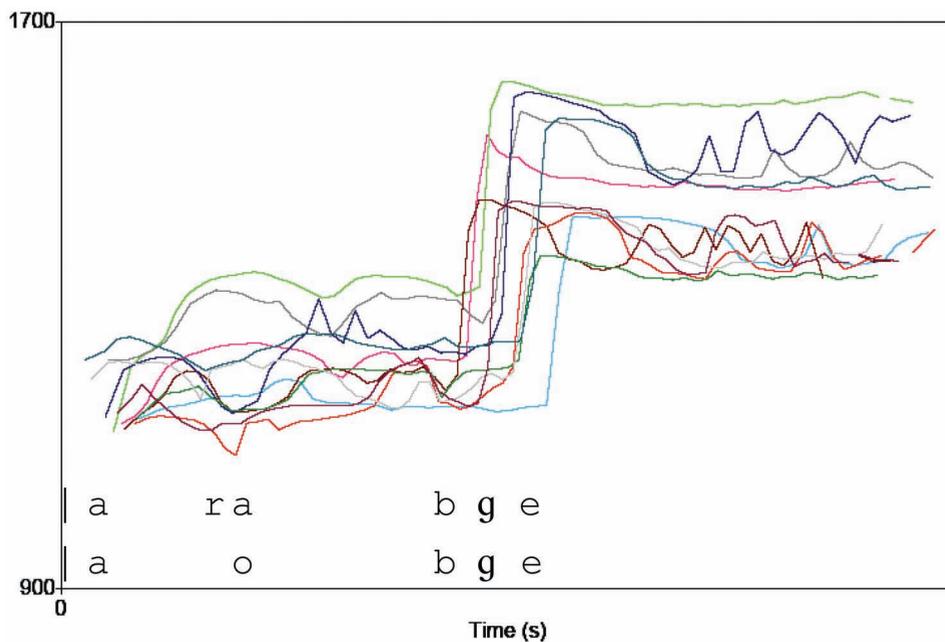
!Ora	2	(Elderkin 2006; cf. Beach 1938)
Western !Xoon	2	(Naumann 2006)
Naro	3	(Visser 1998)
Central Khoekhoe	3 or 4	(cf. Table 1 and discussion following Table 2)
Tsumeb Damara, †Ākhoe, Hai om	4	(this paper)
!Xun	4	(Heikkinen 1989, König & Heine 2001)

/Gomais †Ākhoe: tone of ge (decl)

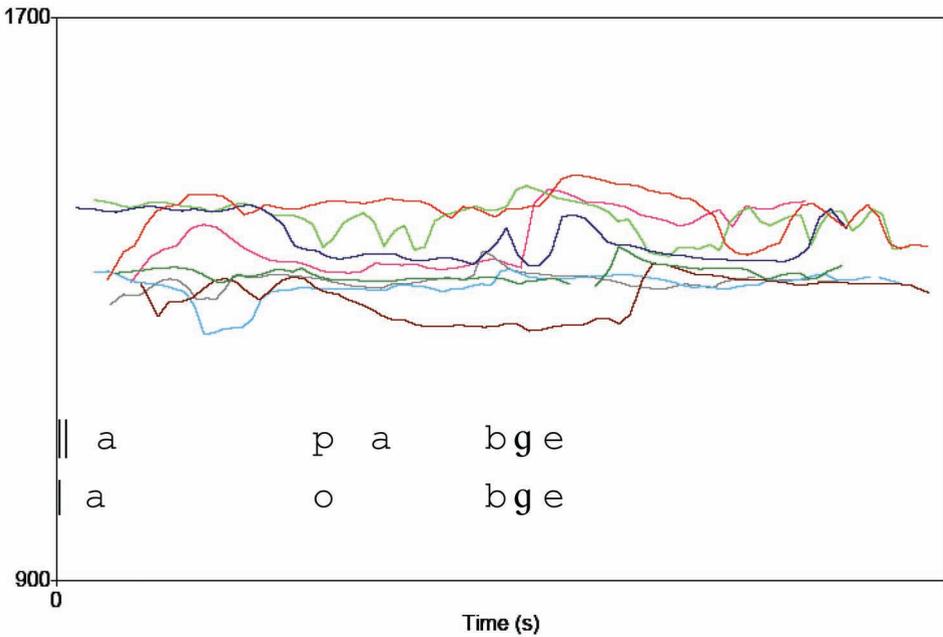
In contrast to Tsumeb Damara, the Citation form of nouns in †Ākhoe is not the bare noun, but carries what is sometimes called the oblique case marker –a. For this reason, the context chosen here to investigate the Citation form is the syntactic frame __ ge,



Graph 10. Group I (a): Pattern A (C Kk 4 3): CVCV and CVV + ge (DECL).



