Annotated Swadesh wordlists for the Bantu-S group (Niger-Congo family).

Languages included: Xhosa [bns-xho].

DATA SOURCES

Xhosa

Main source


Additional source

Donnelly 2007 = Donnelly, Simon Scurr. Aspects of tone and voice in Phuthi. PhD diss., University of Illinois. // Although this work mainly deals with the Phuthi language, it also contains a comparative Swadesh wordlist for Phuthi, Xhosa, and Sotho, transcribed phonetically and regularly marking out tonal characteristics.

NOTES

1. General.

Xhosa

The main source for Xhosa entries is Fischer 1985; this English-Xhosa dictionary is, for the most part, sufficient to accurately and reliably fill in most of the positions on the Swadesh wordlist. A few ambiguous cases were verified for peculiarities and frequency of usage on the basis of various Xhosa-language texts and text corpora on the Web. The only flaw of Fischer's dictionary is that, following official orthography, it does not mark
tones; for that reason, phonetically transcribed variants in [Donnelly 2007] have been added in the Notes section.

2. Transliteration.

**Xhosa**

The official Latin-based Xhosa alphabet has multiple differences from the IPA / UTS systems; the principal distinctions are listed in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Xhosa alphabet</th>
<th>UTS system</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>kh</td>
<td>kʰ</td>
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<tr>
<td>ph</td>
<td>pʰ</td>
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<tr>
<td>bh</td>
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<td>hl</td>
<td>Ľ</td>
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<tr>
<td>ny</td>
<td>ų</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c, gc, nc</td>
<td>ǀ, ǁ, ǃ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>q, gq, nq</td>
<td>ǂ, ǂǂ, ǂǃ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x, gx, nx</td>
<td>ǁ, ǁǁ, ǁǃ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e</td>
<td>ɛ (e)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o</td>
<td>ɔ (o)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes.

1. The vowels e and o are pronounced as ɛ and ɔ in most contexts, except for certain consonantal environments; there is no phonemic opposition between ɛ and e, or ɔ and o,
in Xhosa.

2. Voiced and voiceless lateral affricates \( \lambda \) and \( \L \) are positional allophones.

3. Phonetically, unaspirated \( p, t, k, \text{ etc.} \), in Xhosa are usually described as ejectives; to avoid superfluous symbols, we do not mark ejective articulation in the UTS transcription.

4. The two phonemic tones (low and high), as well as their combined contours, are not marked in Fischer's dictionary; we do, however, include tonal transcriptions for most of the items, taken from [Donnelly 2007], in the Notes section.

Database compiled and annotated by: G. Starostin (last update: May 2013).
(The Xhosa wordlist was originally constructed by Ye. Chekmeneva, but seriously revised and re-annotated by G. Starostin).
1. ALL
Xhosa =onke [-onke] (1).

References and notes:

Xhosa: Fischer 1985: 15. A quantitative word, to which the subjectival concord is prefixed (cf. um=ntu w=onke 'all men', aba=ntu b=onke 'all people'). Distinct from the adverbial kwapʰela 'all' = 'quite, entirely'. Quoted as =q̂kè in [Donnelly 2007: 1044].

2. ASHES
Xhosa u=tʰutʰu [uthuthu] (1).

References and notes:


3. BARK
Xhosa i=ǁɔlɔ [ixolo] (1).

References and notes:

Xhosa: Fischer 1985: 45. General meaning of the word is 'cover, shell, skin', etc.; the more specialized meaning 'tree bark' may be expressed by the concatenation i=ǁɔlɔ lɔ=m=tʰi 'cover of tree' (see under 'tree').

4. BELLY
Xhosa isi=su (1).

References and notes:

Xhosa: Fischer 1985: 52. Class 7 (4). Quoted as isi=sù in [Donnelly 2007: 1044].

5. BIG
Xhosa =kʰulu [-khulu] (1).

References and notes:


6. BIRD
Xhosa in=taka (1).
References and notes:

**Xhosa:** Fischer 1985: 56. Plural form: *in=taka*. Class 9/10 (5). Quoted as *in=tâkà* in [Donnelly 2007: 1044].

**7. BITE**

Xhosa =*lum-a* (1).

References and notes:

**Xhosa:** Fischer 1985: 56. Quoted as =*lûm-à* ~ =*lûm-à* in [Donnelly 2007: 1044].

**8. BLACK**

Xhosa =*mŋam-a [mnyama]* (1).

