

An Analysis of How Language Contact Influenced Changes in Address Norms: The Case of Tshivenda in Zimbabwe

by

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Abstract

This paper is a study on language contact in the area of socio-linguistics, with special reference to the dynamics of language change as a result of language contact and its influence to address norms in Tshivenda. The paper seeks to show that language contact due to industrialisation brought about by colonialism, intermarriage links, trade and sharing adjoining areas/geographical space has caused a lot of changes with regard to Tshivenda language's sociolinguistic environment. This is evidenced by some sounds, words and meanings which have crept into Tshivenda language from other languages. In this discussion English, Ndebele and Sotho are the languages which, to a large extent, have had a major influence on the changes of Tshivenda address norms. Based on the above information the paper will focus on some significant changes that are shown by present day address norms. The paper also advances the argument that language contact changes the grasp of propositions and brings new meanings that influence syntax and pragmatics as dictated by speech context that address terms within the bounds of Venda culture and everydayness.

Keywords: address terms, language contact, pronoun, endearment, industrialisation, intermarriages, trading.

Introduction

One of the most significant changes in the history of Tshivenda language is the use of address norms due to modernisation and industrialisation which makes language contact inevitable. Address terms are words and phrases used for addressing a person (Bashir 2015:133). New modern address norms are apparent in everyday life today be it formal or informal. The range of address terms will be extracted and categorised in this study because the study intends to explore and classify address terms used in different circumstances and by different people. The study will be incomplete if we analyse the forms of address and ignore the socio-economic and political circumstances which influenced the contact of languages and different cultures. Among the Vhavenḁa, a greeting is used in conjunction with an address term. Conversation is initiated by an address term. Address norms among African people have been used as a mode/vehicle of showing politeness, respect, the relationship between addresser and addressee as well as drawing attention or creation of a good pavement for communication to commence smoothly. Bisilki (2017:34) posits that address terms play a very important role in human communication and society. The present paper is concerned with some of the address terms in Tshivenda. These are personal names, endearment names, titles, nicknames, and kinship names.

Orientation to the Problem

Language contact is a function of social, economic and political factors which gives rise to language change. Socially, different ethnic groups meet through intermarriage or other types of family-level intermixing leading to mixing of languages as they interact on give-and-take bases. Pattanaik (2011:172) notes that “the tribe is often so small that intermarriages with alien tribes that speak other dialects or even totally unrelated languages are not uncommon”. When large groups of women are incorporated into the community from outside, be it as wives or servants to help raise children, they are bound to influence the change of language. The children raised will be forced to learn the language of those who take care of them and by so doing languages get into contact resulting in language change. Language change can come about because of the proximity in time and space of two or more languages. Ethnic groups living in close proximity often interact in ways that produce language change. Economic factors also play a role in causing language change because in trading and work places which came by as a result of industrialisation, people of different languages get into contact and as they communicate languages influence each other. More often, the influence runs heavily in one direction. The language of a people that is looked upon as a centre of culture and that has been given a better position by the government is naturally far more likely to exert influence on other languages spoken in its vicinity than to be influenced by them. In this case English and Ndebele have influenced changes to Tshivenda because of the position they have in Zimbabwe.

English, Shona and Ndebele were for a long time treated as the only official languages in Zimbabwe, hence creating more room for their dominance upon other languages in Zimbabwe. The supremacy that was allocated to these languages, being a political factor, resulted in some linguistic concepts being incorporated into other subordinate languages amongst which are Tshivenda. Doke's (1931) recommendation on how indigenous languages should be used in Zimbabwe played a bigger role in bringing about language contact which caused language change. Doke in Chimhundu (2005:176) recommends that 'the Western Area Ndebele or Zulu be recognised as the official language...'. Doke on Recommendation 8 stipulated that in Matabeleland South province Ndebele should be used as an official language, and Tshivenda speaking people were forced to learn and use Ndebele thereby bringing new concepts in Tshivenda as a language. The 1987 Education Act aggravated the influence of Ndebele to cause some language changes in Tshivenda. Chimhundu in Royneland (2007:134) notes that 'the Education Act states that either Shona or Ndebele may be used as the medium of instruction in the first grades of school where the language is more commonly spoken and better understood by the pupils, but, from the fourth grade upwards, English becomes the medium of instruction in all the schools while Shona and Ndebele are taught only as subjects'. The language provisions availed a loophole for the official languages to encroach into side-lined languages and their culture. We cannot talk of language that is independent of culture as both are intertwined.

