

**Christa Kilian-Hatz.** *Khwe Dictionary*. With a Supplement on *Khwe Place-names of West Caprivi* by Matthias Brenzinger. 2003, x + 431 pp. ISBN 3-89645-083-2. Namibian African Studies 7. Cologne: Rüdiger Köppe Verlag. Price: €52.80.

Before an assessment of this dictionary is made, it is important to place the Khwe language in its historical and social context. Khwe dam (language of the Khwe), as its speakers would prefer to call it, is a Khoisan language belonging to the Southern African Central-Khoisan under the Khoe cluster (Güldemann and Vossen 2000). It is spoken in Northern Botswana and in the Western Caprivi Strip of Namibia in the Kavango region. As the compiler correctly observes, there are about 10 000 Khwe-speaking people who live in the Caprivi Strip of North-Western Namibia, Angola, Botswana and Zambia, and at Schmidtsdrift, South Africa. As can be expected from a speech community such as the Khwe, who prefer living in small communities, there are dialects within the Khwe dam. In Botswana, the notable varieties are the Buga (Sand Khwe) and the ||Ani (River Khwe), which exhibit discernable linguistic differences at the lexical and grammatical levels. However, linguists agree, as Kilian-Hatz also indicates, that the Khwe dam dialectal varieties are definitely related and mutually fairly intelligible (cf. Güldemann and Vossen 2000). As a language that has not been elaborately codified, it is difficult to speak about a standard Khwe dam form. Many other social and linguistic activities need to be carried out to resolve the question of standard Khwe dam (cf. WIMSA 2001).

As also reported in the introduction to the dictionary, the liberation war in Namibia caused some serious disturbances to the Khwe speakers' social ecology and geographical distribution. Some speakers have consequently been resettled in the Northern Cape Province of South Africa (Takada 2007). Yet this relatively recent social turmoil that affected them is just another of the historical occurrences in their precarious and necessitous lives. Within the Kavango region of Namibia and the Okavango delta of Northern Botswana, the Khwe people, as most Khoisan peoples elsewhere, have always come into contact with other ethnic groups, who often dominated them socially, economically and linguistically. There has therefore been some important lexical borrowings from and even a language shift towards influential regional languages. Also, there is very little that suggests the current language use policies in the countries in which they are found would change the situation for the better. The Khwe are marginalized and subjected to the ethnolinguistic assimilations of the more populous and better organized ethnic groups surrounding them.

It is against this background of a historical and sociolinguistic marginalized speech community that the importance of a lexicographical work such as this Khwe dictionary can be assessed. Recording a language in dictionary form for an endangered language such as Khwe is a milestone in the study and preservation of the language. The compilation of a dictionary, as also an act of language codification, provides a source for important linguistic data and indige-

nous knowledge systems, and as such is critical to all future research on the language. As indicated in the dictionary presentation, this compilation contains about 5 700 entries consisting of lexical as well as grammatical morphemes. In terms of African language standards, this compilation corresponds to a lexical stock that allows an ethnolinguistic speech community to sufficiently express its knowledge systems. Also, as a bilingual dictionary, the limitations are understandable. A monolingual dictionary would help regenerate more linguistic (lexical and grammatical) stock.

Furthermore, the introduction provides essential information on the language dealt with in this dictionary. It contains a map, which helps to precisely locate the speakers' territory. The Khwe dialects are listed as ||Xo-Khwe (lit. Dry Land Khwe, a dialect of the Khwe living mainly in the East Caprivi), ||Xom-Khwe (lit. River Khwe, the dialect of the Khwe living mainly on the Kavango River in West Caprivi), Búma-Khwe (lit. North Khwe, the dialect of the Khwe living in the Caprivi and in Botswana, but originating from Angola) and Búga-Khwe (lit. Bush Khwe, the dialect of the Khwe living in Botswana). It is important to note that this language is in transition and that there is evidence of dialectal convergence. There are also lexical borrowings (loan-words) from other languages such as Mbukushu, Afrikaans and English. This situation has some consequences for the use and variation of words within Khwe dialectology.

The dictionary consists of preliminary remarks and acknowledgements, the table of contents, abbreviations and symbols, an introduction, the Khwe-English dictionary and the English-Khwe index, the references section, and annexes consisting of Khwe proper names and Khwe place-names. The table of contents gives a synoptic view of the dictionary layout, important for providing practical guidance to the use of the dictionary. The table of abbreviations and symbols is elaborate, giving essential information on the abbreviations of the grammatical categories and the linguistic or dialectal sources of some lexical entries in the dictionary. These abbreviations and symbols reflect a language that is grammatically rich and the comprehensive analysis provided in the compilation is linguistically rewarding. For a language such as Khwe, this information facilitates the use of the dictionary for different language activities.