Graph 11. Group 1 (b): Pattern C (C Kk 2 4): CVCV and CVV + ge (DECL).

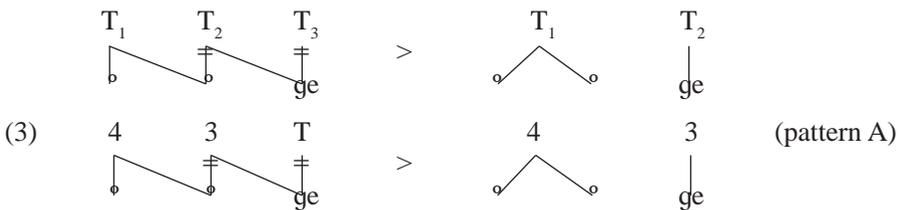


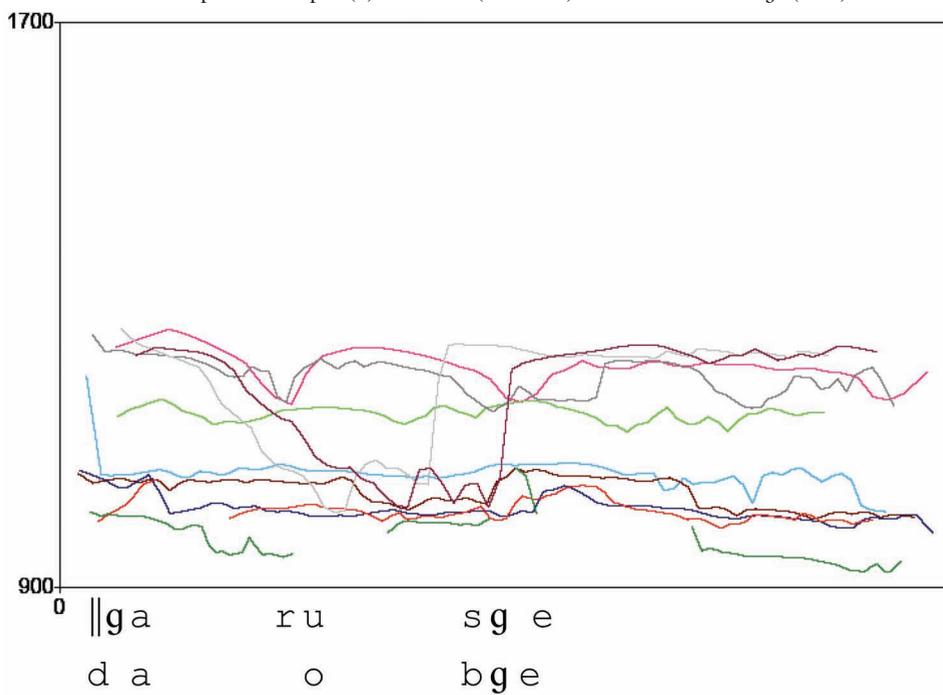
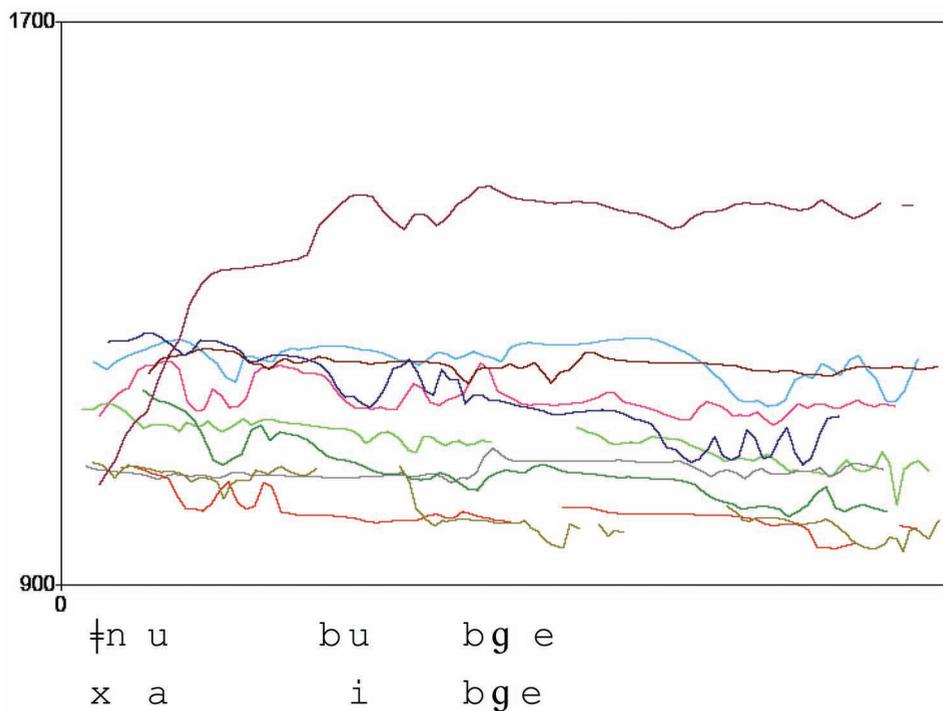
Graph 12. Group II (a): Pattern B (C Kk 3 2): CVCV and CVV + ge (DECL).