References and notes:

**Xhosa:** Fischer 1985: 57. Quoted as =*mŋam-à* in [Donnelly 2007: 1045].

**9. BLOOD**

Xhosa *i=gazi* (1).

References and notes:

**Xhosa:** Fischer 1985: 59. Plural form: *ama=gazi*. Class 5/6 (3). Quoted as *i=gàzì* in [Donnelly 2007: 1045].

**10. BONE**

Xhosa *i=tʰambɔ [ithambo]* (1).

References and notes:

**Xhosa:** Fischer 1985: 63. Plural form: *ama=tʰambɔ*. Class 5/6 (3). Quoted as *i=tʰâmbɔ* in [Donnelly 2007: 1045].

**11. BREAST**

Xhosa *isi=fuba* (1).

References and notes:

**Xhosa:** Fischer 1985: 69. Class 7 (4). Distinct from *i=bele 'female breast'* [ibid.].
12. BURN TR.
Xhosa =čʰ-is-a [tshisä] (1).

References and notes:

Xhosa: Fischer 1985: 75. The transitive stem is formed from the intransitive =č-a 'to burn' with the productive suffix -is-. The intransitive verb is quoted as =č-a in [Donnelly 2007: 1045].

13. CLAW(NAIL)
Xhosa u=zipʰɔ [uzipho] (1).

References and notes:


14. CLOUD
Xhosa ili=fu (1).

References and notes:


15. COLD
Xhosa =band-a (1).

References and notes:


16. COME
Xhosa =z-a (1).

References and notes:


17. DIE
Xhosa =bub-a (1).
References and notes:

Xhosa: Fischer 1985: 158. Secondary synonym: =f-a [ibid.] (this verb is more archaic and used much more rarely than =bub-a; the root is more properly preserved in the derived nominal uku=fa 'death'). Only the more archaic verb is quoted as =fá in [Donnelly 2007: 1045].

18. DOG
Xhosa in=ʒa [inja] (1).

References and notes:


19. DRINK
Xhosa =sɛl-a [-sela] (1).

References and notes:

Xhosa: Fischer 1985: 175. Quoted as =sɛl-à in [Donnelly 2007: 1045].

20. DRY
Xhosa =ɔm-ile [-omile] (1).

References and notes:

Xhosa: Fischer 1985: 177. Derived from the verb =om-a 'to be dry'. Quoted as =ɔm-à ~ =ɔm-á in [Donnelly 2007: 1045].

21. EAR
Xhosa in=Łɛbɛ [indlebe] (1).

References and notes:


22. EARTH
Xhosa um=ɬaba [umhlaba] (1).

References and notes:

Xhosa: Fischer 1985: 181. Class 3 (2). Meaning glossed as 'earth (soil)'; distinct from i=ɬaba-tʰi 'earth (world)', although both words share the same root. Quoted as úm=ɬăbà in [Donnelly 2007: 1046].
23. EAT
Xhosa =q-a [-tya] (1).

References and notes:

24. EGG
Xhosa i=!anda [iqanda] (1).

References and notes:

25. EYE
Xhosa il=isɔ [iliso] (1).

References and notes:

26. FAT N.
Xhosa ama=futʰa [amafutha] (1).

References and notes:

27. FEATHER
Xhosa u=siba (1).

References and notes:

28. FIRE
Xhosa um=lilɔ [umlilo] (1).
References and notes:

Xhosa: Fischer 1985: 216. Class 3 (2). Quoted as um=lìlì in [Donnelly 2007: 1046].

29. FISH
Xhosa in=lanzi [intlanzi] (1).

References and notes:


30. FLY V.
Xhosa =bʰabʰ-a [-bhabha] (1).

References and notes:


31. FOOT
Xhosa u=ɲawɔ [unyawo] (1).

References and notes:


32. FULL
Xhosa =zele (1).

References and notes:


33. GIVE
Xhosa =nik-a (1).

References and notes:

Xhosa: Fischer 1985: 246. Quoted as =nik-a in [Donnelly 2007: 1046]. Secondary synonym: pʰ-a (the meaning is closer to 'donate, present, give as a gift').
34. GOOD
Xhosa =lung-il-e [-lungile] (1).