Among Vhavana addressing one another is an important expectation that should be fulfilled before communication commences which can be taken for a way of asking for permission to communicate with the addressee by the speaker. This is so because after being addressed, if the addressee does not respond, there is no way the conversation can proceed. Khumalo in (Herbert 1992: 345) posits that 'forms of address are of crucial importance in the communicative act since it is common in some communities that before communication takes place the parties involved must first address or salute each other'. Bonvillain (2000:83-89) establishes that address terms play a crucial function in communication, social interaction and cohesion. There are various forms of address that can be used to differentiate people like strangers, friends, elders, relatives and siblings among others and these can be personal names, titles, kinship, nicknames, and terms of endearment depending on the type of relationship between the parties involved in the conversation. The following enlisted forms are used in addresses:

First Names

Traditionally first names are used as address terms among Vhavana people. First names can be used to anyone regardless of their age; however, the honorific Vho- will be affixed when addressing elderly people. According to Bonvillain (2000:89), honorifics are linguistic makers or forms that signal respect. Matloga (2002:153) notes that the prefix [vho-] is the prefix of class (2b) prefix and is used to indicate respect. The use of honorific vho together with first name in Tshivenda is very old and it is more useful and considerate to Vhavana people, as observed from SABC 2 Muvhango soapie.

Now because of the language contacts we see that present day Zimbabwean Tshivenda speakers rarely use first names but instead use surnames as address terms especially to adults. Zimbabwean Tshivenda speakers and South African Tshivenda speakers are one people who were affected by the European demarcations to look like different people. In that regard this piece of work will give reference to South African TV drama “Muvhango” which is mostly broadcast in Tshivenda though we have actors who represent different ethnic groups and cultures. Special attention will be given to Tshivenda address terms comparing them with Zulu address terms as they are used in the drama. In Tshivenda ethnic groups it is noticed that among elderly people first names are used in conjunction with a prefix ‘*Vho-*’. For example, we have a couple *Vho Mushasha* the husband and *Vho Mukondeleli* the wife who have reached the age of being addressed as grannies but reciprocally they call each other by first names together with the prefix *Vho-* which denotes respect or honour. *Teboho* who is the daughter in law to *Vho Mukondeleli* is also addressing her by her first name together with the honorific *Vho-*. In addition we also witness the wife to the chief in the same drama addressed by her first name *Susan* with the honorific prefix *Vho-*. It is only now that the elderly are addressed by their last name and a title *Vho-* is prefixed at the beginning regardless of their gender. For example, *Vho Singo*, *Vho Muleya* and *Vho Mulaudzi*. The practice of surnames as address terms is something new to Vhavenda because culturally we come to hear of someone’s surname or totem when he or she is self-praising or being praised by someone as in praise poetry. In support of the aforementioned, Matloga (2002:100) opines that surnames are widely used in formal situations rather than in addressing people. Matloga further posits that in the past, Venda people did not have surnames, but bear totem names. Something of interest to note on the use of *Vho-* as a prefix is that it’s not gender based. It works for both males and females. The use of neutral honorific *Vho-* in Tshivenda denotes that women have the same value as males in Tshivenda culture.

In Muvhango drama there is also a female adult from the Zulu ethnic group who is addressed as *MaNkosi*. The address term is derived from one’s surname thereby being *MaNkosi* where *Ma-* symbolises the daughter of. In this case it means the daughter of *Nkosi* which is the surname of the biological father. The given example shows that the Zulu address their female elders using paternal surnames with a prefix *Ma-*. Mandende (2009) states that the paternal clan naming folkway is prevalent among amaZulu married women, who can be referenced and addressed through paternal clan names such as *MaNtuli*, *MaKhumalo*, *MaNdlovu* and *MaMlambo*. The same address style is now adopted by Vhavenda people. These paternal clan names have almost become a dominant form of address for both married women and young girls in Tshivenda society. We witness people addressing each other as *Mamuleya*, *Manguluvhe*, *Mandou*, *Mambedzi*, and *Masingo*: *Mamuleya* - The daughter of *Muleya*, *Manguluvhe* - The daughter of *Nguluvhe*, *Mandou* - The daughter of *Ndou*, and *Mambedzi* - The daughter of *Mbedzi*.