‘It is a/the ___’ (see above). According to the tonal behaviour of the declarative particle ge, ǀĀkhoe nouns fall into three groups. This is noteworthy, because in Central Khoekhoe gè has been described as having an invariable tone 2 (v̇) Haacke 1999a). With the first group of nouns, the tone on ge differs from the preceding tone. With nouns of pattern A, it is lower, with pattern C higher than the preceding tone. Consider the graphs 10 and 11.

Within ǀĀkhoe itself, it is hard to find rules to account for the tones of ge (DECL), especially if the tones it takes in combination with the other four major Citation melodies are considered (see below). However, if we take Central Khoekhoe into account, a straightforward rule (R2) can be formulated that accounts both for pattern A and pattern C. Taking the Central Khoekhoe tone patterns as the input, simple rightward tone spreading yields the ǀĀkhoe situation. The first tone of the stem spreads to the right, displacing the second tone, which in turn anchors to the declarative particle ge:

Rule 2 (R2): Tone on ge in ǀĀkhoe following pattern A, C





Pattern C works in exactly the same way as pattern A. In this case, the resulting tone on ge (DECL) is higher than the first tone of the noun.² Again, no historical claim can be necessarily inferred from the use of the Central Khoekhoe tone patterns as an analytical starting point here. In the second group, the tone of the declarative particle ge is identical with the preceding tone (Graphs 12, 13 & 14).

To summarise the description so far, the following groups have been found, Group I occurs after nouns with the patterns A and C, group II occurs after patterns B, E and F:

- (4) Tone on ge in †Ākhoe
- | | |
|-------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| | context |
| Group I (= different from previous tone): | / pattern A, C ___ |
| Group II (= same as previous tone): | / pattern B, E, F ___ |
| Group III | / pattern D ___ (see below) |

Again, it is difficult to account for these different tones on ge within †Ākhoe itself. However, if Central Khoekhoe is taken as the starting point or input, straightforward rules can be formulated. Consider the melodies found in the equivalents of group I and II in Central Khoekhoe:

(5) Central Khoekhoe

Group I	Group II	Group III
pattern A: 4 3	pattern B: 3 2	pattern D: 1 3
pattern C: 2 4	pattern E: 2 2	
	pattern F: 1 2	

All the melodies in group II end in tone 2 (v̇) in Central Khoekhoe, which allows for the following generalisations and constraints about the tone on ge in Central Khoekhoe:

Rule 3 (3): Tone on ge in Central Khoekhoe following pattern B, E, F

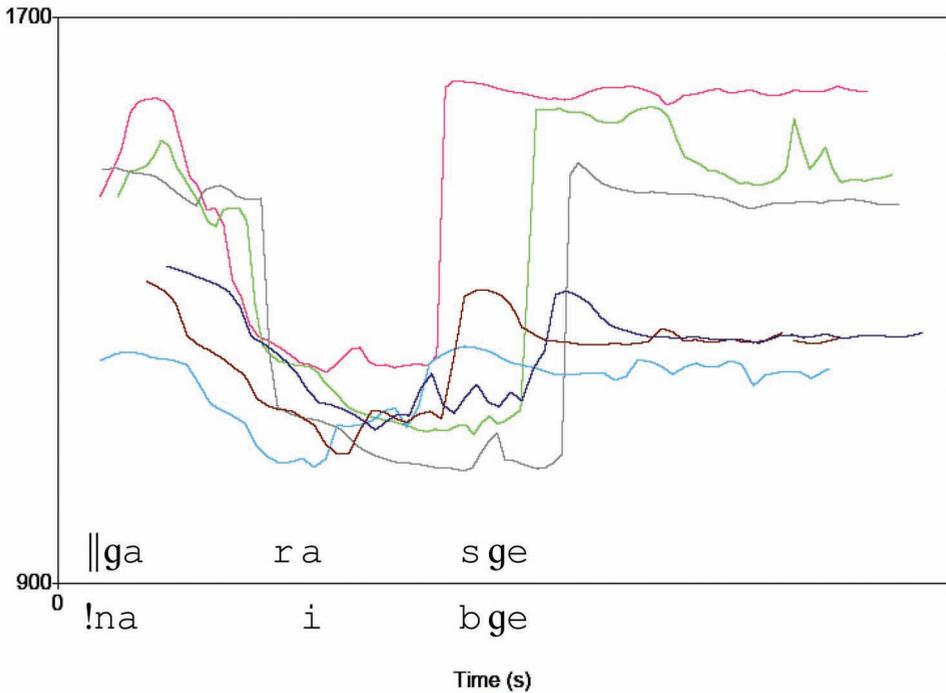
1. tone 2 (v̇) (Haacke and Eiseb 2002)
 2. same as previous tone
- 1 >> 2