References and notes:

Xhosa: Fischer 1985: 251. Derived from lung-a 'to be / get well'. Quoted as =lung-il-e in [Donnelly 2007: 1046].

35. GREEN
Xhosa =lu=az-a [-luhaza] (1).

References and notes:


36. HAIR
Xhosa u=nwele [unwele] (1).

References and notes:

Xhosa: Fischer 1985: 261. Plural form: iː=nwele. Class 11/10 (6). Distinct from u=bɔya 'hair of the body; hair of animals' [ibid.]. Quoted as iː=nwele (pl.) in [Donnelly 2007: 1047].

37. HAND
Xhosa is=anŁa [isandla] (1).

References and notes:


38. HEAD
Xhosa in=ɔkɔ [intloko] (1).

References and notes:


39. HEAR
Xhosa =va (1).

References and notes:

**Xhosa**: Fischer 1985: 270. Quoted as =(i)va in [Donnelly 2007: 1047].

40. HEART

Xhosa in=Azivy [ntlizyo] (1).

References and notes:

**Xhosa**: Fischer 1985: 270. Plural form: i=Azivy. Class 9/10 (5). Quoted as in=Azivy in [Donnelly 2007: 1047]. Secondary synonym: i=pʰupʰu [ibid.] (this word is encountered very rarely and may be considered archaic).

41. HORN

Xhosa u=pʰndɔ [uphondo] (1).

References and notes:


42. I

Xhosa m-na (1).

References and notes:

**Xhosa**: Fischer 1985: 287. This is the stressed emphatic form; the meaning of the 1st p. sg. is normally expressed with the subject prefix ndi-. Quoted as ndi in [Donnelly 2007: 1047].

43. KILL

Xhosa =bulal-a (1).

References and notes:

**Xhosa**: Fischer 1985: 326. Quoted as =bulal-a in [Donnelly 2007: 1047].

44. KNEE

Xhosa i=dlɔ [idolo] (1).
References and notes:


45. KNOW
Xhosa =azi (1).

References and notes:


46. LEAF
Xhosa i=ɀabi [igqabi] (1).

References and notes:


47. LIE
Xhosa =lal-a (1).

References and notes:

Xhosa: Fischer 1985: 344. Static action verb, same as 'to sleep' q.v.; different from butʰum-a 'to lie down' [ibid.].

48. LIVER
Xhosa isi=bindi (1).

References and notes:


49. LONG
Xhosa =de [-de] (1).

References and notes:


50. LOUSE
Xhosa *i=ntwala* (1).

References and notes:

**Xhosa:** Fischer 1985: 358. Plural form: *i=ntwala*. Class 9/10 (5). Quoted as *i=ntwála* in [Donnelly 2007: 1048].

51. MAN
Xhosa *in=dɔda* (1).

References and notes:


52. MANY
Xhosa *=ninzi* (1).

References and notes:

**Xhosa:** Fischer 1985: 367. Quoted as *=ninzi* in [Donnelly 2007: 1048].

53. MEAT
Xhosa *i=ɲama [inyama]* (1).

References and notes:

**Xhosa:** Fischer 1985: 374. Class 5 (3). Quoted as *i=ɲámá* 'flesh' in [Donnelly 2007: 1046].

54. MOON
Xhosa *i=ɲanga [inyanga]* (1).

References and notes:

**Xhosa:** Fischer 1985: 389. Plural form: *i=ɲanga*. Class 9/10 (5). Quoted as *i=ɲángi* in [Donnelly 2007: 1048].

55. MOUNTAIN
Xhosa *in=taba* (1).

References and notes:

**Xhosa:** Fischer 1985: 392. Plural form: *in=taba*. Class 9/10 (5). Quoted as *in=tábá* in [Donnelly 2007: 1048].
56. MOUTH
Xhosa um=lmɔ [umlomo] (1).

References and notes:

**Xhosa:** Fischer 1985: 392. Class 3 (2). Quoted as im=lmɔ in [Donnelly 2007: 1048].

57. NAME
Xhosa i=gama (1).

References and notes:

**Xhosa:** Fischer 1985: 397. Plural form: ama=gama. Class 5/6 (3). Quoted as i=gamɔ in [Donnelly 2007: 1048]. The alternate translation of ‘name’ as u=dumɔ [ibid.] refers to ‘name = fame, notoriety’ rather than personal name.

