

Wilfrid H.G. Haacke and Eliphias Eiseb. *A Khoekhoegowab Dictionary with an English–Khoekhoegowab Index*. 2002, xiv + 740 pp. ISBN 99916-0-401-4. Windhoek: Gamsberg Macmillan. Price: N\$175.00 (Hard-cover), N\$150.00 (Soft-cover).

Having dedicated more than 20 years to this single major lexicographic project, the authors, Professor Wilfrid H.G. Haacke and Pastor Eliphias Eiseb, have produced a dictionary of amazing quantity and quality. The newly published *Khoekhoegowab Dictionary* comprises some 25 000 Khoekhoegowab entries and the English renderings in the English–Khoekhoegowab index amount to over 26 000 entries. While these figures are quite impressive in themselves, the reader will also find a thorough analysis of the Khoekhoegowab entries as well as refined English translations. The dictionary attempts to address the interests of linguists as well as the needs of the speech community. Unavoidably, the divergent interests of these two groups force the authors to accept a number of compromises that result in some inconvenience for both the target audiences. Despite these limitations, linguistic research on African languages will find the dictionary a source of eminent importance for both historical linguistics as well as typological studies. And mother-tongue speakers will greatly benefit from this publication, which, thanks to financial support from the German technical assistance agency GTZ, is available at a price that is affordable for the Namibian public.

The language documented in the dictionary is referred to as Khoekhoegowab. While quite a number of Namibians identify themselves and their language as Nama, Damara or Haillom, it seems, very few, if any, refer to themselves as Khoekhoen or speakers of Khoekhoegowab. The dictionary does not explain why "Khoekhoegowab" is used for the language of these three groups of people; it simply adds "revived authentic name" to the rendering under the entry *Khoekhoegowab* (Haacke and Eiseb 2002: 72). The reason for using "Khoekhoegowab", however, was provided in a lecture, which Professor Haacke delivered at the University of Namibia in the year 2000 (printed in 2002). There he states (Haacke 2002: 12):

The word Khoekhoegowab ... means Khoekhoe-language. This glossonym has, after Namibia's independence, been reintroduced as formal reference to the so-called Nama/Damara language at the initiative of my long-time colleague, Pastor Eliphias Eiseb, so as to avoid the dichotomy of Nama/Damara. ... this term (Khoekhoegowab) is not an artificial creation but was the original name for the language, as already recorded by Jan van Riebeeck in January 1653.

With this new comprehensive dictionary, Khoekhoegowab is now by far the best-documented Khoesaaan language. Only time will tell whether this more correct, but rather bulky language name, Khoekhoegowab, will enter into everyday usage, replacing Nama, Damara and Haillom.

The target users of the *Khoekhoegowab Dictionary* will be readers with wide-

ly different backgrounds and interests: either native speakers from Namibia, Botswana and the Republic of South Africa, or professional linguists of diverse nationalities. The only potential reader combining both characteristics is an exceptional case: Levi Namaseb, a Khoekhoe-speaking linguist, who teaches his language at the University of Namibia. Many of the Khoekhoegowab linguistic terms in the dictionary go directly back to him and their usage in his Khoekhoegowab courses. As a general principle, only notions from mother-tongue speakers have been considered, as the authors themselves "did not attempt to coin Khoekhoegowab words for English concepts, where such words are not already in existence" (Haacke and Eiseb 2002: iii).

In order to serve the needs of the Khoekhoegowab speech community, the dictionary has to be accessible to non-professional dictionary users. For this reason the authors decided to use the officially recognized standardised orthography of Khoekhoegowab.

Unfortunately, the conventions of the "sole official orthography for Khoekhoegowab" (Curriculum Committee for Khoekhoegowab 2002: xiv) do not always comply with international practice. The most problematic deviation in this respect is the use of b, d and g for lower tone melodies, in contrast to p, t and k for the higher melodies. Another confusion arises as a result of the representation of the clicks. In contrast to international conventions, a simple click symbol does not represent a simple click, but instead a click with glottal accompaniment. While a click followed by g otherwise refers to a voiced click, in the orthography of the *Khoekhoegowab Dictionary* it stands for a voiceless click.