Constraint 1 ranks higher than constraint 2, because the reverse order would produce ill-formed output following the patterns A, C and D. Interestingly the same constraints may be posited for †Ākhoe, but with a different ranking:

Rule 3' (R3'): Tone on ge in †Ākhoe following pattern B, E, F

2. same as previous tone
 1. tone 2 (v̇)
- 2 >> 1

² As to the exact values of the tones in pattern C, Haacke (1999: 76) states that they look much like what he interprets as the sequence 23, one of the exceptional or 'minor' melodies. For †Ākhoe, the sequence 22 3 seems more accurate for pattern C + ge, though the question needs more research both in Central Khoekhoe and in †Ākhoe and does not really affect R2.



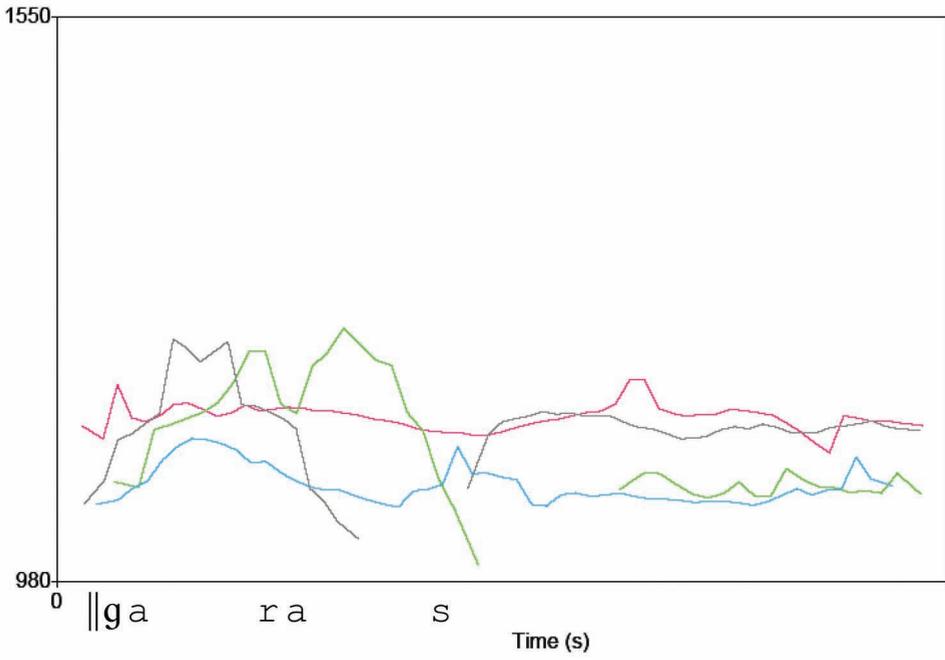
Graph 15. Group III: Pattern D (C Kk 1 3): CVCV and CVV + ge (DECL).

Following patterns B and F, the lower-ranked constraint is violated in †Ākhoe, but not following pattern E. This account is admittedly a bit *ad hoc*, especially since more constraints are needed to generate the correct tone following the patterns A, C, and D. However, already at this stage of analysis, R3 and R3' nicely capture the difference between Central Khoekhoe and †Ākhoe without assuming different constraints altogether.

