

On the phonetics and phonology of clicks in Nguni

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In this presentation a number of phonetic and phonological traits related to click articulations in two Nguni languages (Xhosa and Zulu) will be discussed. Some of these observations are new and some other older observations will be revisited. The following three issues will be touched upon:

- Preferred syllable structures involving clicks.

It will be shown that there are particular phonotactic patterns that clicks seem to prefer. Examples will be presented and explanations sought for this phenomenon with data obtained from articulatory–acoustic modelling and electro–palatographic experiments;

- The notion that clicks are “affricated” sounds

The notion that clicks are “affricated” in nature will be challenged in view of experimental data obtained through Smoothed Pseudo–Wigner Distribution analyses;

- The phonetic representation of clicks

The nature of previous and current IPA representations of clicks will critically be examined in view of a principle of temporal succession underlying the IPA notation, and the actual articulatory and perceptual qualities of clicks.