

## Forms and functions of discourse clicks across languages

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Clicks are defined phonetically as ingressive stop sounds produced on a velaric airstream (Ladefoged & Maddiesen, 1996). While in a few languages, they are implemented as consonant phonemes, across languages they appear to be much more frequently employed as discourse markers, providing information about speaker stance (especially negative stance, cf. e.g. Ward, 2006; Gil, 2013; Trouvain, 2015), discourse organization (cf. e.g. Wright, 2011; Ogden, 2013; Paschen, 2019), floor-holding in conversation during a hesitation or word search (cf. e.g. Ogden, 2020), or social group identity (cf. e.g. Benor, 2004; Pratchett, 2021), among other aspects.

Most studies to date investigating aspects of discourse structuring have focused on Indo-European languages and Western cultures. Even within the limited subset of languages that have been studied, two consistent patterns arise. First, the subset of possible click articulations that are observed in discourse-marking contexts is relatively small and phonetically impoverished compared to the click articulations that are found in languages where click phonemes exist; discourse clicks tend to be limited to dental-alveolar productions (Gil, 2013; Ogden, 2013), and are not accompanied by secondary articulations such as voicing or nasalization which arise alongside phonemic clicks (Bradfield, 2014; Nakagawa et al., 2023). It is also likely that discourse clicks overlap functionally with a set of articulations which do not directly meet the phonetic definition of clicks but that are “click-like” (Brenzinger & Shah, 2023). Second, there appears to be a substantial degree of individual variation in the degree to which speakers employ discourse clicks, with some speakers clicking (almost) never, and others clicking with high frequency (Zellers, 2022).

Although research on non-consonantal clicks is now beginning to address a wider range of languages—recent studies report on clicks used as interjections in Wolof (Grenoble et al., 2015) and Laal (Lionnet, 2020), for example—very little is still known about how discourse clicking is implemented in a wider range of languages and cultures. I will present an analysis of discourse clicking in two- and three-party conversations in the Great Lakes Bantu language Luganda (or Ganda), spoken in Uganda. While many of the discourse click functions described for other languages are also found in Luganda conversation, some notable differences arise in their implementation, especially in terms of their positioning in relation to conversational turns and their combinatory possibilities. I will also present a very small set of discourse click tokens observed in the consonantal-click Khoe-Kwadi language Khoekhoe, spoken in Namibia, comparing the discourse click inventory to the rich phonemic click inventory available in this language. Results will be discussed with an eye to cross-linguistic comparison as well as to possible aspects of language contact versus language universality of discourse-marking functions.

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