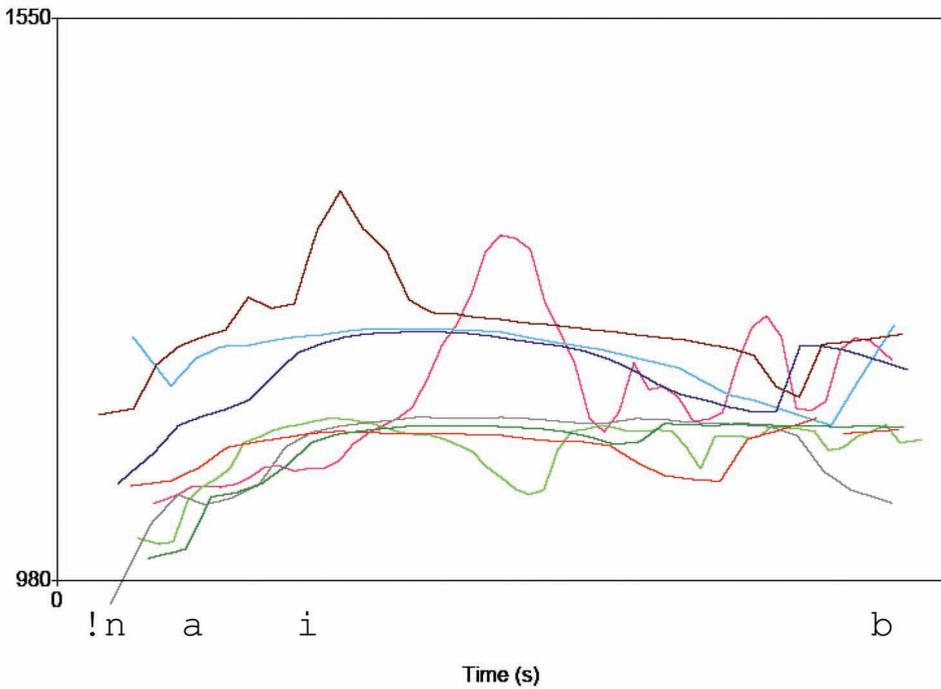
The third group of nouns with respect to the tone of ge (DECL) cannot be accounted for by R2 or R3'. The particle ge (DECL) bears a tone that is identical to the first tone of the preceding noun, the noun itself bearing a high-low melody. The tones on the noun stem are probably tone 3 (v̂) and tone 1 (v̄), but further research is needed to confirm this. This pattern is illustrated here only for the sake of completeness, since at this point of our knowledge of tone in Proto-Khoekhoe and in Northern Khoekhoe varieties, any rule that links it to pattern D in Central Khoekhoe would be highly tentative. Suffice it to say here that the melody on the noun stem in †Ākhoe is the mirror image of the one in Central Khoekhoe (Graph 15).

Outjo Hai//om: missing link in pattern D

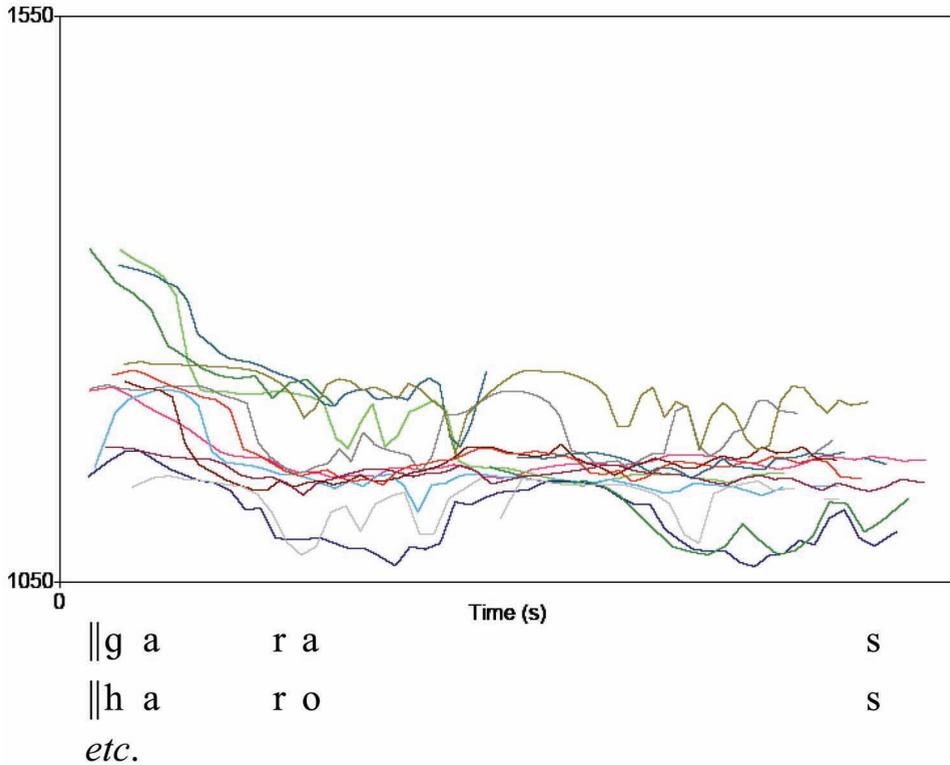
The two tonal phenomena discussed above are at least possibly the result of innovations in the three northern varieties, starting from a situation like the one still found in Central Khoekhoe today. The facts to be discussed in this section, by contrast, may suggest a process in the opposite direction.