Also to meet the requirements of linguistic researchers as well as of persons wanting to learn the language, the authors considered some modifications of the official orthography necessary. Tone marks were added and the "long" vowels are no longer written with a macron, but as double vowels instead. In order to mark nasalization, the standard orthography tops the vowel with a circumflex. In the modified form, the tiny circumflex is inserted between the vowels to allow for separate tone marks of the vowels. Being professionals in the field of linguistics, these scholars can however be expected to be able to adapt to the official orthography. In using the Khoekhoegowab lexical entries from the dictionary in comparative research, one has therefore to adjust them to international phonetic standards in order to avoid confusion.

The decision in favour of the official Khoekhoegowab orthography used in formal education from the elementary school up to university level was made for the benefit of mother-tongue users. The use of the dictionary by Khoekhoegowab speakers requires the coverage of semantic areas essential to everyday life. The dictionary provides Khoekhoegowab entries in areas such as transport (e.g. *car*, *car-wash*, *fuel*, *traffic circle* and *zebra crossing*), communication (e.g. *fax* and *telephone*), disease and its treatment (e.g. *AIDS*, *malaria*, *TB*, *vaccination* and *x-ray*). Dictionaries, like all books, also reflect the personal interests of the authors. Three semantic fields seem to have received special attention. Numerous entries from the religious context, such as *baptism*, *Bible*, *faith*, etc. may possibly

go back to Pastor Eiseb, as well as the large number of names for plants. Furthermore, Professor Haacke appears not to hide his passion for highly abstract Khoekhoegowab terms for phonetic and tonological concepts, for example, the entries of *vowel*, *toneme*, *tone melody*, etc. where the different kinds are listed. All in all, the wide coverage, also of modern aspects of life, makes the dictionary a useful source of reference for native speakers, be they interested laypersons or teachers of Khoekhoegowab.

Scholars will admire the richness of phonetic, lexical and structural information. Impressive is the number of compounds, which follow the main entries, along with other variations. The meanings have been analysed in great detail and even the usage of a given term is mentioned.

In 1999, the same authors published a *Khoekhoegowab–English/English–Khoekhoegowab Glossary* (for a review see Snyman 2000). This glossary, with approximately 10 000 basic entries and exclusive application of the standard orthography, aims to respond to the needs of the Khoekhoegowab community. With this former publication being available, and given the minor orthographic changes discussed above, one might simply omit the repeated entries in a revised edition of the dictionary. The forms in the standard spelling follow each Khoekhoegowab entry in parentheses { }, the main difference in the two forms being the omission of the tone in the standard orthography. Even non-linguists can easily derive the standard form from the main entries. The user of the dictionary is severely hindered by these redundant 25 000 entries.

A statement in the introduction, indicating that the authors consider Khoekhoegowab an "endangered language", at first comes as a surprise. The phrase "this last surviving language of the Central Khoesaaan family" (Haacke and Eiseb 2002: iii) merits correction, as several other Central Khoesaaan languages, such as Khwe and Naro are still spoken today. In fact, after Oshiwambo, with 713 919 speakers, Khoekhoegowab is the second largest speech community of Namibia, with 175 554 speakers (cf. census figures of 1991 by language spoken, Haacke 1996: 32). The results of several surveys reveal, however, that Nama and Damara seem not positively disposed to the formal use of their language. Khoekhoegowab speakers are reluctant to send their children to schools in which their language is employed as medium of instruction (Laurentius Davids, personal communication). Numerous instances from all parts of the world demonstrate that even languages spoken by large communities may indeed disappear, if abandoned by their speakers.

Up to now most research on African languages has been carried out by scholars from the USA, Europe and Japan. The authors of the most important previously available dictionaries of Khoekhoegowab were also foreigners, more precisely German missionaries: Johann Georg Kroenlein (1889) and Friedrich Rust (1969), who based his work on that of the former. With the present dictionary, the situation has obviously changed, as both scholars are born Namibians.

With the completion of this dictionary, which is a milestone in the field of

Khoesaaan linguistics, Professor Haacke and Pastor Eiseb's work will occupy a prominent position in the study and teaching of African languages abroad. This new Khoekhoegowab dictionary may help to preserve the wealth of the language and contribute to efforts of the speakers of Khoekhoegowab to find a meaningful role for their language in modern life and in the future.

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