Consequently in this case the use of surnames with prefix *Ma-* clearly shows that it is due to Ndebele and Zulu influences which was caused by contact of languages through industrialisation, intermarriages, trading and the learning of Ndebele at school as mother tongue language. Still on the same note, Vhavanḁa has a prefix *Nwa-* which denotes the daughter of so and so, referring to the paternal parent. For example: *NwaSundani* is daughter of *Sundani*, *Sundani* being the name of the father. In agreement Mandende (2009) points out that Vhavanḁa married women can be referenced and addressed using their maiden names. In such situations he notes that such maiden names are prefixed with *Nwa-* of which examples are *Nwakhakhu* and *Nwakhadi*.

Personal Pronouns

Pronouns are words which are used in position of names representing a noun in question. Tshivendanḁa has personal pronouns which can be used as address terms like in any other languages. Their normal usage because of influence of other neighbouring languages has shifted a little bit especially on the Western side of Beitbridge in Matabeleland South, Zimbabwe. New connotations are attached to the old pronouns thereby having new functions with a sense of derogation and plurality. Tshivendanḁa has more than two second person singular pronominal forms: '*iwe*' 'you' (between older people and younger people when the speaker is older), '*inwi*' 'you' (between young peers and younger people), and '*vhone*' 'you' polite and respectful and used for older people than the addressee. In the same manner respect can be shown through personal pronouns which denote respect to younger people than the addressee who have a recognised status in the family or community. Tshivendanḁa pronouns are not gender based but the age of the speaker/addressee clearly plays a role in the choice of the pronoun to be used at a given time.

In this paper we need only look at two particular pronouns to illustrate the case in point: '*inwi*' 'you' and '*vhone*' 'you'. At some point they are now used interchangeably, wrongly and to a lesser extent properly but evidently showing influence of other languages. According to Poulos (1990:93), the "pronoun '*inwi*' which is 2nd person plural is used by the speaker to refer directly to the person to whom he is referring to.' It will be used as reference to someone of the same age or younger because it becomes disrespect if it is directed to one who is older than the speaker. Milubi (1996:80) classifies Tshivendanḁa personal pronouns in three positions thus: '*nḁe*' first person singular, '*riḁe*' first person plural, '*iwe*' second person singular, '*inwi*' second person plural, '*ene*' third person singular and '*vhone*' third person plural. As mentioned earlier, special attention will be given to pronouns '*inwi*' and '*vhone*' which have been given varying positions by Milubi and Poulos. According to the given scholars, the distinction is on the positions of the pronouns but their usage is the same.

'*Inwi*' as a second/ third person singular is supposed to be used when addressing a person of the same age group or younger but due to other influences it is currently used to elderly people singular whereas '*vhone*' takes the plural sense for older people than the speaker as second/third plural when in actual fact it can also be used as second/third singular for elderly people. For example:

- I. *Inwi mma* (You mother), (*Wena mama*) 2nd/3rd Singular, its bad mannered.
- II. *Inwi/ Iwe musidzana* (You girl), (*Wena nkazana*) 2nd/3rd Singular, proper.
- III. *Vhone vhasidzana* (You girls), (*Lina mankazana*) 2nd/3rd Plural.
- IV. *Vhone mma* (You mother), (*Wena mama*) 2nd/3rd Singular, proper.
- V. *Vhone vhafumakadzi* (You ladies), (*Lina vhomama*) 2nd/3rd Plural, proper.

In Ndebele it will be '*wena*' second person singular for younger people than the speaker, for people of the same age group and older people, and '*lina*' second person plural will also cut across all age groups to the speaker. Likewise, the same style is noted in English personal pronouns where 'you' is singular/plural for all ages. On the same note Tshivenda people have also taken on personal pronoun '*inwi*' to represent second/third singular across all age groups regardless of the age of the speaker and '*vhone*' for second/third plural across all age groups regardless of age of the speaker.

Titles

Titles are also used in Tshivenda. Title terms are address terms which are used mostly to denote one's position in society, community, work-place and church and are attained as one grows older. Many a time these are taken from lifetime achievements like academic, professional, social and religious statuses. Among them are Mr, Miss, Ms, Mrs, Dr, Prof, Rev, Pastor, and Chief. Before the arrival of the Westerners in Africa and in particular Zimbabwe, Vhavana had their own professions, social and religious statuses from which reference and address terms were coined. For example, we have *Vhafuwi* (Chief) and *Maine* (Traditional healer) and these are still being addressed as such. The title *Maine* has, however, broadened its meaning, for it is also now used even to refer to medical doctors. As shown above, titles can be derived from the occupation that one does. Thus occupational terms are connected with a person's job. In Tshivenda occupational terms are not used as address terms but as reference terms. Matloga (2002:177) states that occupational terms are never used as a form of address to the Venda. It would be thought of as lowering somebody's dignity. This is so because occupations differ; some are regarded as better than others. In that regard those with jobs which are regarded of low status by the community like a security guard will feel offended to be addressed by their occupational terms.

However, due to influence of other languages, occupational terms are now used in Tshivenda language. Most of them are used as borrowed terms. Matloga (2002:177) notes that the use of an occupation term as a term of address to interlocutors depends upon the origin of the occupational term. For example, nurse is *muongi* in Tshivenda; it's difficult for people to address them as *muongi* but rather as *nese*. It is easier for one to say: [*Nese ndi khou humbela u vhudzisa*] than to say [*Muongi ndi khou humbela u vhudzisa*]. Other borrowed occupational terms incorporated into Tshivenda are Dokotela (doctor), Minisiṭa (minister) and Phuresidennde (president).

Not all borrowed occupational titles are welcome into the African society and Tshivenda in this case. Some Tshivenda families have people who help in the household chores to take care of kids or property. It will be unfair to address them by occupational terms like maid and herd boy. The Venda speech community considers such forms of address as insulting. Some are old enough that it won't be polite for them to be addressed by their first names especially by young ones but one way or another they need to be addressed. At some point kinship terms are used to replace the occupational ones. Thus kinship terms are then adopted. In the modern society the term sister has been adopted and adapted into Tshivenda replacing maid as *sisi* and this gives the helper a deep sense of belonging.

Kinship Terms

Kinship terms portray the relationship which is there between two or more people and in this context between interlocutors. Yang (2010:738) states that kinship terms are indicative of the relationship between a person and his relatives. Bisilki (2017:39) also defines kinship addresses as nominal vocatives that are mainly used to call one's relatives in speech. Thus kinship terms even among Vhavenda people show the relationship between relatives. The paper is of the opinion that kinship terms now have a primary sense and various modern extended senses which have emerged among Vhavenda. Among the kinship terms that have gained several usage are *makhadzi* (aunt) and *malume* (uncle). This is believed to have been adopted from the Europeans. Matloga (2002:177) states that the European people have a tendency of using one kinship term for several persons. For example Aunt is used to father's sister, mother's elder sister or younger sister. In Tshivenda *Makhadzi* refers to the father's sister while in the royal family it means the chief's father's sister. *Makhadzi* (aunt) in Vhavenda is highly respected in the community and within the family. Matloga (2002:157) notes that *makhadzi* plays a role in crowning of a chief, settles dispute in the royal family and acts as a protagonist in time of ritual ceremonies to strengthen the chief's power. In the Vhavenda family *makhadzi* is well respected despite her age. Nothing can be done in a family without consulting *makhadzi*. The same goes to *malume* (uncle). *Malume* is a well-respected figure in the family and plays important roles.

According to Sibanda et al (2014:114), the two titles (aunt and uncle) are surrounded by an aura of socially prescribed respect, dignity and responsibility among the people, and anyone who bears such a title has to be treated that way by everyone who is connected to them thereof.

The terms *makhadzi* and *malume* (where by origin used as address terms with valuable meaning and use but because of modern casual and unsystematic usage) signify a language change in progress influenced by language contact as in English where aunt can categorise a large group of females. The terms are now used randomly like in English where they can stand in for any female or male figure except of biological parents. Now the terms are used as a gateway to solidarity, and this shows that the terms have developed another marked sense.

Furthermore the author is of the view that if the new usage is not guarded against jealously the terms *makhadzi* and *malume* might end up losing their value completely through kinship alteration. Alteration of kinship terms is sometimes used by strangers to ask for directions or by market hawkers who persuade the customer to buy their goods, and terms like *malume* and *makhadzi* are mostly used. The objective will be to accommodate, attract and lure their customers and at times to promote the relationship of trust. Some use the term *khaladzi* (brother/sister) so as to create the sense of solidarity especially among strangers or non-relatives. To concur Romaine (1994:156) notes that the terms 'brother' and 'sister' emerged as solidarity forms of address.

On the same note wife to one's uncle is now addressed as *malumes* to which suffix 's' is added as a feminine suffix. In Tshivenda nouns the feminine is denoted by suffix *-kadzi* whereas the masculine suffix is *-lume*. For example Male: *Malume* (uncle), *nḁoulume* (elephant), *ndaoulume* (lion), *gukulume* (cock). Female: *Makhadzi* (aunt), *nḁoukadzi* (elephant), *ndaoukadzi* (lioness). This then clearly shows that suffix 's' in *malumes* as is used in this day and age is borrowed from other languages like English where we have Mr and Mrs; the difference between the two titles is an 's' which denotes feminine figure.

Terms *mmawe* (Mother) and *baba* (father) have also undergone kinship alteration in many African languages found in Zimbabwe inclusive of Tshivenda. This is mostly noted in addressing modern pastors. Mashiri (1999:102) points out that the terms *baba* and *amai* are also used to address or to refer to certain respectable members of the community such as pastors, church elders, councillors, chiefs and their spouses either to express endearment or respect. Traditionally Pastors were addressed as *Vhafunzi* but now a new address term has cropped up; *baba* (father) has slowly replaced *vhafunzi* in the case of male pastors and *mma* (mother) for female pastors, and these are used more often in many denominations, especially Pentecostal churches. *Mma* is also used when referring to a pastor's wife. Matloga (2002:167) notes that *mufunzi* 'Priest' is a person appointed to perform religious duties and ceremonies in the church. When *mufunzi* is addressed the plural prefix of class (2) [vha-] is used instead of the singular prefix of class (1) [mu-].

Changes are also noticed in forms of address used to grannies. Traditionally in Tshivenda culture, grannies are addressed as *makhulu*, both grandfather and grandmother, but it has been overtaken by events especially in urban areas. Usage of terms like 'old lady' which is shortened to O' lady by some and 'old man' is the order of the day.

These are borrowed from English and are used as they are without any changes. To some who prefer to use Tshivenda words, literal translation is applied and we then have ‘*mukegulu*’ as literal translation for old lady and ‘*mukalaha*’ for old man. Culturally *mukegulu* and *mukalaha* are not well accepted as address norms because they do not show respect to the elderly. Kuku as an address term is also dominating especially in rural areas. *Magogo* (granny) is another term which has gained popularity among Vhavenda people as an address term which is mostly directed to female granny or a mother with kids who are at child bearing age. The term is borrowed from Ndebele. In Ndebele the proper term is *Gogo* but when loaned into Tshivenda prefix *Ma-* from 1a noun class is attached for it to rhyme and suit well in Tshivenda where every noun has a prefix. As a result *Magogo* will be a monomorpheme noun/word which cannot be subdivided into morphemes. It is common knowledge that every Tshivenda noun should have a prefix, thus in this scenario it will be a zero prefix where the prefix overtly marked or invisible is singular and becomes visible when in plural, *Vhomagogo* meaning more than one grandmother. For example: *Makhadzi* becomes *Vhomakhadzi*. By and large many present day Tshivenda address norms are loan words or are new coined words as a result of the influence of neighbouring languages.

Another noteworthy example which reveals change in the address system motivated by language contact is noticed when siblings are addressing each other. Terms like *khaladzi* (brother/sister), *mukomana* (brother/sister) and *murathu* (sibling) are no longer popular. Some changes are noticed where terms like *buti* and *sisi* have gained currency taking it from brother and sister. *Khaladzi* is used by people of different sex where the person can be older or younger than the addressee. *Mukomana* is used by people of the same sex where the addressee is younger and the word *murathu* where the addressee will be older but of the same sex. In many cases these changes are brought about by the youths with the mentality that it sounds prestigious or associated with prestigious languages like English. To support the given point Romaine (1994:134) says that “the influence and prestige of American pop culture on youth everywhere has no doubt been responsible for the introduction of a number of English words into other languages”. In view of the above mentioned opinion, the chances for changes of this nature are indeed enormous these days considering how mobile most people are and how much exposure people get to address norms outside their immediate community through the mass media and social media.