Graph 16. Tsumeb Damara: Pattern D (C Kk 1 3), CVCV.



Graph 17. Tsumeb Damara: Pattern D (C Kk 1 3), CVV.



Graph 18. Outjo Hai||om: Pattern D (C Kk 1 3), CVCV.

As seen in Graph 15, the noun in †Ākhoe bears a falling melody, both in CVCV and CVV stems. In Tsumeb Damara, by contrast, both CVCV (Graph 16) and CVV (Graph 17) stems of pattern D have a level melody.³

The exact value of the tone level of pattern D in Tsumeb Damara remains to be investigated in greater detail. It is lower than level 2 (v̇), but we failed to contrast it with level 1 (v̈). Either the patterns D and F are identical in Tsumeb Damara, or pattern D has a fifth contrastive tone level. More important for the present discussion, however, is the realisation of pattern D in Outjo Hai||om. This variety has a falling melody in CVCV stems (Graph 18), but a level melody in CVV stems (Graph 19).

Outjo Hai||om pattern D shares traits with both the |Gomais †Ākhoe and the Tsumeb Damara situation. In CVCV stems it patterns with the former in having a falling melody; in CVV stems it is like the latter in having a level melody. There are two main processes that could link the three varieties in a historical scenario (RX, R4). In both scenarios the geographically intermediate Hai||om has a transitory position.⁴ According to the first

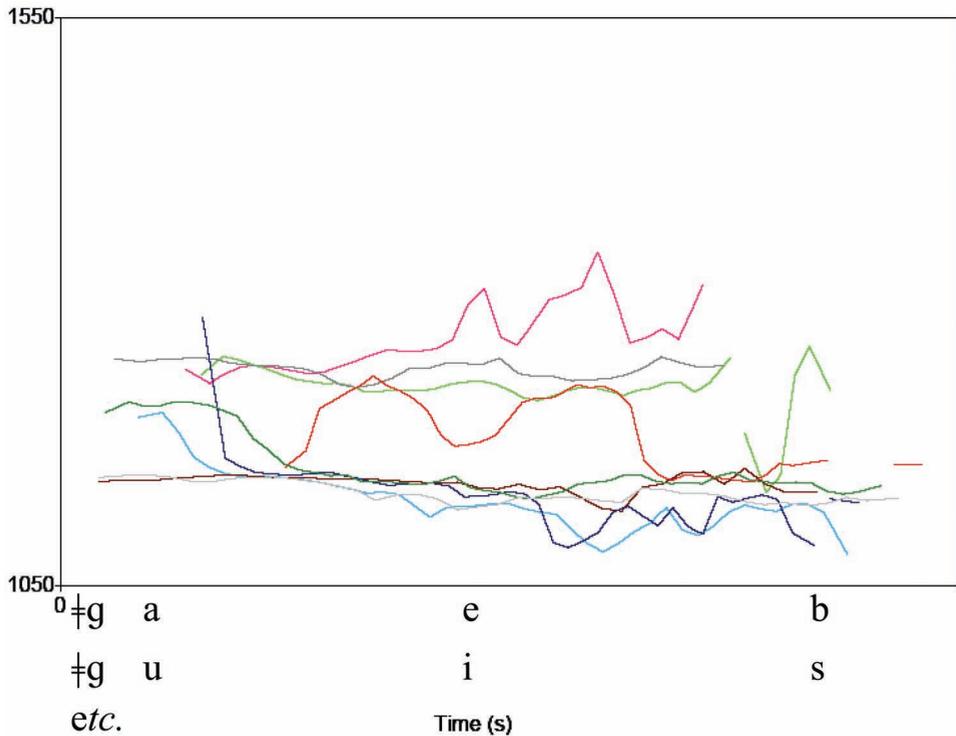
³ It will be noted that two of the four realisations shown in this graph feature a downglide on the second part of the second mora of the noun stem. According to the informants' judgements and our own perception, however, the melody is level throughout. More research is needed to explain this phonetic downglide that occurs as a variant in some speakers.

⁴ As mentioned above, the roots of our Hai||om informants lie in the Etosha pan, north-west of Tsumeb. Hai||om is also spoken north of Tsumeb, in the area between Tsumeb Damara and |Gomais †Ākhoe.

(RX), a level melody (as in Tsumeb Damara) could develop into a falling one, first in CVCV stems (as in Outjo Hai||om) and then extending to CVV stems (as in |Gomais †Ākhoe). This scenario however fails to explain why the other level melodies (patterns A, B, E and F) did not undergo a similar glide formation. A more natural scenario (R4) is that a falling melody (as in |Gomais †Ākhoe) is levelled out, first in CVV stems, where the tones are in close contact (as in Outjo Hai||om), and then extended to CVCV stems (as in Tsumeb Damara). Moreover, this view conforms with the general fact that in all three varieties level melodies are the dominant pattern, being found in at least four out of six major melodies. This would suggest that in the tonal systems found here, a development towards yet another level melody is more likely than one that alters a level melody.

