



DESAFÍOS EN LA
DIVERSIDAD



UNTERSTÜTZT VON / SUPPORTED BY

Alexander von
HUMBOLDT
STIFTUNG

Past, present and future trajectories of Minoritized Languages and Varieties: critical perspectives on the Tjwa of Zimbabwe

Shumirai Nyota:

Zimbabwe Open University, Zimbabwe



Pontificia Universidad
Católica del Ecuador

RUHR
UNIVERSITÄT
BOCHUM

RUB



oralidad
MODERNIDAD



DESAFÍOS EN LA
DIVERSIDAD



Purpose of study

- To describe the TjwaTjwao of Zimbabwe's predicament – Past, Present
- To show efforts towards improving their situation
- To analyse these efforts



DESAFÍOS EN LA
DIVERSIDAD



Methodology

- The study uses the case study research design by looking at the Tjwa community of north western Zimbabwe.
- An ethnographic case study is the most appropriate method for this study since it focuses on social interaction between people in their natural environment.
- Qualitative data collection methods that include observations, interviews and focus group discussions were used.



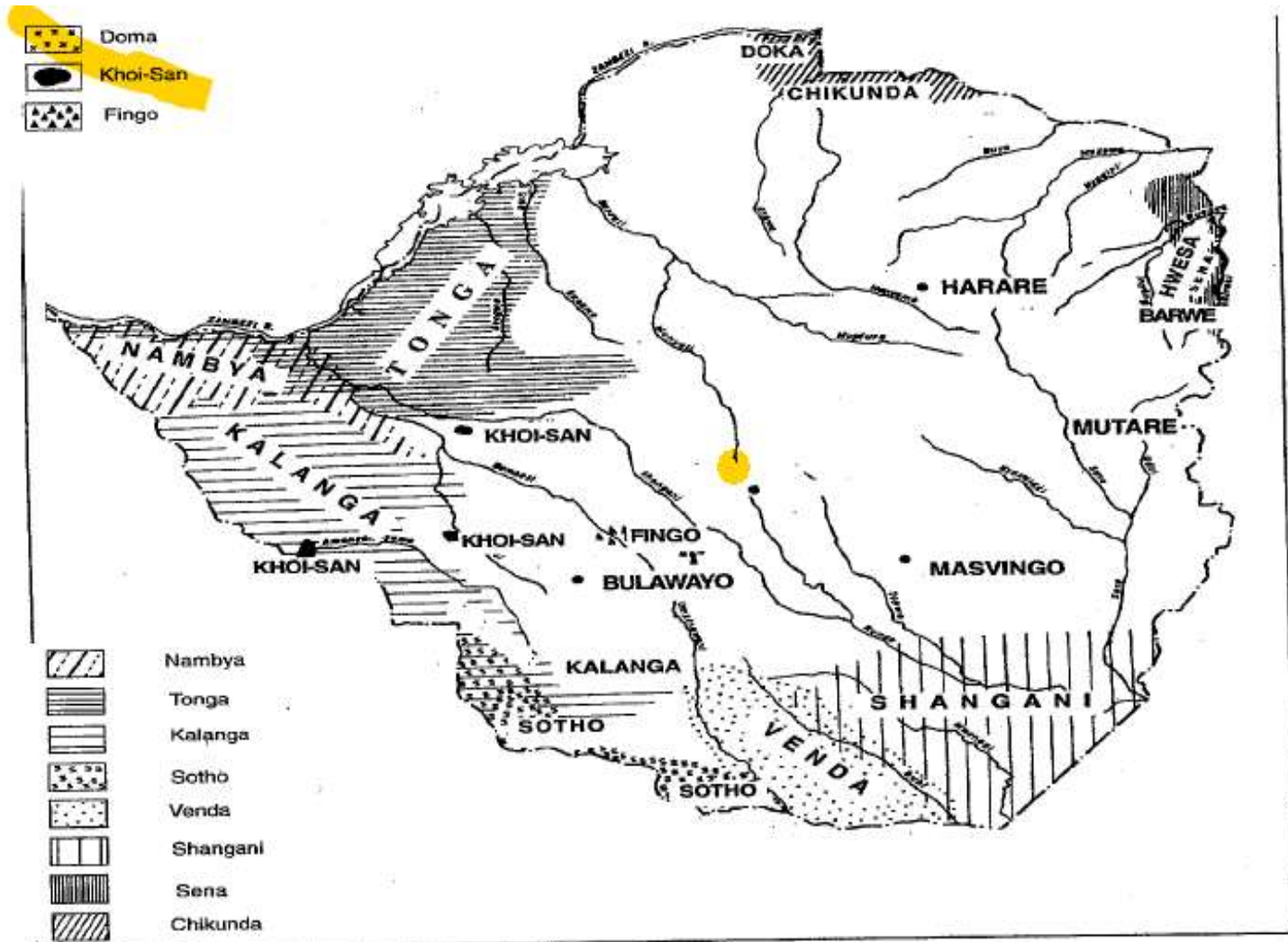
Location of San people in Zimbabwe

DESAFÍOS EN LA
DIVERSIDAD

UNTERSTÜTZT VON / SUPPORTED BY



Alexander von
HUMBOLDT
STIFTUNG



Areas of Minority Languages in Zimbabwe

Source: Hachipola (1998)



Trajectories of the Zimbabwean Tjwa that disrupted their hunter-gatherer life

- The Tjwa, a San people are believed to have been the first people to settle in what is known as Zimbabwe today- have been displaced, (Garlake 1987). –evidence: their rock paintings dotted around the country.
- They have experienced displacement before the colonial era by the Bantu , colonial violence, ethnocide, exclusion and dispossession [of their land] pushing them into dry and marginal areas (Ndlovu, 2013; Zhou, 2014).
- Not the only San displaced –in the Southern African region- Tjwa/Tjwaooof Zimbabwe face unique challenges- lack of interest by researchers- remained forgotten-Lee (2003), Hitchcock (2013), Sylvania (2000) observe how other San in the region benefited from interdisciplinary research.
- Removal to create space for the Bantu, for wildlife -Abandoned their hunter-gatherer life- forced into sedentary life without necessary implements- suffered double domination by the Ndebele and Kalanga
- Colonial government, moved them from Hwange to Tsholotsho in to pave way for the establishment of Hwange National Park in the 1920s (Davison, 1977).
- Post-colonial governments- not doing much



DESAFÍOS EN LA
DIVERSIDAD



UNTERSTÜTZT VON / SUPPORTED BY

Alexander von
HUMBOLDT
STIFTUNG

Samples of Tjwa rock paintings showing their hunter-gatherer life





DESAFÍOS EN LA
DIVERSIDAD

UNTERSTÜTZT VON / SUPPORTED BY



Alexander von
HUMBOLDT
STIFTUNG

Effects of Displacement and marginalization of Tjwa in Zimbabwe

•

Compared with those in Botswana, South Africa and Namibia, Zimbabwean Tjwa and their Language Tjwao are marginalised (Sylvain, 2002; Hitchcock, 2012, Erdal, 2015; Ndlovu, 2013).

- Those in Botswana, South Africa and Namibia have benefited from interdisciplinary researches - films, documentaries and publications have been done and written on them.
- Unlike Zimbabwe Tjwa, this recognition has been accompanied by inclusion of these in community developmental initiatives.





DESAFÍOS EN LA
DIVERSIDAD



Effects of displacement on Tjwao

- They were resettled in Mgodimasili area in Tsholotsho under the Ndebele colonial bondage and in Plumtree under Kananga bondage.
- This displacement forced them to learn the language of the employer.
- Disruption of their life style also meant loss of language since back in the years, it was passed from generation to generation and was rooted in their culture and was closely linked to their hunting and gathering lifestyle (Hitchcock, 2012).



DESAFÍOS EN LA
DIVERSIDAD



UNTERSTÜTZT VON / SUPPORTED BY

Alexander von
HUMBOLDT
STIFTUNG

Effects of Displacement and Marginalisation: Tjwa Representation in local authorities and central government

- The Tjwa community also lack representation in local authorities and central government.
- The community has only six village heads, yet the law of Zimbabwe stipulates that a village head presides over at least 100 households (Madzudzo, 2001; Ndlovu, 2013; Zhou, 2014).
- Given that the Tjwa population is slightly higher than 2500 and that most households have an average of three people, their village heads should be 25.
- Section 280 of the 2013 Constitution of Zimbabwe which states that a traditional leader is responsible for performing the cultural, custom and traditional functions of a chief, head person or village head as the case maybe. The installation of a Tjwa chief would link them with government structures and offer the community traditional representation.



DESAFÍOS EN LA
DIVERSIDAD



UNTERSTÜTZT VON / SUPPORTED BY

Alexander von
HUMBOLDT
STIFTUNG

Effects of Displacement and marginalization: Representation of the Tjwa/Tjwao in Education

- The Education Act of 1987 and the reviewed Act of 1987 of 2006 stipulate that the medium of instruction for grade 1-3 should be Shona language in Shona speaking areas and Ndebele language in Matabeleland.
- Although there were some proposals in 2013 to teach the Tjwao language at Landa John Nkomo High School in Tsholotsho, there is still lack of qualified teachers and adequate literature for the subject (Ndlovu, 2013).
- Worse still in the National Constitution of 2013, Chapter 1, Section 6 (1), the Tjwao language has been entered erroneously as the Khoisan.



DESAFÍOS EN LA
DIVERSIDAD



UNTERSTÜTZT VON / SUPPORTED BY

Alexander von
HUMBOLDT
STIFTUNG

Effects of Displacement and marginalization: Tjwa/Tjwao contemporary sociolinguistic situation

- Analysis of the contemporary sociolinguistic situation shows that Tjwao is critically endangered with less than 20 active speakers left
- Majority shifted to employers' languages (Ndebele and Kalanga) to enhance chances of being employable-A complete language shift is in sight, the active speakers of Tjwao's ages range between (60-90) years out of 1600-2000 total San (Creative Arts & Education Development Association 2013).
- Their linguistic shift- a route to escape from poverty-possibly why they continued singing and dancing *Ibhorro* in their own language.
- Tjwa is now perceived as a marginalised community; a community excluded from mainstream social, economic, educational, and/or cultural life. This is so because they are considered one of the so-called "minority" groups meriting little or no attention by the social political system in Zimbabwe (Murphree, 1989; Sylvain, 2002; Hitchcock, 2012).



DESAFÍOS EN LA
DIVERSIDAD



UNTERSTÜTZT VON / SUPPORTED BY

Alexander von
HUMBOLDT
STIFTUNG

Interventions strategies to help to save the Tjwa/Tjwao

- Remaining speakers, eg. Motshwa Moyo have been a driving force in the Tjwa culture and language reclamation, reinvigoration and revitalisation projects- proudly speak the language at all traditional gatherings.
- Davy Ndlovu, a Tjwa language activist spear headed Tsoro-atso- Development Trust ,researched about the state of the Tjwao language and with the university of Zimbabwe launched the Tjwao language during the International Mother Day, now meeting yearly for Bush language festival to gather and share experience with Tjwa elders.
- American Professor, Wills, offered to pay school fees for 24 Tjwa students at John Landa Nkomo High School on condition that the school start teaching their language.
- Admire Phiri, formely, formaly from the University of Zimbabwe worked tirelessly to come up with the Tjwao language orthography- his PhD thesis



DESAFÍOS EN LA
DIVERSIDAD



UNTERSTÜTZT VON / SUPPORTED BY

Alexander von
HUMBOLDT
STIFTUNG

Interventions strategies continue:

- Some researchers are collecting Tjwao words in a bid to come up with a Tjwao dictionary
- Dictionaries of endangered languages have their own specificity- one that lies in their users, wordlists and definitions, Ivanishcheva (2016:82)
- Focus of attention in the dictionary is not on grammatical features but on culturological commentary reflecting background knowledge of the speaker



DESAFÍOS EN LA
DIVERSIDAD



UNTERSTÜTZT VON / SUPPORTED BY

Alexander von
HUMBOLDT
STIFTUNG

Interventions strategies: Ibhoro dance

- Ibhoro dance - *the only* Tjwao traditional dance and songs that the elder generation has taught the younger generation.
- The organisation of the Tjwa songs and dance reflect a society that had collective responsibility.
- Dance enables people to participate spiritual, emotionally and physically.
- Ibhoro dance is performed at big celebrations before an audience— International mother language day, International day of the world's indigenous people and bush camps-
- Dancers are aware that Ibhoro is their traditional dance comparable to dances of their counterparts among the Kalanga and Ndebele they are in contact with— gives them identity and makes them feel proud.
- Performers not aware of meanings of the songs- till Tsoro-atso- Development Trust transcribes and explains to them



DESAFÍOS EN LA
DIVERSIDAD



UNTERSTÜTZT VON / SUPPORTED BY

Alexander von
HUMBOLDT
STIFTUNG

Conclusion

- Displacements and marginalization have adversely impacted on the Tjwa/Tjwao of Zimbabwe
- Efforts being made to counter these impacts could be improved on- representation in local authorities, government, constitution, education
- Cultural practice prevent the death of a portion of the Tjwa, Tjwao language and culture-it needs preservation.
- There is need to preserve both tangible and intangible heritage of the Tjwa.



DESAFÍOS EN LA
DIVERSIDAD



UNTERSTÜTZT VON / SUPPORTED BY

Alexander von
HUMBOLDT
STIFTUNG

Sample of references consulted

- Davison, T (1977), *Wankie: The Story of a Great Game Reserve*, Harare: Regal Publishers.
- Hitchcock, R. 2012. *People of the Two Way River: Social, Ecological and Economic Change and Water Resource Management in the Nata River Region of Southern Africa*, London: Penguin Books.
- Madzudzo, E.2001. *An assessment of the status of the San in South Africa, Angola, Zambia and Zimbabwe*, Harare: Legal Centre.
- Ndlovu, D. 2013. *In their own words: A contemporary history of the lost and forgotten San people in Zimbabwe*, Harare: Creative Arts Armature Book Club.



DESAFÍOS EN LA
DIVERSIDAD



UNTERSTÜTZT VON / SUPPORTED BY

Alexander von
HUMBOLDT
STIFTUNG

Tikwa boka- Tjwao
Tatenda- Shona
Twalumba- Tonga
Siyabonga- Ndebele
Thank you