The format of presentation is therefore helpful in view of the language that is being treated lexicographically. The preliminary remarks, as brief as they may seem, are informative as they provide research data sources for the dictionary. The extensive research by the renowned linguist Oswin Kohler is, for instance, acknowledged. Kohler, who produced major works on Khoisan, is credited for the current understanding of Khoisan classification (cf. Güldemann and Vossen 2000; Kohler 1981; Legère 1998; Haacke and Elderkin 1997). The botanical data also comes from a well-known Khoisan researcher Mathias Schaldt (cf. Schaldt 2000). Several contributions on material culture by Gertrud Boden and Stefanie Michels are furthermore acknowledged. The acknowledgements also recognize the contribution of ethnic speakers, namely David Naudé

and Bothas Marinda Xunudao. The collaboration by native speakers ensures the reliability and representativeness of the dictionary data. The "insightful comments and invaluable help" by Wilfred Haacke is furthermore recognized. Haacke, a Khoisan lexicographer (Haacke 1998) himself, based at the University of Namibia, is crucial in assuring the quality of any dictionary publication on the Khoisan languages of Namibia.

The presentation of the orthographic conventions cannot be underestimated. While they are essentially adapted from Kohler, the compiler indicates that some practical enhancements have been introduced to make the dictionary user-friendly. There is further information that the speakers' own writing practices have been taken into account. For a dictionary which targets a minority and marginalized language, it is important that the community of speakers should not feel completely alienated by linguists' academic research works. It is this practical aspect of the dictionary that will remain a constructive contribution to the development of the language. The orthographic presentation gives an elaborate discussion of the writing symbols. Phonemically, as it can be observed, the Khwe language has an extensive system and an elaborate list of representative letter symbols, more than that of the Latin alphabet. If the order of entries is anything to go by, there are 55 alphabetized entries. The four fundamental clicks (dental, alveolar (retroflex), palatal and lateral) have phonemic accompaniments which necessitate the addition of other letter symbols to cater for voicing, aspiration, ejection, velarization, uvularization, nasalization, and glottalization. The other non-click consonant symbols numbering about 16 are also carefully described and approximate English equivalences indicated. This is most helpful in view of the readership of the dictionary, who may not necessarily have the phonological knowledge of the language. If the symbol combinations (bigraphs and trigraphs) account for most of the elaborate entry listing, it should be understandable that the language has a complex phonetic and phonological structure.

As the author pertinently indicates, Khwe is a tone language and its tonology also forms the core of the lexicon, the word morphology and the sentence structure (or syntax). Tone is marked on vowels and nasal consonants, which are the tone-bearing segments. The author indicates eight tones, consisting of three lexical tones with the practical marking of high (á), mid (ã), and low (à). So critical is the role of tone that information of verb tone classes is provided as they have a bearing on the grammar of the language and its derivations. Being linguistically researched, the dictionary takes other conventions of linguistic importance into account, such as morpheme boundary marking by a hyphen. However, as the author states, this is for purely lexicographical purposes and not part of the orthographic conventions.

Part two consists of the Khwe–English dictionary which constitutes the greatest part of the book, indicating that the target language is Khwe. The Khwe–English entries are elaborate, providing headwords, grammatical information (category, derivation, morphology), and definitions. The definitions are

brief, giving short descriptions or lexical or scientific (botanical, technical) equivalences. Khwe sentences are also used to enhance definitions and provide contextual meaning. As it grammatically contextualizes each headword, this approach is vital, especially for a language that needs to be preserved and utilized by the speakers in their dialectal variations.

Part three of the dictionary consists of the English–Khwe index in which the Khwe equivalences for the English and scientific words are given. The only information given on these Khwe equivalences is the grammatical categories and the semantic fields of some words. A commendable feature is that every Khwe word in the index also appears in the Khwe–English part of the dictionary, allowing for easy reference to and elaboration of its definition and other uses. The index therefore supports the Khwe–English dictionary, focusing deliberately on the study and presentation of the Khwe language.

The dictionary and the index are followed by an appendix on proper names. This brief onomastic presentation furnishes the type of name (first, clan, family or nickname), the grammatical source of the name (verb, morphology and source), socio-anthropological information (social events, situations, and conditions in naming) and the gender (the author states that as a rule there is no gender distinction in naming). Words in this section are not systematically referred to in the dictionary sections (i.e. sections two and three). This is not quite justifiable, as these categories of words are part and parcel of the composite linguistic and indigenous knowledge base of a speech community. Although it might be useful to have all the proper names together in one section, there should not really be any separation of words belonging to the same language.

The last part of the dictionary is the supplement on Khwe place-names in West Caprivi compiled by Matthias Brenzinger. The introduction to this section justifies the giving of this linguistic and ethnographical information on toponyms and their role in the cosmology of the Khwe people. Brenzinger indicates that there are 371 place-names collected from different areas where the Khwe people had settled. This is a well-researched data compilation solidly placing Khwe naming practices within a wider social and anthropological perspective. Indeed, names, as it is evident from the presentation, are not just limited to geographical place references, but to all the life experiences of the Khwe people. There are linguistic, social and historical values in the names given to places. In his vivid discussion, Brenzinger demonstrates that for languages, and especially for Khwe, there is much that can be derived from names, and indeed place-names. They map out the territory of the ethnic community's movements, socio-economic and historical, and the justification for their territorial attachment thereto. This section indeed gives proof of a profound onomastic study as well as a theoretical analysis of names. It will be valuable to onomatologists, toponymists and researchers in the related fields of the cultural and linguistic aspects of names.