58. NECK
Xhosa in=tamɔ [intamo] (1).

References and notes:


59. NEW
Xhosa =čʰa [-tsha] (1).

References and notes:

**Xhosa:** Fischer 1985: 403. Quoted as =čh in [Donnelly 2007: 1048].

60. NIGHT
Xhosa ubu=suku (1).

References and notes:

**Xhosa:** Fischer 1985: 404. Class 14 (7). Quoted as ūbū=sukù in [Donnelly 2007: 1048].

61. NOSE
Xhosa im=pumlo [impumlo] (1).
References and notes:


62. NOT
Xhosa a- (1).

References and notes:

Xhosa: Fischer 1985: 408. This is the most common prefixal morpheme of negation; it usually functions as part of a circumfix (a- ...-i for the present tense; a- ...-nya for the recent past tense, etc.).

63. ONE
Xhosa =nɛ [-nye] (1).

References and notes:


64. PERSON
Xhosa um=ntu (1).

References and notes:


65. RAIN
Xhosa im=vula (1).

References and notes:


66. RED
Xhosa =bomvu (1).

References and notes:

67. ROAD
Xhosa \textit{in=Lela} [\textit{indlela}] (1).

References and notes:


68. ROOT
Xhosa \textit{in=lambu} [\textit{ingcambu}] (1).

References and notes:


69. ROUND\textsubscript{1}
Xhosa =\textit{sisazi}ng\textsubscript{e} [-\textit{sisazi}ng\textsubscript{e}] (1).

References and notes:

\textbf{Xhosa}: Fischer 1985: 543. Meaning glossed as ‘round (as a circle)’ (i. e. ‘2D’).

69. ROUND\textsubscript{2}
Xhosa =\textit{phuku}va [-\textit{nguku}va] (2).

References and notes:

\textbf{Xhosa}: Fischer 1985: 543. Meaning glossed as ‘round (as a ball)’ (i. e. ‘3D’).

70. SAND
Xhosa \textit{in=\textit{Aaba-t}\textit{hi}} [\textit{intlabathi}] (1).

References and notes:

\textbf{Xhosa}: Fischer 1985: 553. Class 9 (5). Cf. ‘earth’ with the same root. Quoted as \textit{in=\textit{Aab}\textit{ti}} in [Donnelly 2007: 1049].

71. SAY
Xhosa =\textit{thi} [-\textit{thi}] (1).
References and notes:

Xhosa: Fischer 1985: 556. This is the main Xhosa verb that introduces direct speech; distinct from =tʰi=tʰ-a 'to speak’. Quoted as =tʰi in [Donnelly 2007: 1049].

72. SEE
Xhosa =bɔn-a [-bona] (1).

References and notes:


73. SEED
Xhosa im=bewu (1).

References and notes:


74. SIT
Xhosa =ɬal-a (1).

References and notes:

Xhosa: Fischer 1985: 590. This is the static verb ('to be sitting'); the dynamic meaning ‘to sit down’ is usually rendered as a complex expression (=ɬala pʰ'anci). Quoted as =ɬâl-á in [Donnelly 2007: 1049].

75. SKIN
Xhosa ulu=su (1).

References and notes:

Xhosa: Fischer 1985: 592. Class 11/6. This word generally refers to human skin; for 'animal skin', the more common equivalent is isi=kʰ'umba [ibid.]. Only the latter is quoted as ísí=kʰ’umbà in [Donnelly 2007: 1049].

76. SLEEP
Xhosa =lal-a (1).

References and notes:

Xhosa: Fischer 1985: 594. Same word as 'to lie' q.v. Quoted as =lâl-á in [Donnelly 2007: 1049].
77. SMALL
Xhosa =înæ-ne [-nciname] (1).

References and notes:

78. SMOKE
Xhosa um=si (1).

References and notes:
Xhosa: Fischer 1985: 598. Class 3 (2). Quoted as úm=sí in [Donnelly 2007: 1049].

79. STAND
Xhosa =m-a (1).

References and notes:
Xhosa: Fischer 1985: 618. Distinct from =pʰakam-a 'to stand up' [ibid.]. Quoted as =(i)mà in [Donnelly 2007: 1050].

