**The project and its results**

Between 2003 and 2010 research for this project (funded by the DoBeS programme of the Volkswagen Foundation) was carried out under the leadership of Prof. S. Levinson of the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics in Nijmegen.

In this period the three main researchers Thomas Widlok, Christian Rapold and Gertie Hoymann compiled the Akhoe Ha|llom corpus. The corpus is accessible online (http://www.mpi.nl/DOBES/projects/akhoe/) and local copies of representative data samples are also available at the archive of the University of Namibia, the National Archive of Namibia, and at the Working Group of Indigenous Minorities in Southern Africa (WIMSA) as our partner organizations in Namibia.

The project researchers continue to publish results gained from working with this corpus. Selected joint publications are:


**The people**

There are several thousand Ha|llom speakers in northern Namibia but less than 200 Akhoe Ha|llom in the Oshikoto region maintain a distinct profile with cultural features such as healing trance dances, intensive use of wild plant and insect food, their own kinship and naming system, frequent storytelling, a landscape-term system of spatial orientation and elaborate sharing practices. Our documentation project includes samples of the broad range of Akhoe Ha|llom cultural and linguistic features. It also includes a record of the interaction with people in the field.


Akhoe Ha|llom is a Central Khoisan language and a member of the Khoekhoegowab dialect continuum. Like the other Khoisan languages Akhoe Ha|llom has click sounds which are represented in writing by special signs:

- represents the dental click (resembling the fricative sound of disapproval in many languages)
- represents the lateral click (previously often rendered as k as in the Name Ha|llom)
- represents the alveolar click (resembling the sound of a bottle being uncorked)
+ represents the palatal click (resembling a clapping sound)

Akhoe Ha|llom is threatened not only due to the small size of the community of speakers and a low reputation of the language and its speakers but also because only the other, standardized variants of Kho- khoegowab receive the attention of school teachers and language planners.

The unique features of the Akhoe Ha|llom language are tightly connected with particular cultural practices such as sharing. Speakers have, for instance, a preference for less coercive and less restrictive question forms which underlines individual autonomy. Requests are not considered face-threatening and people make themselves conspicuously present (part of a practice called *goana*) and thus, without verbal interaction, they initiate sharing through a silent demand.

For more details see:


**CONTACT ADDRESS**

Prof. Dr. Thomas Widlok
Institut für Afrikastudien
Universität zu Köln
50923 Köln, Germany

twidlok@uni-koeln.de
christian.rapold@sprachlit.uni-regensburg.de
Gerttie.Hoymann@mpi.nl
http://www.mpi.nl/DOBES/projects/akhoe/

---

**The link between language and culture**

Akhoe Ha|llom is a Central Khoisan language and a member of the Khoekhoegowab dialect continuum. Like the other Khoisan languages Akhoe Ha|llom has click sounds which are represented in writing by special signs:

- represents the dental click (resembling the fricative sound of disapproval in many languages)
- represents the lateral click (previously often rendered as k as in the Name Ha|llom)
- represents the alveolar click (resembling the sound of a bottle being uncorked)
+ represents the palatal click (resembling a clapping sound)

Akhoe Ha|llom is threatened not only due to the small size of the community of speakers and a low reputation of the language and its speakers but also because only the other, standardized variants of Kho-