(RX)	Tsumeb Damara >	Outjo Hai om >	Gomais †Ākhoe
	level in CVV	level in CVV	falling in CVV
	level in CVCV	falling in CVCV	falling in CVCV
(R4)	Gomais †Ākhoe >	Outjo Hai om >	Tsumeb Damara
	falling in CVV	level in CVV	level in CVV
	falling in CVCV	falling in CVCV	level in CVCV

Unlike the other processes discussed above (R1, R2, R3'), the present scenario (R4) does not take a situation such as that of the Central Khoekhoe as its starting point to derive the Northern Khoekhoe tone facts, but proceeds from the northernmost Khoekhoe variety, †Ākhoe, south via Outjo Hai||om to Tsumeb Damara. In other words, while in



Graph 19. Outjo Hai||om: Pattern D (C Kk 1 3), CVV.

R1, R2, R3' the centre of innovation is in the North, in R4 it is in the southernmost of the Northern Khoekhoe varieties, Tsumeb Damara.

Common to all three Northern Khoekhoe varieties discussed is the fact that level melodies in noun stems outnumber the contour melodies by far. This is in sharp contrast with Central Khoekhoe, which has only one level melody (pattern E).⁵ If the rules (R1–R4) are correct, this situation is an innovation in Northern Khoekhoe (except in pattern E, of course). The trend towards level melodies in lexical stems is most pronounced in the southern part of Northern Khoekhoe varieties and may be a process that is still going on, as evidenced by the intermediate stage of Outjo Hai||om in pattern D. In three cases (R1, R2, R4), the tonal levelling is the result of a simple tone spreading rule; in one case (R3'), it is a different ranking of constraints that causes the change.

It must be stressed that at the current stage of our knowledge of Proto-Central and Proto-Khoekhoe tone (Beach 1938; Elderkin 2006; Haacke 1999a, b; Honken 2006; Winter 1981 *inter alia*), the proposed scenarios are rather tentative. The data presented, however, allow for at least two conclusions. First, there is more internal tonal variation within Khoekhoe than previously known, and second, any simplistic model of the linguistic prehistory of speakers of Northern Khoekhoe varieties is doomed to failure.

CONCLUSION

The Hai||om of north-central Namibia have long been called a 'typological riddle' (at best) or a 'hybrid' and 'anomaly' (at worst). This image has been replicated over generations of researchers, perhaps partly because both linguists and ethnographers genuinely like riddles as solving them provides researchers with an identity and a purpose. We should realise, however, that a typological puzzle is a puzzle produced by typology (and typologists). In other words, what it shows, above all, is that there are limitations to classification. There can be no doubt that many people in Namibia, of all kinds of backgrounds, do find it puzzling to realise that some people who apparently live very much like 'San', speak a language that is very much like that of 'non-San'. In this contribution, we have argued that we should not ignore the phenomenon, even though we may be critical of typologies and classification that contain fallacies and pitfalls for local speakers of Khoisan languages and researchers alike. This is why we have included a short ethnographic depiction of the ways in which Hai||om and their dominant neighbours today appropriate the discourse of origins. Notions of 'being a first people' are seen as a means towards greater recognition by many Hai||om, notions of 'hybridity', by contrast, have been used as a political tool to counteract claims by Hai||om who seek to reconstruct their language and culture.

But what are the implications of this situation for academic research? Excluding questions of cultural evolution or cultural diffusion is one strategy that some researchers pursue. The problem with this stance is that it leaves the field open to the political strategists and ignores what many people in their everyday interaction and identity formation consider to be of prime importance. The ideas provided in this contribution are intended to be a first step towards overcoming this rather unsatisfactory state of affairs.

How can we find a productive new turn to the questions that preoccupy so many people in southern Africa? Based on the evidence presented here, we suggest that it is no longer satisfactory to seek what one may call 'first-order patterns', that is, evidence

⁵ The same holds for verb stems, but cannot be shown here for reasons of space.

from an isolated single line of research, be it a subfield of anthropology (e.g. oral history) or linguistics (e.g. lexicography). In the study of Hai||om language and culture single patterns of this sort may be identified which can be correlated with diverse, even opposed, long-term reconstructions. These are easily open to political abuse and, more fundamentally, they have little explanatory power as they are usually informed by the theoretical stance they are supposed to confirm.