80. STAR
Xhosa in=kwenkwezi [inkwenkwezi] (1).

References and notes:

81. STONE
Xhosa ili=ções [ilitye] (1).

References and notes:

82. SUN
Xhosa i=langa (1).
83. SWIM
Xhosa =!ubʰ-a [-qubha] (1).

84. TAIL
Xhosa um=sila (1).

85. THAT
Xhosa =ɔ (1).

86. THIS
Xhosa lɔ # (1).

87. THOU
Xhosa we-na [wena] (1).
Xhosa: Fischer 1985: 737. This is the stressed emphatic form; the meaning of the 2nd p. sg. is normally expressed with the subject prefix u- (or the object suffix -ku-). Quoted as u·-ná in [Donnelly 2007: 1051].

88. TONGUE
Xhosa ulw=imi (1).

References and notes:

89. TOOTH
Xhosa i=ziŋa [izinyo] (1).

References and notes:

90. TREE
Xhosa um=tʰi [umthi] (1).

References and notes:

91. TWO
Xhosa =bini (1).

References and notes:

92. WALK (GO)
Xhosa =y-a (1).

References and notes:
Xhosa: Fischer 1985: 249.

93. WARM
Xhosa =šušu [-shushu] (1).

References and notes:


94. WATER
Xhosa ama=nzi (1).

References and notes:


95. WE
Xhosa tʰi-na [thina] (1).

References and notes:

Xhosa: Fischer 1985: 717. This is the stressed emphatic form; the meaning of the 1st p. pl. is normally expressed with the subject prefix sì-. Quoted as tʰî-ná in [Donnelly 2007: 1050].

96. WHAT
Xhosa nto=ni (1).

References and notes:

Xhosa: Fischer 1985: 721. The main interrogative morpheme is =ni (nto- = ‘thing’). Quoted as ntó=ni in [Donnelly 2007: 1050].

97. WHITE
Xhosa =mɬopʰɛ [-mhlophɛ] (1).

References and notes:


98. WHO
Xhosa ube=ni (1).

References and notes:
Xhosa: Fischer 1985: 723. The main interrogative morpheme is =ni (cf. 'what'). Quoted as übâ=ni (subj.) ~ bå=ni in [Donnelly 2007: 1051].

99. WOMAN
Xhosa um=fazi (1).

References and notes:
Xhosa: Fischer 1985: 731. Plural form: aba=fazi. Class 1/2 (1). Quoted as üm=fâzì in [Donnelly 2007: 1051]. In Fischer’s dictionary, the word is marked as ‘not very polite’: the alternate designation is in=kosi=kazi ‘married woman’, but textual usage shows that the latter is rather a markedly polite term for ‘wife’, ‘lady’.

100. YELLOW
Xhosa =lu=bʰɛlu [-lubhelu] (1).

References and notes:

101. FAR
Xhosa =kube [-kude] (1).

References and notes:
Xhosa: Fischer 1985: 207. Alternate synonym: mgama (usually as an adverb: ‘far off’).

102. HEAVY
Xhosa =nzima (1).

References and notes:

103. NEAR
Xhosa =kufupʰi [-kufuphi] (1).

References and notes:
104. SALT
Xhosa $i=\text{cuwa} [ityuwa]$ (1).

References and notes:
**Xhosa:** Fischer 1985: 552. Plural form: $i=\text{cuw}u$. Class 9/10 (5).

105. SHORT
Xhosa $=fuc^{\text{h}}a-ne [futshane]$ (1).

References and notes:
**Xhosa:** Fischer 1985: 581.

106. SNAKE
Xhosa $i=\text{n}o^\text{k}a [inyoka]$ (1).

References and notes:
**Xhosa:** Fischer 1985: 599. Plural form: $i=\text{n}o^\text{k}a$. Class 9/10 (5).

107. THIN
Xhosa $=l$$i\text{h}w\text{e}k\text{we} [-licwecwe]$ (1).

References and notes:
**Xhosa:** Fischer 1985: 660.

108. WIND
Xhosa $u=m\text{ya}$ (1).

References and notes:

109. WORM
Xhosa $um=sundulu$ (1).
References and notes:

Xhosa: Fischer 1985: 733. Class 3 (2). Meaning glossed as 'earthworm' (distinct from um=bungu 'grub', 'larva', etc.).

110. YEAR
Xhosa um=naka [umnyaka] (1).

References and notes: