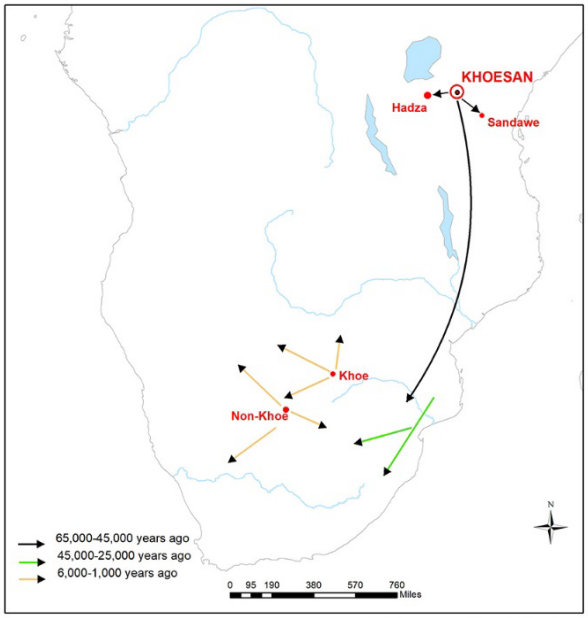
1.Khoesan

Homeland. Khoesan languages, now spoken primarily in southwestern Africa, give evidence of having had their homeland at the frontier of modern Kenya and Tanzania, especially as indicated by the Hadza and Sandawe languages, still spoken in that area. Languages within the Khoesan phylum have changed steadily with time (as have other languages), yet certain of the ancestral characteristics of each group remain.

Because the overlap from Bantu-speaking settlers during the late Holocene covered the traces of early Khoesan migrations, the map shows current distribution of Khoesan languages or language groups rather than the distribution and migration of Khoesan languages in late Pleistocene and early Holocene times.



Concise Spreadsheet: top four levels

Khoisan			
	Hadza		
		Hadza	
	Sandawe		!Xûû
		Sandawe	ǁX'auǁ'e
	Khoe		
		Khoekhoe	
			North
			South
		Kalahari Khoe	
			West
			East
	Non-Khoe		
		Ju	
			!Xûû
			ǁX'auǁ'e
			Ju|'hoan
		!Ui-Taa	
			!Ui
			Taa
		ǂHõã	
			ǂHõã
	Kwadi		
		Kwadi	

Full Spreadsheet: see "1.Khoesan," listing Khoesan languages by groups and subgroups.

Pleistocene Changes.

65,000–45,000 years ago. The Khoesan phylum formed out of original speaking community. Assuming that the initial proto-human language split into two main groups, one may hypothesize that the ancestors of Khoesan languages were in one group, while all other known languages were in the other group. Speakers of languages within or closely related to the Khoesan phylum migrated from their homeland to the south and west, carrying a Late Stone Age technology with them. In southern Africa they encountered and presumably interbred with earlier hominin inhabitants of southern Africa, who used a Middle Stone Age technology. But the Middle Stone Age technology regained its dominance of southern Africa, apparently through better adaptation of its population to the habitat.

45,000–21,000 years ago. Khoesan speakers and Late Stone Age technology advanced further into southern Africa, at the expense of previous inhabitants, aided by invention of bows and arrows.

21,000–12,000 years ago.

Holocene Changes.

12,000–6000 years ago. Khoesan speakers expanded to most of southern Africa but lost some lands to the north as speakers of Afroasiatic expanded southward.

6000 years ago–1000 CE. In the mid-Holocene, especially during the past 5000 years, Bantu speakers of the Niger–Kordofanian phylum migrated into East Africa and then into parts of southern and southwestern Africa. Khoesan speakers were gradually limited to southwestern Africa and to small settlements surrounded by Bantu speakers.

Commentary and Debates. The characteristic sounds of Khoesan languages include several implosive "click" sounds. Some of these phonemes have been borrowed into nearby Bantu languages.

Quentin Atkinson has claimed, based on genetic evidence, that the Khoesan homeland was in southwestern Africa.

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