We suggest that a more likely corrective source is the combination of independent frames of reference from different domains. These 'second-order patterns' emerge where the patterns in one frame of reference—and not the surface phenomena themselves—are related to patterns found on the basis of a different frame of reference. In the case of this contribution we have combined patterns found in kinship/naming practices with those found in tonology. In both domains there is evidence for changes shaping Hai||om and its sociolinguistic neighbourhood in both directions. Moreover, the influences seem to go beyond the Khoekhoe cluster so that the boundary between Khoekhoe variants and non-Khoekhoe variants has probably been much more permeable than was previously thought. The comparative ethnographic remarks on the kinship and naming systems of the Hai||om and their neighbours indicated both variability and similarities. We suggest that it is useful to discuss this pattern in parallel with our body of recently collected comparative linguistic data on the tonology of a number of Hai||om and Khoekhoe variants. Again, variability and continuities emerge from this data. Typologically, we suggest, the evidence in both fields must be considered 'inconclusive', with little prospect of solving the riddle as constructed by previous research.

As an alternative route for knowledge growth, we suggest to dimensionalise what has hitherto been considered to be a dichotomous switch between two types. The variation found can help us to lay out a spectrum or a scale on which we can place the empirical instances (of language use, of cultural practice) found in the larger set of research lines. Rather than dividing the continuum found into discrete types that are then taken to 'explain' the data, we suggest that explanations have to be sought at the level of second-order correlations. In other words we may seek to compare patterns found in the variability of tones, for example, with patterns found in other domains of linguistic description or, indeed, ethnographic description.

Further long-term interdisciplinary research enterprises are needed to develop the perspective that we advocate in this contribution. Our limited data set, consisting of a short survey of speech tones in a number of Khoekhoe variants and a comparative study of the use of personal names and kin terms, can only be a modest starting point for such a larger endeavour. What we do offer is a suggestion for an alternative way of looking at variation and variability, as well as an alternative way of combining linguistic and ethnographic data.

This also opens up a new direction for interdisciplinary research, in that we are not thinking in terms of two 'types' of data (e.g. linguistic versus ethnographic, or ethnographic versus archaeological), but that each of the disciplines involved provides a number of frames of reference that may be productively brought together in attempts to seek explanations. Moreover, the list of involved disciplines is not closed but may be extended to include ecology or genetics. This article, therefore, does not seek to find the definitive answer to the Hai||om riddle, but rather to set out a path that will allow our knowledge to grow.

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APPENDIX: WORDS USED FOR THE TONE ANALYSIS

The pattern membership given here is as in Central Khoekhoe (Haacke & Eiseb 2002). As mentioned above, there are some mismatches across the varieties with regard to pattern membership. In such cases, the words concerned were of course not taken into consideration for the patterns given here.

Pattern A (Central Khoekhoe: 4 3)

karab	bead
kunis	wagon
torob	war
arub	baboon
arab	sticks of game sp.
!apus	gun
uis	stone
gôab	son, child
ams	mouth
!oms	fist
haab	horse

Pattern B (Central Khoekhoe: 3 2)

gapas	hat
apab	thread
sores	sun
sarab	cloth
khâb	moon
aob	blood
oms	house
‡aib	foot
!âb	river
!nôs	monkey orange

Pattern C (Central Khoekhoe: 2 4)

!arub	cheetah
piris	goat
taras	woman, wife
khurib	tortoise sp.
anis	bird
kurib	year
‡khanis	book
!unib	makalani
sonis	navel
soros	body
arab	rib
karab	afternoon
nabeb	Wambo
abib	rain
!ubub	egg
‡hanub	law
bapus	pumpkin
aob	snake
aes	fire
!khaib	cold (noun)
xammi	lion
gammi	water
‡gaes	ear

Pattern D (Central Khoekhoe: 1 3)

!ores	plate
danib	honey
darab ~ drâb	wire
haros	shoe
danas	head
!haras	kraal, fence
tsarab	dust
surus	adder sp.
garab	shoulderblade
tsawab	gall-bladder
!hûb	land
!nâb	light
hais	tree
gûs	sheep
‡guis	nose
!nais	giraffe

Pattern E (Central Khoekhoe: 2 2)

amis	ostrich
‡nubub	large intestine
‡khabab	quarrel
aru-i	bush potato
anub	value (noun)
sorab	disdain
aub	dew
ûb	hair
ûb	urine
xaib	kudu
aub	fish
‡khoab	elephant

Pattern F (Central Khoekhoe: 1 2)

!nabas	rhino
garus	bag
gomas	cow
gawub	shadow
!haros	hut, cattle-post
tsamab	melon sp.
‡nobos	lizard, small snake
dai-e	milk
daob	road
khoes	woman, female person
hommi	sky

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