To summarize: In the first instance, this Khwe dictionary and the supple-

ment on place-names provide an interesting compilation for a first edition of a reference work on a specific Khoisan language. The determining of the lemmas, the defining of the headwords and the treatment of the semantic domains make the dictionary quite practical for native speakers, for Khwe learners, and for linguists and grammarians. The lexicographical awareness in the handling of the Khwe–English entries greatly enhances the semantic value of the headwords and their application to different domains. This dictionary constitutes valuable work not only on the vocabulary of the Khwe language but also on the whole ethnolinguistics and ethnoculture of the Khwe. Essentially it is minimally bilingual. The emphasis is on Khwe, and the English facilitates its linguistic and lexicographical accessibility to other users than Khwe speakers. The English also enhances the functionality of the dictionary which will indeed facilitate comparative Khoisan studies. The dictionary will provide a resource for the speakers and a source of linguistic analysis for researchers.

In the second instance, as there is no comprehensive grammar published on the Khwe language yet, a grammatical sketch of Khwe would have been greatly appreciated. For the community and any other user, the availability of such publications that are the result of difficult research seldomly undertaken, remains the only available codified material for a considerable time. Very often, language teachers in such communities have nothing else to resort to in their endeavour to contribute to the promotion of the language through literacy. This comment, however, should not be construed to question the dictionary which has its own lexicographical purpose, and its compilers their own task, which is to record the lexicon of the language. The only wish that can be expressed is that there will be some follow-ups in other areas of Khwe linguistics to complement this dictionary.

As indicated in the introductory matter, the Khwe dictionary has benefited from various research and field-work and contributions from other researchers and field-workers. However, the compiler Christa Kilian-Hatz has demonstrated the assiduity of a field linguist. It has creatively combined an eclectic mix of lexical sources. This open-minded approach also accounts for the inclusion of the section on place-names by Brenzinger. All aspects cohere to make a good reference work. Even though it is bilingual, the focus is on the Khwe language. It will therefore be understandable why the English–Khwe section is more of an index than an elaborate lexicographical presentation. The importance of a lexicographical work not only lies in the practicality and functionality of its usage, but also in the forming and building of a language knowledge base — the lexicon. Even though this compilation may not be exhaustive in terms of collecting the complete Khwe vocabulary, it establishes a firm foundation for the lexicography of the language. It will serve as a research text for field linguists and other language analysts. Indeed, it will be a lexical companion for the speakers and a necessary text for the learner of the Khwe language. This dictionary cannot be compared with Haacke and Eisib's *Khoekhoegowab Dictionary* (2002) (cf. Haacke 1998), which has benefited from exten-

sive literary and linguistic sources spanning over a century. This is lacking for Khwe. Therefore, one can only be happy and grateful for such a pioneering work as this which Kilian-Hatz has effected. It will contribute much to the standardization of Khwe, which is crucial to language development (cf. Haacke 1989).

Having said all this, it will greatly enhance this dictionary if its next edition should not only expand on the vocabulary, but also merge the separate section on names into the main dictionary. In the true sense of a dictionary, words and names are lexically the same linguistic material. For practical purposes, looking for a word or name within the same alphabetic order of entries is not only economical but also desirable.

In conclusion, the strength of this dictionary lies in its judicious application of a lexicographical technique which varies the definitions with descriptions and translations of terms. Yet there are no excesses in the illustrations, lengthy semantic explanations being absent. These have a justifiable place in a monolingual dictionary. Indeed, this dictionary has made and will make an important contribution to the language development efforts of the Khwe community by adopting and justifying the practical orthography the speakers have accepted (cf. WIMSA 2001). There is therefore no need for conversion from phonetic to practical as the symbols used constitute the conventional orthography. This is a notable change as very often dictionaries in Khoisan languages have mainly been motivated by linguistic and not community considerations. As linguistic documents, dictionaries have remained on the shelves of libraries and academics' offices. It is therefore a truly appreciable development that this dictionary will be accessible for use by teachers, students and literacy material developers of Khwe. It should be emphasized that a dictionary plays a powerful role in language development; it canonizes the orthography and the word usage. As such, it is always desirable that the compilers should produce dictionaries that will stand the rigour of judgment and the test of time. Here the compiler has undoubtedly succeeded in taking the linguistic research on the Khwe language to a new level. This dictionary can be recommended to Khoisan linguists particularly, and, having a solid base for language development and promotion by the speakers themselves, to community language developers and promoters.

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Andy Chebanne  
Department of African Languages  
University of Botswana  
Gaborone  
Botswana  
(chebanne@mopipi.ub.bw)