According to Sibanda et al (2014:113), the concept of a cousin in most African communities is almost similar, but most importantly it is very different from the way it is defined in the Western spheres. The cousin in the traditional context is the one who is descended from the aunt who happens to be a sister to our father or an uncle who is the brother to our mother. Traditionally according to Vhavenda culture cousins irrespective of sex or age address each other as *muzwala*, but because of modernisation and interculturalisation new address norms have been devised from the English version thereby replacing *muzwala*. Phonetically the new address norms show the influence of shortened English norms *khazo* and *khazi*; the only difference is that they have been phonologised to suit Tshivenda, but it is very clear that they come from cousin.

Muzwala refers to a sister or brother who is born of one's Aunt or Uncle. Instead of the address term *muzwala* these days people shorten it to *VhaZ* whereby -Z- is taken from the stem of the name -zwal- where prefix *Vha-* which denotes plurality is then added. Thus this shortening of address terms is something which has just cropped in and is mostly used in urban areas by young people. This clearly shows language contact which was influenced by colonial modernity where we ended up borrowing some address norms from white people. *Muzwala* as an address norm has also developed another connotation where it can be used by people who are not relatives but who have become close friends and know each other well like relatives as a way of bringing someone close by abandoning the use of first names.

The same practice of using address terms before a conversation starts also incorporates in-laws who are mother in-law and daughter in-law. The term *mazwale* was used reciprocally to refer to both daughter-in-law and maternal in-laws before the influence of other cultures. This however has since changed and the term *nwedzhi* gained popularity and is being used to refer to daughter in law though its origin is difficult to trace. People have adopted the use of daughter (*nwananga*) and mother (*mma/mmawe*) as new address terms believing that it shows good relations and also accommodates members as true family members unlike saying *nwedzhi* which closes out the daughter-in-law indicating that she is not a full member of that family. When one says *mazwale* it clearly shows that one is not an offspring of the person referred to, which, it is claimed, in the long run strains relations. This also comes from the influence of English which has such relations and address terms as mother and daughter leaving out the aspect of in-law in informal settings. Ajani (2007) postulates that it is a well-known sociolinguistic fact that when two or more languages and cultures come into contact different types of sociolinguistic chemistry takes place. The same sentiment is echoed by Mawadza (2000:96) who states that it is a well-established fact that when two or more languages come into contact, they influence each other. Thus, because English was the language of government and business in pre-independence Zimbabwe, borrowing from English by Indigenous languages was considerable during the colonial period and after. In the context of this research borrowing manifested itself in address norms and caused a lot of changes. Schendl (2001:3) argues that all physical aspects of the universe and all aspects of human life are subject to change, and languages are no exception.

Endearment Names

Endearments are terms mostly used as a way of showing the relationship between the people involved in the friendship. These include among them shortening names, shortening of terms which denote relations, intimacy and love. Fasold (1996:10) posits that when people become very good friends, the exclusive mutual use of first name no longer seem enough to symbolise the friendship.

People tend to coin new names with relationship symbolism. Most endearment terms like *Shaka langa* (relative), *muthu wanga* (love), *khonani* (friend), *thama* (friend), and *mufunwa* (dear) are now apparent especially on social media like Facebook and WhatsApp. This shows that European languages have an influence on African languages in a number of ways. *Mashaka* (relative) is also used as an endearment term by people who are not relatives but have a close friendship such that they call each other relative. Mashiri (1999:102) modern children address their parents as dad and mama instead of Baba na Amai, to show intimacy, and sometimes to patronise them if there is something they want done for them. These days' *mazwale* and *nwedzhi* are used by ordinary close people as endearment names. People who are not related but who will be at an age of child-bearing and a minor can address each other as such.

Mixing/Nonce Borrowing

Borrowed address terms are now a living reality in Tshivenda. The mixed morphological structure is achieved through the use of prefixation and suffixation. This is done within two or more different languages where a host language will build its term using the guest's by adding affixes. Some address terms have found their way into Tshivenda directly or indirectly from English, Ndebele and Sotho as indicated below.

Butiza, budiza bhudi Ndebele, brother

Mageli from girl

Geli from girl

Boyizi from boys

Spapa from *Papa* Sotho thus a boy child symbolising fatherly figure

Sesi from Sotho *Sesinyana/sesituku* small girl

Fana from Ndebele *umfana* which implies a boy

Mabebeza from baby with affixes *ma-* and *-za*

Sijana from Sotho *musijana* which means girl

The examples are a true indication of historical contacts through industrialisation, trading and even intermarriage.

Colonial capitalism brought with it the culture of master-servant relations (Mashiri 1999:95). With the advent of master-servant relations taken from the colonial period, names like *mukhuwa* (white person) and *shefi* (Chief) among others are arbitrarily assigned to Black adults who are employers or have fat pockets regardless of their age as address norms. *Mukhuwa* literally means white person in English both female and male whether he or she is an employer or not. Now it has the connotation of someone with money or who is rich.

This is taken from the fact that when white people came to African countries they eventually owned all the riches; they were the ones who owned property, companies and were employers of Black people. So, by association, someone who is an employer is referred to as *mukhuwa* and is therefore addressed as *mukhuwa*. This is mostly done by contractors who build people's houses; when they see the owner of the house they address him/her as *mukhuwa*.

Nicknames

Nicknames always carry a certain truth behind them which can be positive through praising, complimenting or negative by carrying the meaning of derogatory, irony, sarcasm and satire. Khumalo in Herbert (1992:348) defines nicknames as ordinary names with very strong sentimental attachment. 'Nicknames may be either self-selected by an individual or imposed by others.' Some people, for personal reasons adopt nicknames of their choice and prefer to be addressed by the adopted names. The choice may be based on several factors such as being impressed by the qualities and characteristics of the original person so named, or just wanting to be fashionable. Everyone wants to be associated with good things thus some nicknames are well accepted whereas some raise emotions to the addressee. Nicknames are used most commonly among peer groups of children and young people and by older persons addressing a child or younger person in the family. Nicknames are mostly utilized by friends, peers.

Inasmuch as people address each other by nicknames derived from one's character, some names are derived from one's structure, that is, height and body structure. In Tshivenḁa we have nicknames like *thoḁo* (tall person) and *shothi* (short) and thus a clear indication that they were derived from English words tall and short where phonologisation process takes place. *Tepi* (slim person) is a nickname which is used to address people with slim bodies taken from the verb *u tepa*. *Tshibumba* (fat person) is another nickname which shows influence of other languages where a Tshivenḁa noun prefix *tshi-* is prefixed for the name to qualify to be a Tshivenḁa term, and the etymology of *bumba* is not very clear; but it is assumed that it was coined from English terms 'fat boom boom' which refers to a fat person. Mashiri (1999:101) in agreement notes that those names that refer to the addressee's distinctive stature are either adoptives or coinages. This is evidenced by the aforementioned examples.

Conclusion

This article has discussed forms of address in Tshivenḁa. Special attention was paid to address forms which have been influenced by contact between different ethnic groups in modern Zimbabwe. One can say geographical closeness does not imply borrowing or adoption by all languages in question, but languages with power will always assimilate others and be borrowed from thereby influencing changes in other languages.

For example, in South Africa Tshivenda geographically is sharing with Xitsonga, but its influence is limited because their political and economic powers are equally the same. Comparatively, in Zimbabwe Tshivenda share space with Shona, Ndebele and English, but more changes are evidenced in Tshivenda than in other languages from Tshivenda because they have been given more power politically and economically. Modern Tshivenda address terms show the influence of other languages. Many address terms were effected but among them a few stood the test of time. Finally, I observe that there is a perceptible level of intercultural intrusion on the kinship address terms used among Vhavenda people. The flood of new and old but modernised address terms in Tshivenda socio-economic and religious spheres reveals a pattern of social interaction and cultural influence that is incompatible with the traditionally described hostile relationship between Southern African groups.

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