

**A LINGUISTIC DESCRIPTION OF LANGUAGE
VARIETIES IN VENDA**

by

PHALANDWA ABRAHAM MULAUDZI

Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF LITERATURE AND PHILOSOPHY

in the subject

AFRICAN LANGUAGES

at the

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

PROMOTER: PROF G POULOS

JOINT PROMOTER: PROF A E KHUBA

DATE SUBMITTED: AUGUST 1999

CONTENTS

	Page
Declaration	(vi)
Dedication	(vii)
Acknowledgements	(viii)
Summary	(xi)
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Aims of study	1
1.2 Scope of study	2
1.3 Traditional dialectology versus modern dialectology	3
1.3.1 Regional varieties	13
1.3.2 Social varieties	15
1.4 The position of Venda and other South African languages with regard to traditional and modern dialectology	17
1.5 Recapitulation	23
CHAPTER 2: THE ORIGINS OF THE VENDA PEOPLE AND THEIR CURRENT GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION	24
2.1 Introduction	24
2.2 Origins	24
2.3 The Venda language and its varieties	30
2.3.1 Vhaphani	30
2.3.2 Vhailafuri	33
2.3.3 Vharonga	35
2.3.4 Vhaguvhu	41
2.3.5 Vhaṅia as a blanket term	45

2.3.5.1	Vhaṭavhatsindi	45
2.3.5.2	Vhaṅia	48
2.3.5.3	Vhambedzi	50
2.3.5.4	Vhalembethu	52
2.4	The existence of various social activities among the Venda people	55
2.4.1	Murundu	55
2.4.2	Musevhetho	55
2.4.3	Vhusha	56
2.4.4	Vhutuka	56
2.4.5	Thondo	56
2.4.6	Domba	57
2.4.7	Musanda	57
2.4.8	Mawa a ṭhangu	58
2.4.9	Malombo	58
2.4.10	The tsotsis	58
2.4.11	The churches	59
2.4.12	Situational grouping of people	59
2.5	Recapitulation	60
CHAPTER 3:	REGIONAL VARIETIES	61
3.1	Introduction	61
3.2	Definition of regional variety	61
3.3	Regional varieties	62
3.3.1	Tshiilafuri	62
3.3.1.1	Speech sounds	62
3.3.1.2	Sound changes	64
3.3.1.3	Grammatical features	66
3.3.1.4	Lexical items	69
3.3.2	Tshironga	72
3.3.2.1	Speech sounds	72
3.3.2.2	Sound changes	74
3.3.2.3	Grammatical features	76
3.3.2.4	Lexical items	80
3.3.3	Tshimaanda	81
3.3.4	Tshiguvhu	83
3.3.4.1	Speech sounds	84

3.3.4.2	Sound changes	86
3.3.4.3	Grammatical features	89
3.3.4.4	Lexical items	98
3.3.5	Tshimbedzi	102
3.3.5.1	Speech sounds	102
3.3.5.2	Sound changes	104
3.3.5.3	Grammatical features	104
3.3.5.4	Lexical items	108
3.3.6	Tshiṭavhatsindi	109
3.3.7	Tshilembethu	110
3.3.7.1	Speech sounds	110
3.3.7.2	Sound changes	111
3.3.7.3	Grammatical features	114
3.3.7.4	Lexical items	119
3.3.8	Tshiṅia	121
3.4	Recapitulation	122
CHAPTER 4:	SOCIAL VARIETIES	123
4.1	Introduction	123
4.2	Rural social varieties	124
4.2.1	'Closed' rural varieties	125
4.2.1.1	Murundu variety	125
4.2.1.2	Musevhetho variety	136
4.2.1.3	Vhutuka variety	139
4.2.1.4	Vhusha variety	143
4.2.1.5	Thondo variety	147
4.2.1.6	Domba variety	150
4.2.2	'Open' rural varieties	162
4.2.2.1	The musanda language	163
4.2.2.2	Malombo variety	168
4.2.2.3	The traditional religion variety	171
4.2.2.4	The mourning variety	174
4.2.2.5	Taboo variety	176
4.3	Urban and rural social varieties	179
4.3.1	The speech variety of diviners in Venda	179
4.3.1.1	The main lexical items of this variety	180

4.3.1.2	Terminology employed during divination	181
4.3.1.3	The chanting of divining dice	187
4.3.1.4	The characteristics of praise poems as part of this variety	189
4.3.2	The church varieties	196
4.3.3	The tsotsitaal variety	205
4.3.3.1	The origin of tsotsitaal and its use	205
4.3.3.2	Types of influence	208
4.3.4	Gender variety	215
4.3.5	Linguistic restriction variety	217
4.3.6	The courtroom variety	219
4.3.7	The politicians' variety	221
4.4	Recapitulation	224
CHAPTER 5:	CONCLUSION	227
5.1	Introduction	227
5.2	The use of the term 'variety'	227
5.3	Historical background	229
5.4	The dialects of Venda	229
5.5	Other language varieties found in Venda	230
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	233

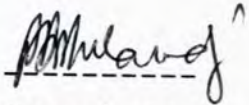
496.39768 MULA



0001760925

DECLARATION

I declare that **A LINGUISTIC DESCRIPTION OF LANGUAGE VARIETIES IN VENDA** is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.



Signature

(Mr P A Mulaudzi)



Date

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my father, **MULAVHEDZI SAMSON** who died before he could witness the fruits of his encouragement to one of his sons.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My grateful acknowledgement is extended in the first place to my promoter, Prof. G. Poulos and co-promoter Prof. A.E. Khuba whose help and encouragement, meticulous scrutiny and useful comments in each chapter of this thesis have been invaluable.

The University of South Africa assisted with research funds which greatly reduced my financial burden in doing field work. I am most thankful to Unisa for this.

I must acknowledge my indebtedness to Prof C.T. Msimang, the Acting Registrar at the University of South Africa and Prof M.J. Mafela for their advice and encouragement concerning this work.

I wish also to single out Prof L.J. Louwrens for placing his library with most valuable linguistic publications at my disposal and for drawing my attention to a number of relevant publications which would have otherwise eluded my attention.

My thanks are also due to Prof S.E. Bosch for her amazing support of this work when my computer broke down.

I shall be failing in my task if I do not express my thanks to Mrs IM Cooper for her highly competent editing and Mr T.L. Molefe for assisting me in some computer skills.

My thanks to my family must be acknowledged, especially to my wife, Ramokone Margreth and our children namely: Ndivhuho, Mashudu and Fhulufhelo who understand the demands of an academic career.

Finally, I am grateful to my informants and to all my good friends who opened their hearts and homes to me during my research trips and who also helped to organise groups of informants for me. In particular I wish to mention the name of

Mr Mashudu Gilbert Nephalama, the principal of Tshikundamalema Secondary School and his family who hosted me at Hamakuya. With his assistance I managed to consult the following informants for Tshilembethu: the late, Chief Daniel Mutele, Mrs Nangani Munyani, Mrs Masindi Tshivhanda, Mrs Mukanele Munzhelele, the headman Mr P.P. Mabaya and the headman of Matshakaṭini. Mr Nephalama and Mr Samuel Mavhungu, a teacher at Vhurivhuri Secondary School, also assisted me in consulting the following informants with regard to Tshimbedzi: the late Mr W.M.D. Phophi of Tshifuḍi, chieftainess Vho-Phophi Tshisinavhute of Mianzwi and her family. The informants who helped me with regard to Tshiṭavhatsindi were the late headman Nemuṭanzhela of Thengwe and his family; the informants on Tshinṭia were the headman of Hagumbu, Mr Phineas Mudzweḍa and Mr N.P. Ntshidzati from Hamukununde. Mr T.J. Maphaha has also assisted me in consulting the following informants on Tshiilafuri: Mrs Masiavhula, Mrs Mukumela Khonzani and the late Mr Petrus Rammbuḍa Lishivha. Mr P.P. Maremeni, a teacher at Tshiitwa Secondary School assisted me in consulting the following informants on Tshiguvhu: Mr William Sinagana Mugwena, Mrs Mafhungo Mashamba, Mr Phineas Maṭamba Mulaudzi and Mrs Mudzhadzhi Mbedzi; Mr N.C. Mbedzi assisted me in carrying out research with the following informants regarding Tshironga: the headman of Maṭhoṭhwe, Mr Ratshibvumo Nemaṭhoṭhwe, Mrs Maria Tshigoli and Mrs Esther Rathari. The informants on Tshimaanda were the late Mrs Nkhumeleni Ligege, Mrs Elisabeth Mavhivha, Mrs Tshisevhe Ruth Mulaudzi Nemukula and Mr John Sigidi.

The following informants were consulted on various social varieties namely:

Mrs Munzhedzi Nḍou, Mrs Sanie Nyamaḍala Mashau, Mrs Nyamaḍala Maphiri, Mrs Masindi Mulondo, Mrs Mukumela Khonzani, Mrs Masindi Khomola and Mrs Masindi Kutama (musevetho, vhusha, Domba, Luambo lwa musanda, malombo, mourning, traditional religion and taboo terms).

Headman Nemuṭanzhela, Mr Andries Mudau, Mr A Magudulela and Mr

Petrus Rambuḁa L̄ishivha (thondo, murundu and v̄hutuka).

Mrs Tshinakaho N̄emukula and Mrs Masindi Masiavhula (the speech variety of diviners).

Mr Thomas Magoro and Mr Patrick Matshidze (tsotsitaal)

Mr Petrus Rambuḁa L̄ishavha and Mrs Marandela Raḁiphada (gender)

Rev. Mutshembele, Rev. Kruger, Rev. F.M. Menziwa and Mr VS Molobi (Church varieties)

Mr M.R. Pandelani (the politician and courtroom varieties)

To all these generous and helpful informants, I would like to say: A VHA NTSHILELI.

SUMMARY

This thesis investigates the various language varieties of Venda. In traditional descriptions, researchers were mainly concerned with linguistic differences which characterised the so-called Venda 'dialects'. These are spoken forms which are mutually intelligible to one another and which occur within identifiable regional boundaries. Each of these forms in turn, is mutually intelligible to the so-called standard form, commonly known as Tshiphani. Various factors contributed to the evolution of the Venda dialects and, as this study shows, in some cases these factors are historical in nature and in others, they are determined by adjacent ethnic groups of people. The linguistic differences which characterise each of these dialects are identified and discussed.

It is then argued that the term 'dialect' is far too restricted to account for the various spoken forms which characterise the Venda language, and the term 'language variety' is introduced to deal with the shortcomings of the traditional approach to language differences. The nature of different spoken forms is then discussed within the ambit of the definition of 'language varieties'. This is a term used in general linguistic studies and accounts for the many different forms that may characterise a language. To this end, a detailed discussion is presented of the social rural and urban varieties which are found in Venda. Some of these varieties are secretive in nature, and are not generally known to the general public. They include language varieties which characterise various institutions such as *murundu*, *vhutuka*, *musevhetho*, *vhusha*, *thondo* and *domba*. Then there are those varieties which are referred to as 'open' rural varieties which are not, generally speaking secretive in nature, for example those which characterise traditional religious beliefs, taboo forms, and those referred to as *musanda* and *malombo*. Finally,

reference is made to the language varieties which permeate urban as well as rural areas, including those of divination, the church, tsotsitaal, gender, a variety which is referred to as the the linguistic restriction variety and finally the varieties used in the courtroom as well as that used by politicians.

Key terms:

Language varieties; dialects; dialectology; traditional approach and modern approach; regional varieties; social varieties; rural varieties; urban varieties; standard variety.

1.2 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This thesis comprises five chapters, the contents of which may be outlined as follows:

Chapter 1 deals with the traditional as well as the modern approach to dialectology and language varieties. The shortcomings of the traditional approach are highlighted and weighed up against current thinking on the issue of language varieties in general. It is then proposed that a detailed description of the language differences which occur in Venda can only be justified if the varieties which are manifested in various social contexts are taken into consideration.

Chapter 2 provides a historical perspective on the migrations of the Venda people as well as their modern-day geographical distribution. An historical perspective always throws light on the current distribution of people as well as their current social practices, and can explain some of the differences that may be detected in their language.

Chapter 3 deals with a detailed description of the regional varieties of Venda, the so-called 'dialects'. Their distribution as well as the influences they have undergone are discussed at length. Reference is made to phonological, morphological and lexical influences and these are compared to the standard Venda form.

Chapter 4 shows that the term 'dialect' is too restricted in its application, especially considering the various spoken forms which characterise the Venda language. A detailed discussion is then presented of 'language varieties' other than dialects. These varieties occur in both the rural and the urban communities. In this regard, it is shown that two major categories need to be identified and the need for such a categorisation is substantiated in the discussion.

Finally, chapter 5 presents an overview of the salient features of the different 'language varieties', which characterise the Venda language.

1.3 TRADITIONAL DIALECTOLOGY VERSUS MODERN DIALECTOLOGY

All languages change with time and as they change, special linguistic usage associated with particular regions or groups emerge. These changes form natural language varieties because language is a form of human social behaviour and groups displaying language varieties tend to emerge in a natural way over time. With regard to this Hudson (1980:23-24) says:

If one thinks of 'language' as a phenomenon including all the languages of the world, the term VARIETY OF LANGUAGE (or just VARIETY for short) can be used to refer to different manifestations of it, in just the same way as one might take 'music' as a general phenomenon and then distinguish different varieties of 'music.' What makes one variety of language different from another is the linguistic items that it includes, so we may define a variety of language as a set of linguistic items with similar social distribution.

With regard to this definition, variety is determined in terms of a specific set of linguistic items that it includes. These linguistic items are also associated with external factors such as geographical area and social group.

In the light of this definition, London English and the English of football commentaries should be regarded as varieties of the English language. The term 'variety' includes what would normally be referred to as dialects and *registers*.

The changes which create varieties in a language indicate that there is no language in the world which can be regarded as absolutely homogeneous. As Francis (1983:15) says:

Variation in language results from differential change. If we could assume, quite hypothetically, that at a certain point in its history a language is homogeneous - the same for all speakers at all times - and further assume that either no changes take place or that such changes as do take place are adopted by all speakers, the language would remain free from variation.

Francis (1983:15) further argues that:

No language spoken by more than a very small number of people is homogeneous, and when changes occur, they characteristically affect the speech of only a part of the population of the total language community. Some speakers will adopt an innovation, others will either not be aware of it, and in both cases the response may be conscious or unconscious. Some innovations, like slang, may be confined to a single social group. It is seldom easy, and often impossible, to find a simple cause for a linguistic innovation, because the factors involved are many and complex. But whatever the motivation, it is normal for an innovation in language to be differently accepted across the speech community.

In support of this view of the non-existence of language homogeneity, Ferguson and Gumperz (1960:3) define language variety in this manner:

A variety is any body of human speech patterns

which is sufficiently homogeneous to be analyzed by available techniques of synchronic description and which has a sufficiently large repertory of elements and their arrangements or processes with broad enough semantic scope to function in all normal contexts of communication.

In addition Ferguson and Gumperz (1960:3) point out that a language should consist of varieties. These varieties should share a single superposed variety. One can cite London variety here as the one which has been superposed on Cockney, Yorkshire, Geordie, etc.

However, traditionally, a variety is regarded as a smaller unit than a dialect. According to Petyt (1980:27),

...languages comprise dialects, so dialects in turn comprise varieties, and sometimes these are said to have subvarieties.

4 This view is not supported by modern dialectologists because the definition of the term dialect poses many problems.

It is interesting to note that in the literature, varieties are also referred to as dialects. With regard to this, Francis (1983:1) says that dialects are varieties of language used by groups smaller than the total community of speakers of the language. Wakelin (1972:1) adds:

The word dialect itself is used with various shades of meaning, but for present purposes dialects will be taken to be variant, but mutually intelligible, forms of language,...

In the light of this, Brook (1979:28) says:

The different varieties of English in use

overseas, as well as British English, are all regional dialects of the same language, which it is convenient to call English, and each of them has many sub-dialects, both regional and social.

In an attempt to clear the confusion on the use of variety, dialect and language, Haugen (1966:923) says:

... the term dialect was borrowed as a learned word from Greek in the Renaissance. In fact, we may see our distinction between 'language' and 'dialect' as due to influence of Greek culture, since the distinction was developed in Greek because of the existence of a number of clearly distinct written varieties in use in Classical Greece, each associated with a different area and used for a different kind of literature. Thus the meanings of the Greek terms which were translated as 'languages' and 'dialect' were in fact quite different from the meanings these words have in English now. Their equivalents in French are perhaps more similar, since the French word 'dialecte' refers only to regional varieties which are written and have a literature, in contrast with regional varieties which are not written and which are called 'Patois'.

In the first instance, it is clear from this quotation that dialects were primarily defined in terms of differences which existed between the dialect and the standard variety. This also poses a problem because dialects may share standard form features whereas in certain instances, there may be the poorest mutual comprehension between them. According to Petyt (1980:15),

In China, speakers in different parts of the country use Mandarin, Cantonese, Wu, Hakka, Funkie, or one of numerous other forms. Now many

of these forms are not mutually intelligible, but partly because the speakers all read and write the same Chinese written form, they are generally referred to as the 'Chinese dialects'.

Petyt points out the contrast of the criterion that two dialects can become two different languages if they are not mutually intelligible to each other. In some instances, some dialects, even if mutually intelligible to one another, are regarded as not related because they do not share the same standard form. In addition Petyt (1980:15) says further,

Likewise, though some dialects on opposite sides ^{AD} of the national border are mutually intelligible, speakers would be classed as using Dutch or German by the criterion. Another European area where this criterion plays a part to some extent is that of Scandinavia: speakers there are judged to speak three different languages (Danish, Norwegian and Swedish) according to the standard form to which they look, even though their dialects and these standard forms have certain degrees of mutual intelligibility.

Secondly, it is clear that traditionally, dialectologists were concerned with the regional variety of the standard language as dialects. With regard to regional dialects, Wakelin (1972:3) says,

...dialect associated with a particular geographical area - a subject known as linguistic geography or dialect geography, and the word dialect, when unqualified, will be understood to mean regional dialect.

Bloomfield (1970:321) defines dialect geography as, "the study of local differentiation in a speech area". Petyt (1980:27) also

indicates that the term dialect was mainly used to refer to regional differences within a language, for example: Yorkshire, Lancashire and Northumberland etc. as regional dialects. According to Petyt (1980:11):

Forms of speech with no corresponding written form, or those used by uneducated people, are labelled dialects and contrasted with the true 'languages' of the literate and educated.

Furthermore, Petyt (1980:30) sums up the argument on regional dialect by saying,

The essential point is that 'dialectology' is a wider subject than the study of regional varieties. But the fact that until relatively recently the social dimension was relatively neglected in favour of the geographical has left many people with the impression that dialectology is only concerned with geographical differences. Linguistic geography is properly a sub-division of dialectology: it is concerned with the regional distribution of linguistic varieties and their particular elements.

This approach is not supported by modern dialectologists because it does not refer to the social dimension with linguistic differences. The modern view contrasts with the traditional view because the term 'dialect' is interpreted as referring to any speech variety be it the variety of the illiterate, women, men, juveniles, educated, religious groups, members of a community located at a particular area etc. The 'dialect' in terms of the modern view is defined in terms of social groupings within a larger community and not in terms of regional criteria only. Pringle (1986:224) supports the modern view, when he says:

Note that because the techniques of dialectology were developed in Europe to respond to particular cultural and linguistic circumstances there, they are biased away from the notion that any sub-variety of a language is a dialect, worth of study for that reason, and towards the notion that the dialects are quaint, rural, archaic, queer. That is, traditional dialectology carries at the center of its methodology a concept of dialect which is not the concept commonly ascribed to by linguists, but something narrower, and in fact something a great deal closer to the popular concept of dialect as a non-standard form of the language ...

With regard to this, Petyt (1980:11) indicates some problems encountered when the term 'dialect' is used. In the first place, he questions the meaning of a different form of a language and cites 'Yorkshire' as an obviously different form of English from 'Berkshire'. On the other hand, Yorkshire on its own has different forms and there are also different forms in Bradford. The infinite number of different forms in Yorkshire and Bradford lead to the speech of smaller and smaller groups. This can ultimately reach the speech of an individual, namely idiolect. Petyt (1980:11) says further that the phrase, "different form of a language" poses a problem because it implies that we are going to take note of some feature and ignore others. According to Petyt (1980:12), another problem arises when it is said that dialects are different forms of the same language. It is not clear how different two forms can be before they are called different languages and not dialects. 'Cornish' and 'Geordie' are different in many ways but their differences are not sufficient to call these dialects different languages. In addition to this, Petyt says:

English and German on the other hand, though they were originally the same language and though they

have a considerable similarity in sound pattern, grammar, vocabulary etc, are too different now to be called dialects of say 'Germanic' - they are separate languages.

From these examples we can conclude that the criterion used for different forms of language is often an arbitrary one.

The traditional dialectologists have also used the criterion of mutual intelligibility to see whether a certain speech variety is a dialect or a language. With regard to this Petyt (1980:13) says:

Many people hold the essential criterion to be that of mutual intelligibility: dialects are different but mutually intelligible forms of speech. So if two speakers, in spite of some observable differences in their speech, can understand each other, they are held to be using different dialects; if two speakers cannot understand each other, they are speaking different languages.

This criterion also poses a problem because some dialects of the same language may be mutually intelligible while some may not. A Lancastrian and a Yorkshireman may understand each other very well while a Geordie and a Cornishman may experience some difficulties in understanding each other. If this occurs among the dialects of the same language in this case English, this criterion serves no purpose for distinguishing between dialect and language. This criterion leads to confusion when dialects from different languages are mutually intelligible. For example: some Northern German dialects are more mutually intelligible to some Dutch dialects than are some Southern German dialects. In this regard Wardhaugh (1992:27-28) says:

In the border area speakers of the local

varieties of Dutch and German do still remain largely intelligible to one another, yet the people on one side of the border say they speak a variety of Dutch and those on the other side, a variety of German. On the Dutch side, the residents of the Netherlands look to Standard Dutch for their model; they read and write Dutch, are educated in Dutch, and watch television in Dutch. They say they use a local variety, or dialect, of Dutch in their daily lives. On the other side of the border, German replaces Dutch in all equivalent situations.

Highlighting the problems posed by this criterion, Chambers and Trudgill (1980:4) point out:

It seems then, that while the criterion of mutual intelligibility may have some relevance, it is not especially useful in helping us to decide what is and what is not a language.

Besides the linguistic criteria mentioned previously, Petyt (1980:15) mentions non-linguistic criteria which can be used to determine whether a spoken language is a dialect or language. These criteria are common cultural, political allegiances and the consciousness of the speakers. Like other criteria, these pose problems in determining whether a spoken language is a dialect or a language. Citing an example on the problems posed by these criteria, Wardhaugh (1992:27) says that Yugoslavia is a country in which many different languages are spoken. Serbo-Croatians believe that Serbian is a language different to Croatian even though the difference between them is marked by vocabulary rather than pronunciation and grammar. Serbian and Croatian should be regarded as varieties of the same language but are not. The Serbs insist that they speak a different language to Croats because they see themselves as members of a different ethnic group. On the other hand, the Norwegians and Danes can understand one

another very well but are said to be speaking different languages because they are different nations, each with its own cultural centre and tradition.

To address the problem of using the word 'dialect', Chambers and Trudgill (1980:5) maintain,

The term 'language', then, is from a linguistic point of view a relatively nontechnical term. If therefore we wish to be more rigorous in our use of descriptive labels we have to employ other terminology. One term we shall be using in this book is VARIETY. We shall use 'variety' as a neutral term to apply to any particular kind of language which we wish, for some purpose, to consider a single entity. The term will be used in an ad hoc manner in order to be specific as we wish for a particular purpose.

The use of the term 'variety' is neutral in the sense that it refers to any form of speech such as idiolect, dialect, registers and standard language. In other words a dialect of any sort is a variety, such as 'Northumberland' or 'Yorkshire'; patois like Dentale; or a koine, such as Standard English; or a particular style like colloquial standard English. The use of the term 'variety' in this way suggests the greater departure from the linguistic tradition. As Petyt (1980:27) says:

The more recent use of 'variety' is a neutral term for "any form of language considered for some purpose as a single entity". It is neutral in the sense that it can refer to any form...

People believe that the standard variety of any language is actually only the preferred variety of that language. Examples which can be cited here are Parisian French or the Zanzibar variety of Swahili in Tanzania or the Chichewa variety of Malawi.

One of these varieties is chosen for some reason, perhaps political, social or economic to serve as either the model or the norm for other varieties. As for the preference of the Chichewa variety in Malawi, Timpunza Mvula (Herbert 1992:45) says:

The question of functional and cultural relevance also contributed towards Malawi's choice of Chichewa as the national language. Chichewa has become a functional language in school....At the socio-political level the use of Chichewa narrows ethnic differences and provides a framework for the cultivation of national identity. The effects of the national language policy are already noticeable whenever the mbumba (Malawi Congress Party Women's League) entertain the Life President.

As a result the standard is often not called a variety or a dialect but a language.

The importance of the term 'variety' and the relationship between language and its varieties forms the core of this study. There are two types of language varieties, namely, regional and social variety. At this point, let us expand our interpretation of regional and social varieties.

1.3.1 REGIONAL VARIETIES

Traditionally, these are known as dialects. According to Petyt (1980:27), this term 'dialect' is employed to refer to regional differences within a language. Examples to be cited here are Northern and Southern dialects namely Yorkshire, Lancashire and others. If the varieties are classified in this way, one is almost certain to notice differences in pronunciation, in the choices and forms of words and syntax.

With regard to regional varieties Anderson and Stageberg

(1962:318) say:

... the systematic study of language differences within a specified area, usually a country or a part of a country. The differences are those of pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar. To get accurate information, trained linguists hold long interviews with native informants, who have been carefully selected so as to offer a representative sampling of the speech of the area. When all the information has been collected and edited, it is made public by a series of maps or by books and articles.

Brook(1979:13), has the following to say with regard to regional varieties:

One group of varieties of language has long been known and frequently studied: the varieties known as dialects. A dialect may be defined as a subdivision of a language that is used by a group of speakers who have some non-linguistic characteristics in common.

In addition to this, Brook (1979:13) points out that sometimes social varieties are also used on a regional basis. Of course, this is one of the shortcomings of the traditional approach where social varieties were neglected.

With regard to this shortcoming Wardhaugh (1992:41) says:

This use of the term dialect to differentiate among regional varieties of specific languages is perhaps more readily applicable to twentieth-century conditions in Europe and some other developed countries than it would have been

in medieval or renaissance Europe or today in certain other parts of the world, where it was (and still is) possible to travel long distances and, by making only small changes in speech from location to location, continue to communicate with the inhabitants.

Examples of regional varieties of the English language are Lancashire, Yorkshire, Northumberland, Bradford, Halifax and others. Examples of the Chinese language are Mandarin, Cantonese, Wu, Hakka and Fukien. These regional varieties are regarded as equivalent to non-standard forms of speech or forms of speech used by uneducated people.

With regard to this, Wardhaugh (1992:25) says further:

It is often equivalent to nonstandard or even substandard, when such terms are applied to language, and can connote various degrees of inferiority, with that connotation of inferiority carried over to those who speak a dialect.

1.3.2 SOCIAL VARIETIES

These varieties are based on social groups but also depend on several factors, such as social class, religion and ethnicity.

With regard to social varieties, Wardhaugh (1992:132) says:

Just as a regional dialect marks off the residents of one region from those of other regions, a social dialect would be a variety associated with a specific social class or group, marking that class or group off from other classes or groups.

In addition, Ferguson and Gumperz (1960:9) say:

Any group of speakers of language X which regards itself as a close social unit will tend to express its group solidarity by favoring those linguistic innovations which set it apart from other speakers of X who are not part of the group. The existence within a speech community of social distinctions such as those of caste, class, professional guild therefore gives rise to differential rates of linguistic change, favoring the creation of new speech differences or the preservation of existing ones.

Wardhaugh (1992:46) cites an example of caste in India which is one of the clearest of all social class differentiators. This helps a speaker to find a variety to use when talking. Wardhaugh (ibid) goes on to say:

In a city like Baghdad the Christian, Jewish, and Muslim inhabitants speak different varieties of Arabic. In this case the first two groups use their variety solely within the group but the Muslim variety serves as a lingua franca, or common language, among the groups. Consequently, Christian and Jews who deal with Muslims must use two varieties: their own at home and the Muslim variety for trade and in all inter-group relationships.

Because of geographical mobility, the speech of the highest social classes has a tendency to show little difference from one region to another. An example of this can be found in Britain and with regard to this, Petyt (1980:28-29) says,

... these groups tend to send their children to boarding-schools, often away from the home area, where features of regional speech are likely to disappear and an RP accent to be acquired. Lower

down the social scale people are more likely to remain in their home areas and to receive their education in local schools, often from teachers who themselves have certain regional features in their speech, and so they have local accents. The lowest classes, especially in rural areas, tend to be the least mobile and are least likely to acquire even Standard English;...and are the most likely section of the population to use regional dialect (*sic*).

1.4 THE POSITION OF VENDA AND OTHER SOUTH AFRICAN LANGUAGES WITH REGARD TO TRADITIONAL AND MODERN DIALECTOLOGY

Dialectology is concerned with the study of dialects, but there is no general agreement between traditional dialectologists as to how the concept 'dialect' should be defined.

Perhaps it would be relevant to open the discussion by looking into the manner in which the term 'dialect' was perceived by traditional dialectologists.

In traditional dialectology, the term 'dialect' was perceived as referring to a regional variety of the standard language. With regard to this, Petyt (1980:11) says:

What is dialect? In popular usage the term dialect and language are sometimes opposed to each other. Forms of speech with no corresponding written form, or those used by uneducated people, are labelled 'dialect' and contrasted with the true 'languages' of the literate and educated. Thus for example, we often hear the speech of African or South American tribes referred to as dialects; or an English farmworker of minimal

education may be described as speaking a dialect, the educated person from any of these countries would on the other hand be said to speak a language - French, Spanish, English, or whatever. A distinction along similar lines which we shall note below, is to speak of 'standard English' on the one hand (with the implication that this is the real 'language') and 'dialect' on the other.

Dialects can therefore be distinguished from languages because they are regarded as different forms of the same language. In this regard, Petyt (1980:11) says:

Using a language thus necessarily involves using one of its dialects - whether, in case of English, this is the dialect of Yorkshire, Berkshire, Suffolk or standard English dialect.

A problem arises when dialects are defined as different forms of the same language. It is not clear how different two forms need to be before they can be considered to be different *languages* rather than *dialects*. Let us say for argument's sake, that it is reasonable to maintain that the distinction between dialect and language is a 'quantitative' matter. For example, we could say Cornish and Geordie are different in many ways, but not sufficiently different to be called different languages but different dialects. On the other hand, English and German, though they are considerably similar in sound pattern, grammar and vocabulary, are different enough to be called dialects, of, say, 'Germanic'.

The problems identified by Petyt with regard to the way in which dialects are defined, have also confronted dialectologists who have studied the Venda language. They have also had to contend with the issue of how many differences must be exhibited by a language variety in order to be regarded as a different form of a language.

Mathivha (1966:3-4), Ralushai (1977:46), Doke (1954:154), Poulos (1990:8), Mulaudzi (1996:3-4) and others would not hesitate to characterise varieties such as Tshiilafuri, Tshilembethu, Tshimbedzi and others as dialects of Venda because they differ from the standard language, irrespective of how many linguistic features each dialect exhibits. On the other hand, Van Warmelo (1932:9-10), Lestrade (1927:488), Neluvhalani (1984:58) and others would not regard Tshiilafuri, Tshironga, Tshilembethu, Tshimbedzi etc. as dialects of Venda because the degree of these differences is never quantified.

Illustrating the problems identified by Petyt, Louwrens (1995:8) says the following with regard to Northern Sotho:

Researchers will not hesitate to characterise varieties such as Lobedu, Pai, Hananwa etc as dialects of Northern Sotho. The reason for this is that these varieties differ markedly from the standard language. However, the degree of these differences are never quantified. So, for example, the differences between Pai and Standard Northern Sotho are much more numerous than the differences between Hananwa and standard Northern Sotho. Nonetheless, both Pai and Hananwa are regarded on an equal footing as dialects of Northern Sotho. On the other hand, there are no clearly definable reasons why certain minor dialects such as those spoken around Pietersburg (Matlala, Moletši, etc.), Tzaneen (Dzwabo, Khaha, etc.), Bushbuck Ridge (Pulana, Kutswe, etc.) are listed as dialects of Northern Sotho in academic writing, since there exists virtually no information on the linguistic structure of these dialects.

In the above discussion, Louwrens (1995) has identified two problems which make the classification of varieties as dialects

of Northern Sotho difficult. The question to ask then is: What criteria are employed when these varieties are characterised as dialects of Northern Sotho? There is no obvious answer since as pointed out by Petyt, the dividing line between different forms of language is often an arbitrary one.

Another question related to the above problems is: Where should the line between language and dialect be drawn? In South Africa, for instance, the three Sotho languages, namely Northern Sotho, Tswana and Southern Sotho are regarded as autonomous languages. With regard to Northern Sotho and Tswana, for example, we are faced with a peculiar situation. A greater degree of mutual intelligibility seems to exist between Standard Tswana and its dialects, than between Standard Northern Sotho and some of its dialects such as Lobedu and Pai. For example, while Lobedu enjoys a lesser degree of mutual intelligibility with Standard Northern Sotho, a greater degree of mutual intelligibility seems to exist between standard Venda and Lobedu. It is quite clear here that the three Sotho languages have gained official status due to political reasons.

The criterion of mutual intelligibility applied by traditional dialectologists when deciding whether a speech variety is a dialect or language also poses several problems. In South Africa, the three Sotho languages, namely Northern Sotho, Tswana and Southern Sotho, are mutually intelligible and should therefore, according to the criterion of mutual intelligibility, be regarded as different dialects and not as different languages. The same can be said of the Nguni languages, namely Xhosa, Zulu, Swati and Ndebele, which are mutually intelligible. On the other hand, the Pai dialect of Northern Sotho and, to a certain extent, Lobedu as well, are hardly understood by speakers of the standard language when spoken by elderly members of the Pai and Lobedu communities. Nonetheless, Pai and Lobedu are regarded as dialects of Northern Sotho and not as languages.

As pointed out by Chambers and Trudgill (1980) and Petyt (1980),

mutual intelligibility is not always equal in both directions. For example, a Lobedu speaker may understand a Hananwa speaker with relative ease, whereas a Hananwa speaker may experience greater difficulty in understanding a Lobedu speaker. If this is the case, then how should the criterion of mutual intelligibility be applied in order to decide whether Hananwa and Lobedu are different dialects or different languages?

To sum up this argument, Chambers and Trudgill (1980:5) say:

It seems then, that while the criterion of mutual intelligibility may have some relevance, it is not especially useful in helping us to decide what is and what is not a language.

Unlike the traditional dialectologists, the modern dialectologists interpret the term 'variety' as referring to any speech variety, whether it be the variety used by the educated, the illiterate, juveniles, women, men, religious groups, members of a community located in a particular geographical area, or whatever the case may be. This interpretation of the concept 'dialect' differs from the traditional one in so far as dialect is defined in terms of social groupings within a larger community, and not only in terms of geographical or regional criteria. Today, there is fairly general consensus that the term 'dialectology', in its widest sense, refers to the study of language variation which is brought about by speakers affiliated to different social groupings.

With regard to the modern dialectologists' interpretation of the term dialect, Chambers and Trudgill (1980:5) say:

The term 'language', then, is from a linguistic point of view a relatively nontechnical term. If therefore we wish to be more rigorous in our use of descriptive labels we have to employ other terminology. One term we shall use is 'variety'.

From these observations it should be clear that the term 'dialect' is used nowadays to refer to a part of a much larger body of linguistic phenomena which distinguish one language variety from another.

1.5 RECAPITULATION

This chapter examined the traditional and modern approaches to the term 'dialect' and proposed that the regional as well as social dialects should be grouped together as language varieties. The term 'variety' should be used instead of dialects because of the shortcomings associated with the term 'dialects'. This does not imply that there are no problems when the term 'variety' is used. Traditionally, the term '*dialect*' only referred to the spoken language used in a specific region and was also regarded as a language variety for people with lower status. On the other hand, within the modern framework of analysis, the term 'variety' refers to any speech variety, whether used by the educated, illiterate or any other group. The term 'variety' therefore embraces all speech varieties used by various communities.

CHAPTER 2

THE ORIGINS OF THE VENDA PEOPLE AND THEIR CURRENT GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter gives a brief overview of the Venda peoples' origin and also refers to the migratory movements from the north to the south. Thereafter, the geographical distribution of the various Venda groups is set out. It is also indicated that the existence of various social activities has contributed to social language varieties. Details of the linguistic characteristics of all these varieties will be discussed in succeeding chapters.

2.2 ORIGINS

The Venda language belongs to the language family commonly referred to as the Bantu language family. In order to probe into the historical background of the Venda people, it is necessary to refer to the most salient aspects of migrational patterns. The literature mentions several places the Venda people migrated from, namely Egypt, the Lower Congo, the Great Lakes area and Southern Rhodesia, until they finally settled in the Northern Province, the then Northern Transvaal.

Despite reference to these places in the literature, there is still uncertainty as to the exact place of origin of the Venda people, as Stayt (1931:13) points out,

Traditions concerning the early history of the original Bavenda, prior to their entry into

Rhodesia are vague and fragmentary.

This is undoubtedly true when one looks into the theories of Venda origins.

According to Ralushai (1977:23), the Venda people originally lived in Egypt. They left Egypt because of the civil wars following succession disputes which caused the defeated group to move southwards via the then Congo and Southern Rhodesia. One informant W M D Phophi, agrees with Ralushai (1977:22-23) when he says:

The theory of the Egyptian origin of the Venda is a case in point. I have never heard this theory proposed by an illiterate person, but both chief Davhana one of the oldest Venda chiefs and a veteran of the First World War, and Vho-John Mulaudzi, who had been to North Africa in the Second World War, presented the theory as oral tradition.

In addition Ralushai (1977:23-24) goes on to say:

Vho-John Mulaudzi even stated that he had seen all Venda works of art in a big house in Egypt. These works of art, according to him, undoubtedly prove that the Venda must have lived in Egypt before settling in Southern Africa. The interesting thing about the theory of the Egyptian origin of the Venda is that it is not confirmed by a single illiterate Venda woman. Most of the old men who supported the Egyptian argument were literate. My suspicion is that they learnt this from school.

The idea that the Venda people might have originated in Egypt should be dismissed, since there is no concrete evidence to link

Venda with Egypt.

There is a Venda tradition which states that the Venda people originated in the Congo. According to Hanisch (1994:68), this might have passed into the oral tradition through the works of Carl Beuster and his followers including Grundler and Wessmann. Grundler and Wessmann's argument is based on the existence of recognised words with similar meanings when comparing the Congolese languages with Venda. They erroneously concluded that the Venda people originated in the Congolese region, namely Zaire, but on moving southwards had over the years lost the language, only retaining a core vocabulary. G P Lestrade also rejects this, because there was no sufficient reason to link the Congolese tribes ethnically with the Venda people. According to Ralushai (1977:24),

The argument from language is similarly weak. From the nature of Tshivenda, it would obviously be impossible for any Congo language to be so markedly like what we are now able to isolate as original Tshivenda as to admit of a linguistic identification.

Wentzel (1983:152) points out that if the Venda originated somewhere in the Congo, it would have meant that they had followed a more westerly direction than the Shona, who originated from the region west of the Great Lakes. If they did, the Venda people would have influenced the Western Shona strongly in two ways: linguistically and culturally.

All informants who remained adamant that the Venda people originated in the Congo could not support their argument. This shows that they were directly or indirectly influenced by written accounts of early Venda history.

It is also said that the Venda people originally lived in the area of the Great Lakes of East Africa. Gottschling (1950:365),

Stayt (1931:14), Monica Wilson and L Thompson (1969:169), and others support this view.

Although Stayt (1931:14) supports this argument by using Chief Sinthumule's linguistic evidence, this does not prove that the Venda people once lived in the area of the Great Lakes of East Africa. It is true that the languages spoken in the area of the Great Lakes of East Africa are also members of the Bantu language family, but there is no written evidence that the Venda people had close contact with those languages.

According to Ralushai (1977:26), Chief Sinthumule used to be sent by his father to trade or buy goods in Rhodesia, so Chief Sinthumule might have learnt the Malawian languages in the process of trading and buying.

The works of Gottschling, the records of the Native Affairs Department and Mudau's version used by Monica Wilson are all misleading. The place mentioned, which was near the sea and land of many rivers which all join and in one body rush to the sea may suggest an area to the west of Lake Malawi or Lake Shirwa, of Tanganyika or Kive or Victoria. W M D Phophi does not agree that the Venda people once lived in the area of the Great Lakes of East Africa. He says that Gottschling, the records of the Native Affairs Department and Mudau's version used by Monica Wilson probably referred to Southern Rhodesia (Vhukalanga). This country had closer cultural, linguistic and historical connection with the Venda people. Ralushai (1977:29) also supports this view:

Most people mentioned that their forefathers, before entering the Northern Transvaal, were living in Vhukalanga. By this they generally mean the land north of the Limpopo river, and not necessarily the Kalanga areas around the river Limpopo. With the exception of the Ngoni groups, all Venda-speaking groups (the Singo, Ndalamo, Tavhatsindi, Mbedzi, Twanamba, Lembethu, Nyai,

Lea, Kwevho, Nḁou, Khomola, etc.) bury their dead with the head facing north, to indicate that their forefathers came from the north (Devhula).

The view that the Venda people once lived in Southern Rhodesia (Vhukalanga) is widely confirmed in both oral tradition and written records. In this regard, Wentzel (1983:152) says:

The picture becomes clearer only from the point where they are reported to have stayed at a large city, known as Matongoni in the Venda traditions and in written sources referred to as Dhlodhlo.

Today the ruins of Dhlodhlo are found at a site which is about 67 kilometres to the north-east of Bulawayo in Zimbabwe.

There is no clear reference as to when the people arrived at this site but one can conclude that they stayed for a considerable time because of the influence that Western Shona had on the Venda language. It is at this place where the Venda people stayed with the Lemba people but it is not clear whether they arrived at Dhlodhlo together or whether the Venda people found the Lemba people there or vice versa. There are no written records in this regard and it is not even expressed in oral tradition. It is also not clear whether the Lemba people had their own language at that time. According to Wentzel (1983:153),

This language was a form of the Western Shona cluster and was spoken by the Lemba who left Dhlodhlo and came further south with the Venda to cross the Limpopo. It is therefore obvious that the Lemba stayed among the Western Shona peoples for a very long time after they left Sena and that they did not easily switch over to Venda.

At Dhlodhlo, the Venda people worshipped their High God, Nwali. Nwali was also their God-king. After a disaster that struck the

city, the Venda people decided to leave. Tshilume, the son of God-king Nwali led them away under the sacred protection of Ngomalungundu (the Holy Drum). According to Von Sicard (1952:10-36), Tshilume did not guide his people on a straight route to the Limpopo. He guided them through Chibi's country where they stayed for at least three years. This is where the Venda people came into close contact with the Kalanga people and evidence of this can be seen in the linguistic borrowing from Kalanga. Unfortunately, Tshilume died before they crossed the Limpopo, but before he died, he climbed to the top of the mountain called Mubvumela and was never seen again.

The Venda people moved from Chibi's country to Buxwa. From here, they crossed the Limpopo under the leadership of Dyambeu as chief. Von Sicard (1952:80) refers to Dlembeu (known as Dimbanyika) as the chief who led the people across the Limpopo. Van Warmelo (1932:33-40;70 and 1940:6), on the other hand, is of a different opinion because in these sources Dimbanyika is mentioned as the father of Dlembeu. Dimbanyika was the one who crossed the Limpopo to the then Transvaal with his followers whereas his son died in a cave while he was hunting. However, Von Sicard is also supported by Ralushai (1977:30) when he says that Dimbanyika crossed the Limpopo with his subjects. The exact date of their arrival to the south of the Limpopo is not known but it must be at the beginning of the eighteenth century.

On their arrival to the south of the Limpopo, the Venda people found some Bantu-speaking people, who had arrived there long before them and had settled at Nzhelele. Among the people found in this area were the Lembethu, Twanamba or Twamamba, Ngoni and others. These people were easily overcome by the Venda people. The Lembethu fled eastwards to a place which today is known as Hamutele; the Twanamba fled westwards and the Ngoni moved further south.

The Venda people, or the Senzi as they are also known, became the conquerers of tribes living next to their occupied area.

According to W M D Phophi, the Twanamba, Lembethu, Mbedzi (or Pfumbi) and Ngona, Tlokwa, Hananwa, Lobedu, Tsonga and others came under the rule of the Venda.

2.3 THE VENDA LANGUAGE AND ITS VARIETIES

Venda is one of over 400 languages which belong to the so-called Bantu language family. It is spoken by 23 clans that form the Venda tribe, plus the non-Venda clans like Ngona, Twanamba, Mbedzi and Lembethu. This does not exclude the speakers of the Luleke and Gwamba dialects of Tsonga; as well as Hananwa, Tlokwa and Lobedu speakers who are still living among the Venda clans in large numbers. These clans have divided themselves into the five major groups namely the Vhaphani, Vhailafuri, Vharonga, Vhaguvhu and Vhaṅia. The fifth group could still be divided into three sub-groups, namely the Vhaṭavhatsindi or Vhaṅia, Vhambedzi and Vhalembethu. The division of these clans into five groups has contributed extensively to the formation of the regional and social varieties of the Venda language. These groups are as follows:

2.3.1 Vhaphani

Most of the people who form this group are the Masingo of Hatshivhasa, Rammbuḁa and Mphaphuli shown in map 1. Other non-Venda groups, such as the Vhangona, Vhambedzi and Vhalemba, are also found among the Masingo. According to Ralushai (1977:49), the area known as Vhuphani,

...has many meanings and associations, some of which were not even in existence a hundred years ago. To some Ilafuri (W. Venda), it is identified with 'cowardice' or 'being circumcised,' whilst to the Phani, Vhuphani is still associated with

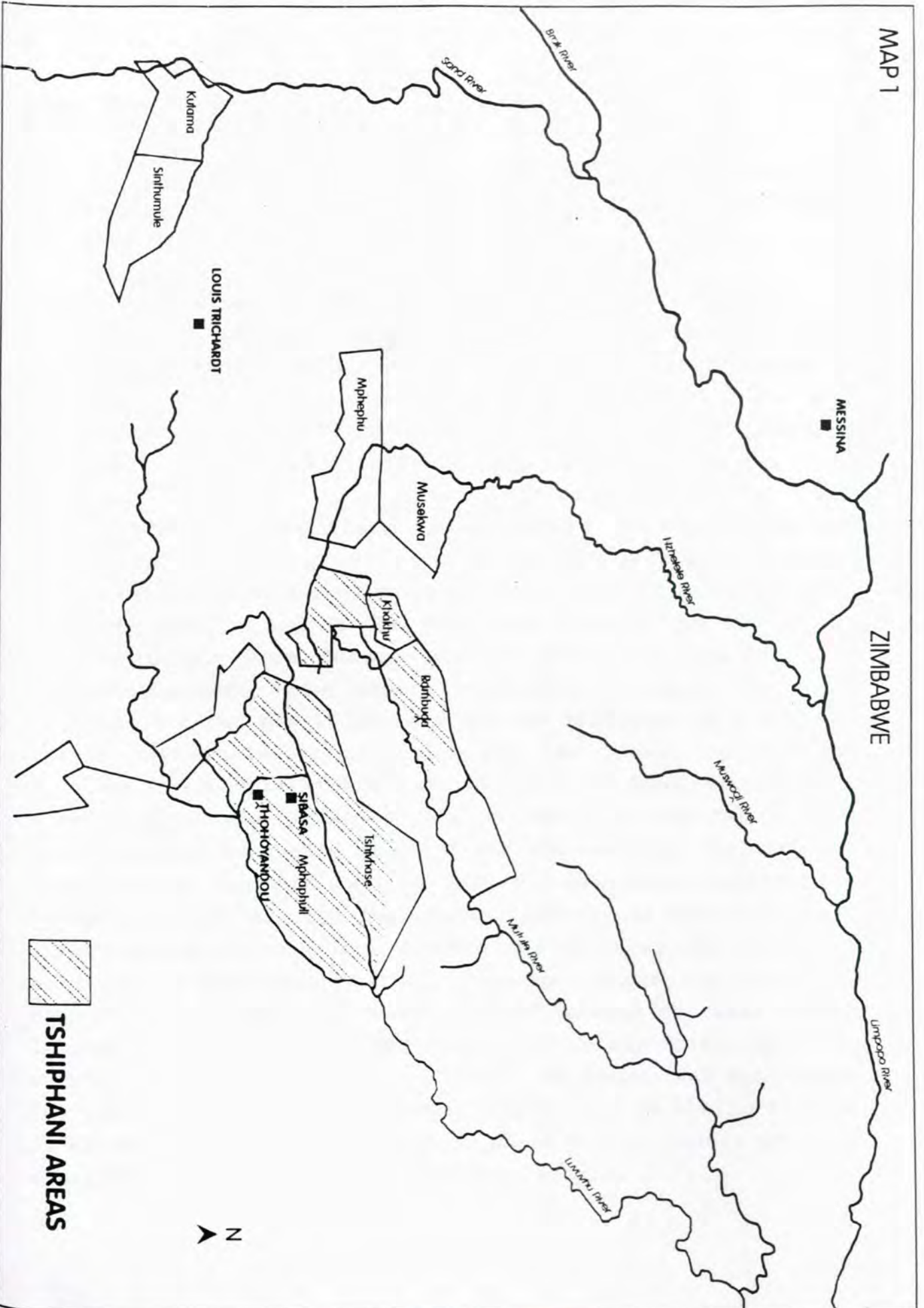
peace, rain, fertile hills and valleys. Such attitudes could make sense when explained historically.

The area known as Vhuphani covers the Thohoyanḁou district, some parts of the Dzanani district and Mutale.

The people in this area are linguistically less influenced by non-Venda groups. This made it possible for the missionaries who arrived at Beuster, the place known as Maungani today, in 1872 to only learn to speak Tshiphani, the spoken language of the Vhaphani. Tshiphani was later developed into a written language and was adopted by the Thohoyanḁou Territorial Authority in 1963 as the official language. The Venda Government which succeeded the Thohoyanḁou Territorial Authority and Vhembe Territorial Authority also used Tshiphani as the standard variety. Today, the Tshiphani variety is known as the standard form of the Venda language.

MAP 1

ZIMBABWE



2.3.2 Vhailafuri

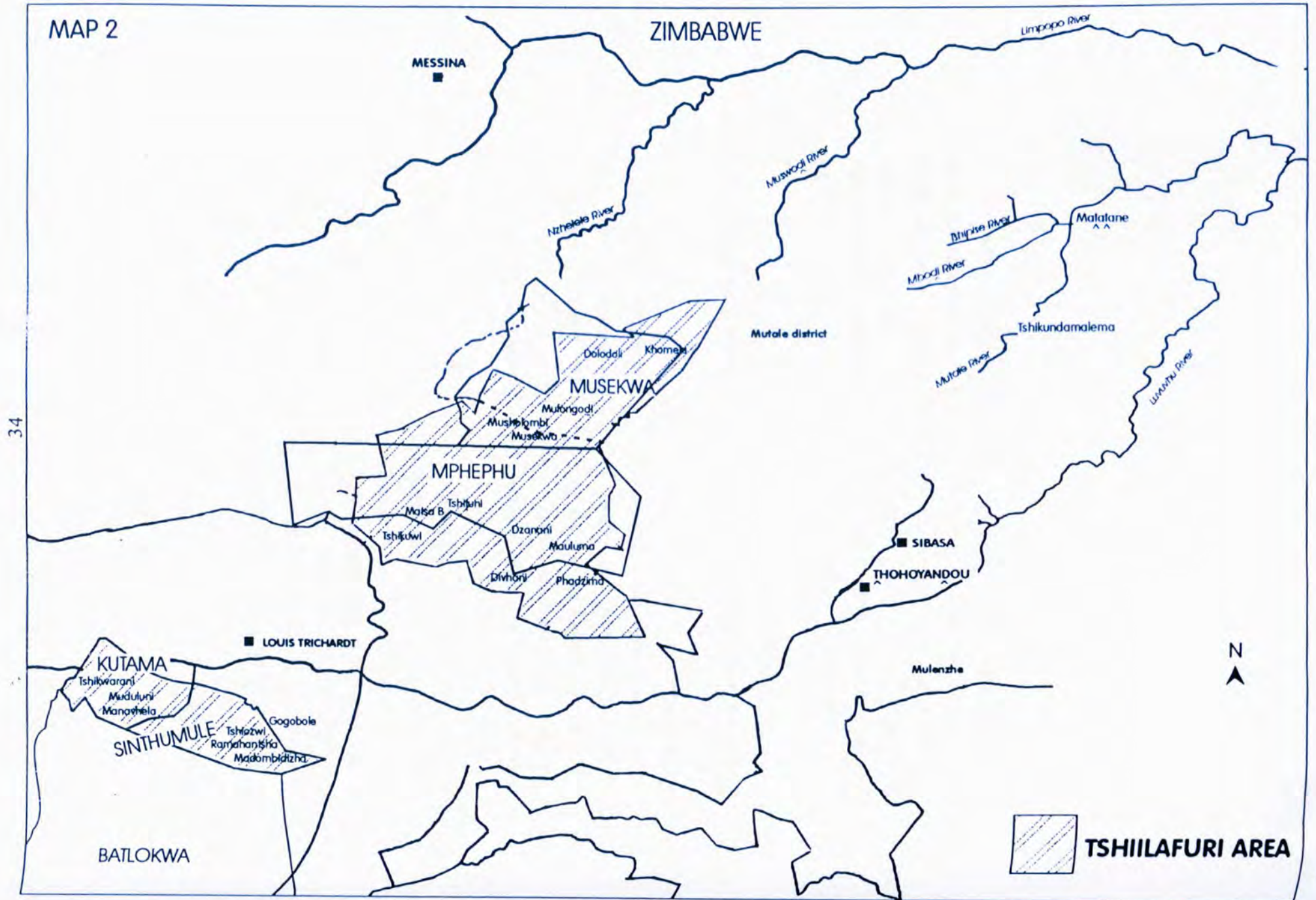
The area known as Vhuilafuri is situated in the western and northern areas of Louis Trichardt as shown in map 2. Some parts of these areas are occupied by white farmers.

The people known as the Vhailafuri are the Vhasenzi, the Vhalaudzi of Maphaha, the Vhalemba, the Vhatwanamba and some remnants of Northern Sotho tribes. The name Vhailafuri means "to avoid eating a pumpkin". However it is not known why this term is used to refer to these people. According to Ralushai (1977:52), however, "Vhuilafuri refers to Western Venda".

The Vhailafuri share their boundaries in the West with the Hananwa and in the south with the Tlokwa. The Tlokwa and Hananwa people were once conquered and subjugated by Chief Makhado during the 19th century and at the same time most of the Tlokwa and Hananwa people were forced to live among the Vhasenzi and Vhalaudzi clans. These people were made to speak the Venda language but the result of this was the influence of Tlokwa on Venda. The Vhailafuri also accepted the Tlokwa customs and culture; for example, circumcision schools and traditional dances such as *givha* and *tshikhaba*. At the same time the Twanamba of Tshivhula were conquered by Chief Makhado and this resulted in the Twanamba language falling into disuse, since many of the Twanamba people adopted the spoken language of their masters. Inter-marriage between the Twanamba and Vhasenzi put the final nail on the existence of their language. Those who fled from Makhado joined the Hananwa and adopted Hananwa as their spoken language. Today, we have the Tshiilafuri variety which came into existence as a result of the influences of Tlokwa and Hananwa on the Venda spoken by the Vhailafuri. Vhuilafuri in the north-east is slightly influenced by Tshiphani where the Vhailafuri speakers share the boundary with the Tshivhase people.

MAP 2

ZIMBABWE



2.3.3 Vharonga

The area known as Vhuronga is situated in the south-west part of Thohoyandou and east of Louis Trichardt as shown in map 3. It is largely occupied by the Venda people who call themselves the Vharonga and the speakers of Luleke and Gwamba dialects who arrived at this place during the time of Joao Albasini, a Portuguese merchant who was appointed vice-consul by the British Government (Mathumba, 1993:60).

Most people known as the Vharonga are the Vhalaudzi of Hamasia, Tshimbupfe, Gwamasenga and Lwamondo areas. The Masingo of Davhana, Nesengani and Tshikonelo are also included in this group. In addition to the two mentioned major clans, the Vhakwevho of Luonde and Vhafamaḽi of Hamashau are also included in this group.

According to Ralushai (1977:52), the term 'Vhuronga' means the place where Vharonga are found and,

...generally refers to low-lying sandy areas (Muḽavhani) south of the river Luvuvhu. The sandy areas that lie adjacent north of the river Luvuvhu are also called Vhuronga. The people living in these areas are called Vharonga and their dialect of Venda is called Tshironga...

MAP 3

ZIMBABWE

MESSINA

Gumbu
Masisi

Matshakatini

Duluthulu

Mulele

Lukau

Majajane

Ishikundamakema

Nzhelele River

Muswodi River

Shipasa River

Makwala River

Luvuvu River

Brock River

Musekwa

Mphephu

Makwarela

SIBASA

THOHOTANDOU

LOUIS TRICHARDT

KUTAMA

SINTHUMULE

TSONGA

Nesengani

Ishimbupfira

Mashau

Masia

Bhungeni

Mhangani

Davhana

Njakanjaka

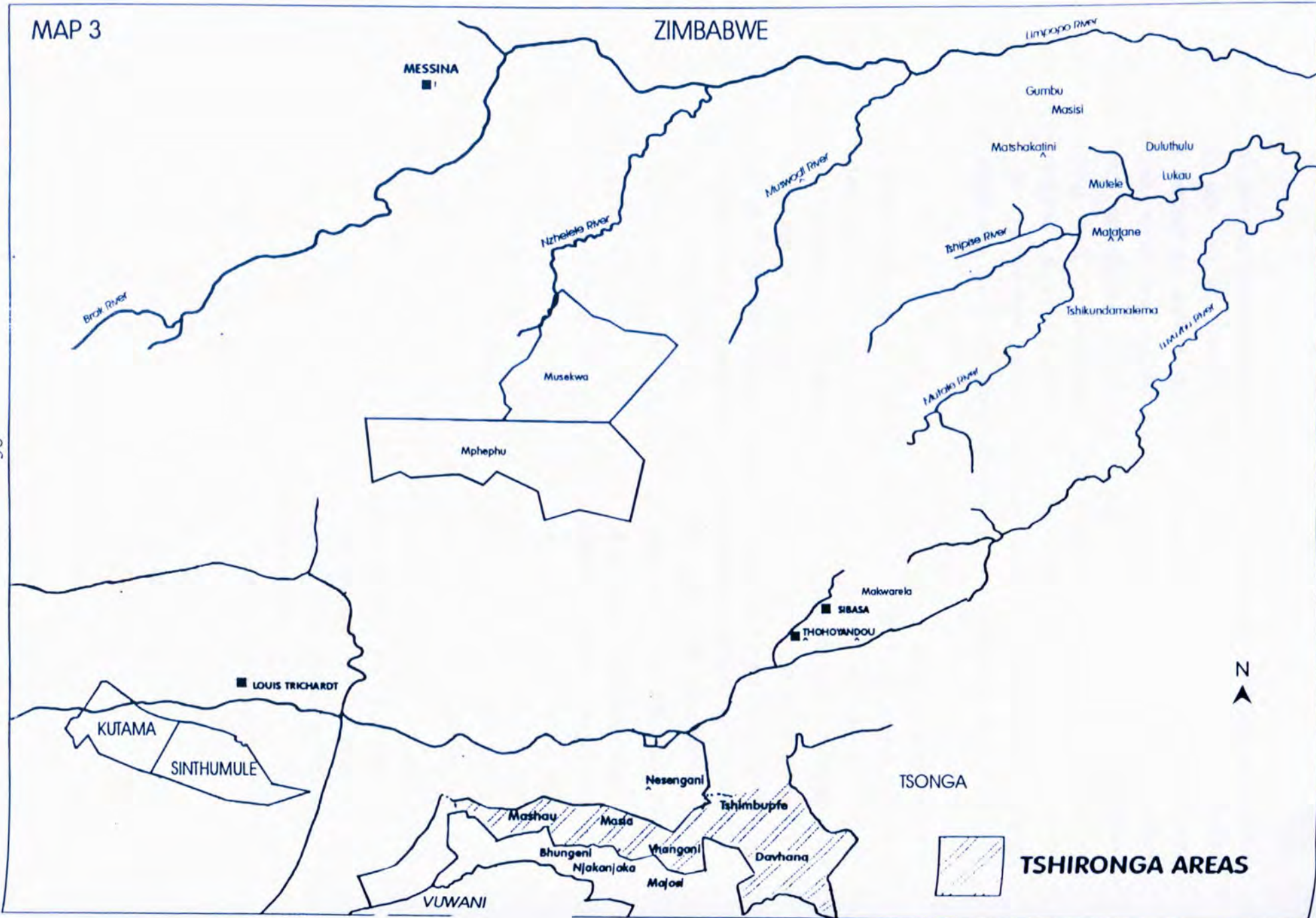
Majosi

VUWANI



TSHIRONGA AREAS

36



The Vhalaudzi of Tshimbupfe, Hamasia, Gwamasenga and those at Lwamondo (as shown in map 4), including those of Tshivhodza who are under Chief Nelwamondo's rule, are typically known for their sluggish articulation. It is believed that this type of articulation was acquired while they were still somewhere near Pietersburg where they settled for a short period. This is also confirmed by an informant, Mr Lishivha. The speech variety of these people is known as Tshimaanda and not Tshironga as indicated by some scholars. It is characterised by the omission of the lateral alveolar tap sound [ɾ] (e.g. muio for mulilo - fire); the occurrence of the labio-prepalatal fricative consonant [β̥] (e.g. [β̥aa] for halwa - beer) as has been recorded at Musanda Hamasia and also the denti-labial [ɭw] (e.g. ɭwanzhe for lwanzhe - sea, -ɭwaa for -lwala - sick, ill). Previously Ziervogel, Wentzel and Makuya (1972:01), Mathivha (1966:03) and others mention only the omission of [ɾ] in their speech, and the other features are not mentioned. The presence of the labio-prepalatal fricative consonant is evidence that they might have acquired this feature from Northern Sotho speaking people. On the other hand, the denti-labial results as a failure of the Vhamaanda to articulate the alveo-lateral [l] which is commonly used by Northern Sotho speaking people. This can be explained by the omission of the lateral alveolar tap sound, which does not occur in Northern Sotho.

Although the Vhalaudzi of Lwamondo were part of Vharonga who once spoke Tshimaanda, it is believed the Vhalaudzi of Lwamondo adopted this speech variety and Vhalaudzi's custom through marriage. According to Lestrade (1927:486), the Vhalaudzi of Lwamondo are said to be of Sotho stock although they regard themselves as pure Laudzi. With regard to this origin, Van Warmelo (1940:188) disagrees that they are of Sotho stock and regards them as part of Ndebele, the Nzunza tribe. On this he is supported by two informants, Mrs Tshisevhe Ruth Mulaudzi Nemukula

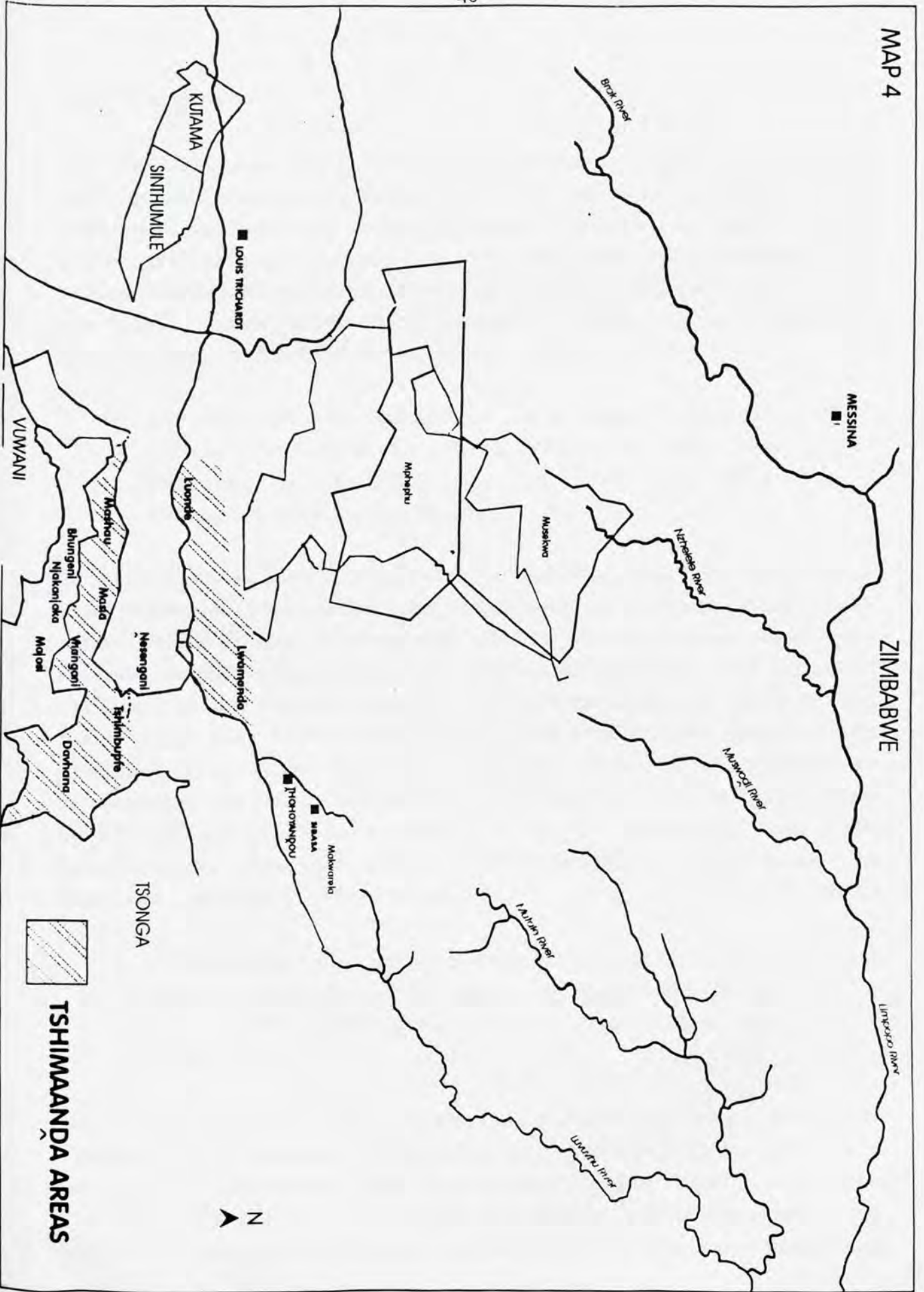
and Mr John Sigidi, who are the descendants of the Vhalaudzi of Tshivhodza.

According to Mrs TR Mulaudzi N̄emukula and Mr John Sigidi, the Vhalaudzi of Tshivhodza at Lwamondo are the breakaway group from Tshivhodza. They left Tshivhodza, the area situated approximately 20km away from Louis Trichardt, under the leadership of Muvhulawa. The grandson of Muvhulawa is today known as N̄emaṭaṭani. On their arrival at Lwamondo, they were welcomed by the Nzunza people, who allowed them to settle at Tshifhande. The Nzunza people did so because they wanted Muvhulawa and his people to protect them.

Later on, the Vhalaudzi of Tshivhodza moved to the place which is today known as Maṭaṭani and the headman of this place who is under Chief N̄elwamondo is known as N̄emaṭaṭani. The chief of the Nzunza people who was at Lwamondo married the sister of Muvhulawa. She played a big role in making the Nzunza people adopt the Vhalaudzi customs and religion. This in itself explains why the Nzunza people who are known as Balauti, changed their clan name to Vhalaudzi. This move also contributed much to the existence of Tshimaanda at that time.

In addition to what has been said by Van Warmelo, N̄emukula and Sigidi, the Vhalaudzi of Lwamondo avoid using driftwood from the river whereas other groups of Vhalaudzi avoid eating goat's tail. This point also proves that the Vhalaudzi of Lwamondo are not of the same origin as other groups. Their praise poem is known as Matshela whereas the praise poem of other Vhalaudzi is known as Tshinavhe. The Vhakwevho of Luonde, like the Vhalaudzi of Lwamondo, also adopted the Tshimaanda variety as their language. Presently, Tshimaanda is becoming extinct.

The arrival of the speakers of the Gwamba and Luleke dialects of Tsonga, who settled among the Vhalaudzi of Hamasia and Tshimbupfe, Vhafamaḍi of Hamashau, Masingo of Haḅesengani, Davhana and Tshikonelo at Vhuronga, contributed to the extinction of Tshimaanda. The presence of the speakers of the two dialects made it easier for the Vharonga to acquire new lexical items and some grammatical features as against the old lexical items of Tshimaanda. This paved the way for the Tshironga variety spoken today. This variety differs from the standard variety morphologically, syntactically and tonally.



TSHIMANDANDA AREAS

2.3.4 Vhaguvhu

The Vhaguvhu are known as the south-eastern clans of Venda and their spoken variety is Tshiguvhu. Their area is situated in the south-eastern part of Louis Trichardt as shown in map 5. These clans are mainly dominated by the Vhaluvhu of Hamashamba and Mulima. Although Vhaluvhu is one of the twenty-three clans, there are other clans which form Vhaguvhu namely: Vari, Mugwena, Masingo etc. According to Mulaudzi (1996:2),

The Vhaluvhu of Hamashamba show more traces of Lobedu influence in their language than the Vhaluvhu of Hamulima who, in turn, show more traces of Tlokwa influence.

According to Ralushai (1977:197), the Vhaluvhu are originally from Zimbabwe. They moved from Vhukalanga in Zimbabwe along with other Venda clans to Nzhelele but it is not clear when they arrived at this place. They all settled at Kokwane, the mountain situated to the side of Rabali's village in Nzhelele. This is the place where they first settled with some Venda clans south of the Limpopo. They moved to their present areas of settlement at Hamashamba, Mufeba, Mukondeni, Tshivhuyuni and Mulima after spending many years at Kokwane. It is not known why they left Kokwane where they were ruled by Thohoyandou, a Singo ruler. In addition, Mulaudzi (1996:3) says:

Thohoyandou was the paramount chief of the Venda people although he belonged to the Singo clan. All chiefs from other clans were under his leadership.

According to an informant, Mr William Sinagana Mugwena, the Nguni troubled the Vhaluvhu during the 19th century. This took place during the Anglo-Boer War. The attack by the Nguni forced the Vhaluvhu to protect their Chief Rasishasha and other members of the royal family by fleeing to Modjadji. At the same time some

of his subjects fled to Hamakhuvha. Those who remained behind did so because they wanted to fight for their land. On this issue Mulaudzi (1996:3) says:

...Mugwena differs from Ralushai who says that mountains offered the Vhaluvhu a formidable defence against the Nguni at Modjadji and Hamakhuvha whereas, according to Mugwena, the remaining subjects were left behind to fight for their present settlement. Their presence in the area in which they are found today seems to confirm Mugwena's account. While the remaining subjects of Rasishasha were still fighting on his behalf, he died in exile. His subjects returned after a long time from Bolobedu, their speech having been affected by Khelobedu. They subsequently also influenced the speech of the community to which they returned.

Although the Vhaluvhu of Hamashamba and Hamulima belong to the same clan, the Vhaluvhu of Hamulima have strong ties with the Lobedu through marriage. This used to happen during the dry seasons when the Mulima people sent girls to Chieftainess Modjadji so that she would perform rain rituals. In return, these girls, who were 'married' to Chieftainess Modjadji, bore children for her. Besides this, the Lobedu men were also permitted to marry girls from Hamulima and other parts of Venda.

The relationship between the Balobedu and the Venda people

The relationship between the Venda people and Lobedu can be traced back to the 18th century when the Balobedu crossed the Limpopo to the then Transvaal province. On their arrival in the Transvaal, they settled among the Venda people. With regard to this, Ralushai (1977:153-155) says that the Balobedu once stayed at Tshavhalovhedzi, the mountain which is situated on the eastern side of chief Mphephu's kraal. When the Balobedu left

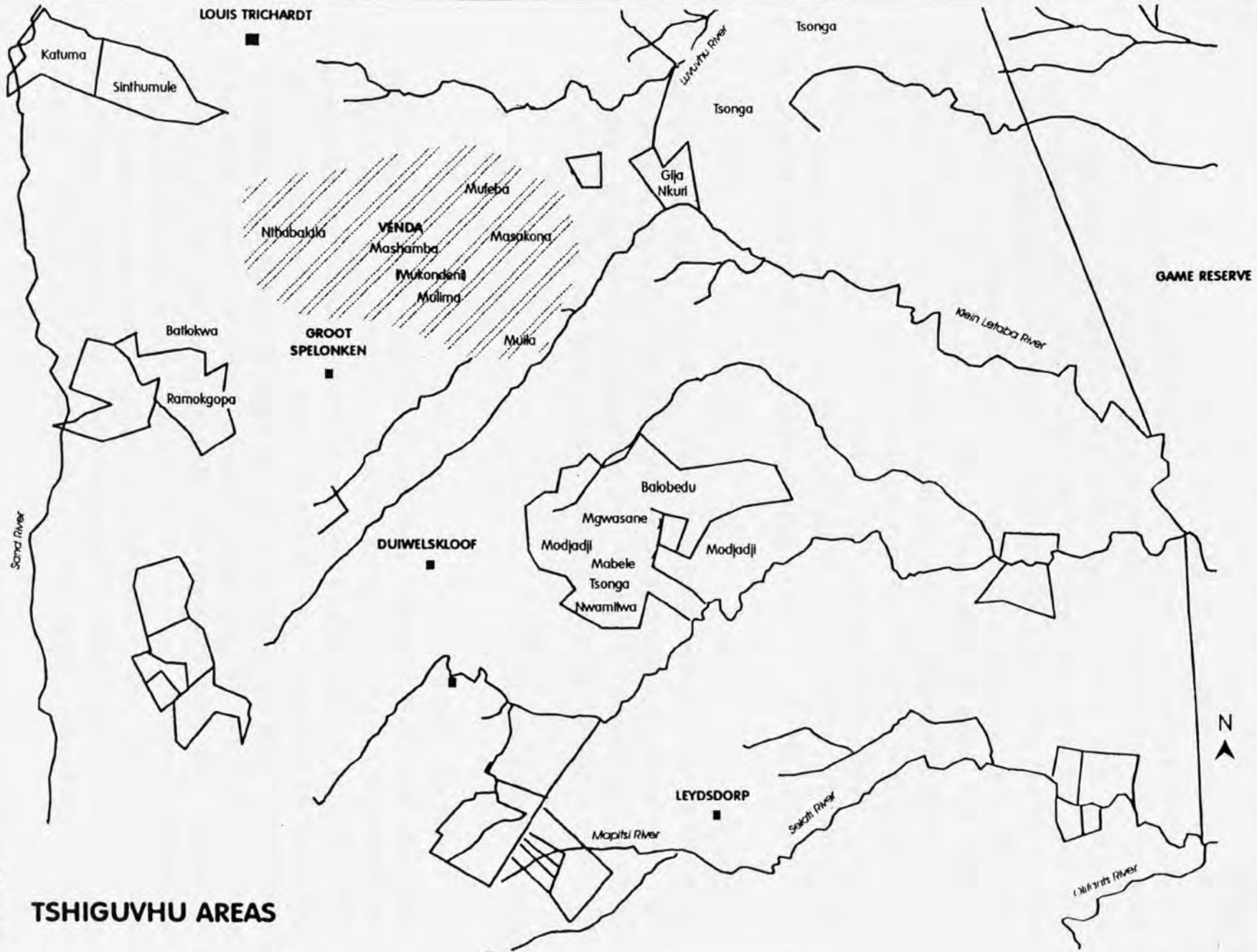
Tshavhalovhedzi, they headed south where they finally settled at the place known as Bolobedu today.

Although the Balobedu moved from Tshavhalovhedzi to Bolobedu, their relationship with the Venda people remained strong. For example, in 1730 some Venda clans namely, the Vhakwevho and Muila fell under Modjadji; in 1780 chief Mashau, a Venda chief assisted Queen Modjadji to crush the rebellion in Bolobedu and in 1898 the Vhaluvhu of Hamashamba when they were attacked by Nguni warriors, fled to Bolobedu with their chief for protection. Culturally the Balobedu have much in common with Venda people, for example Queen Modjadji marries her wives from the Venda clans such as the Vhaluvhu of Hamashamba and Mulima. Besides this, the Lobedu men were also permitted to marry girls from Hamulima and other parts of Venda.

Political and cultural factors have had impact on some Venda dialects and Lobedu. The evidence of this can be seen in linguistic features which are shared by Standard Venda, some Venda dialects and Lobedu. With regard to this, Van Warmelo (1935:114) says:

The Balobedu, or Vhalovhedzi as they are called by the Venda, are a much Sotho-ised people which in origin probably had more in common with the Venda.

MAP 5



44



TSHIGUVHU AREAS

2.3.5 VHAŃIA AS A BLANKET TERM

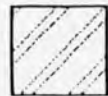
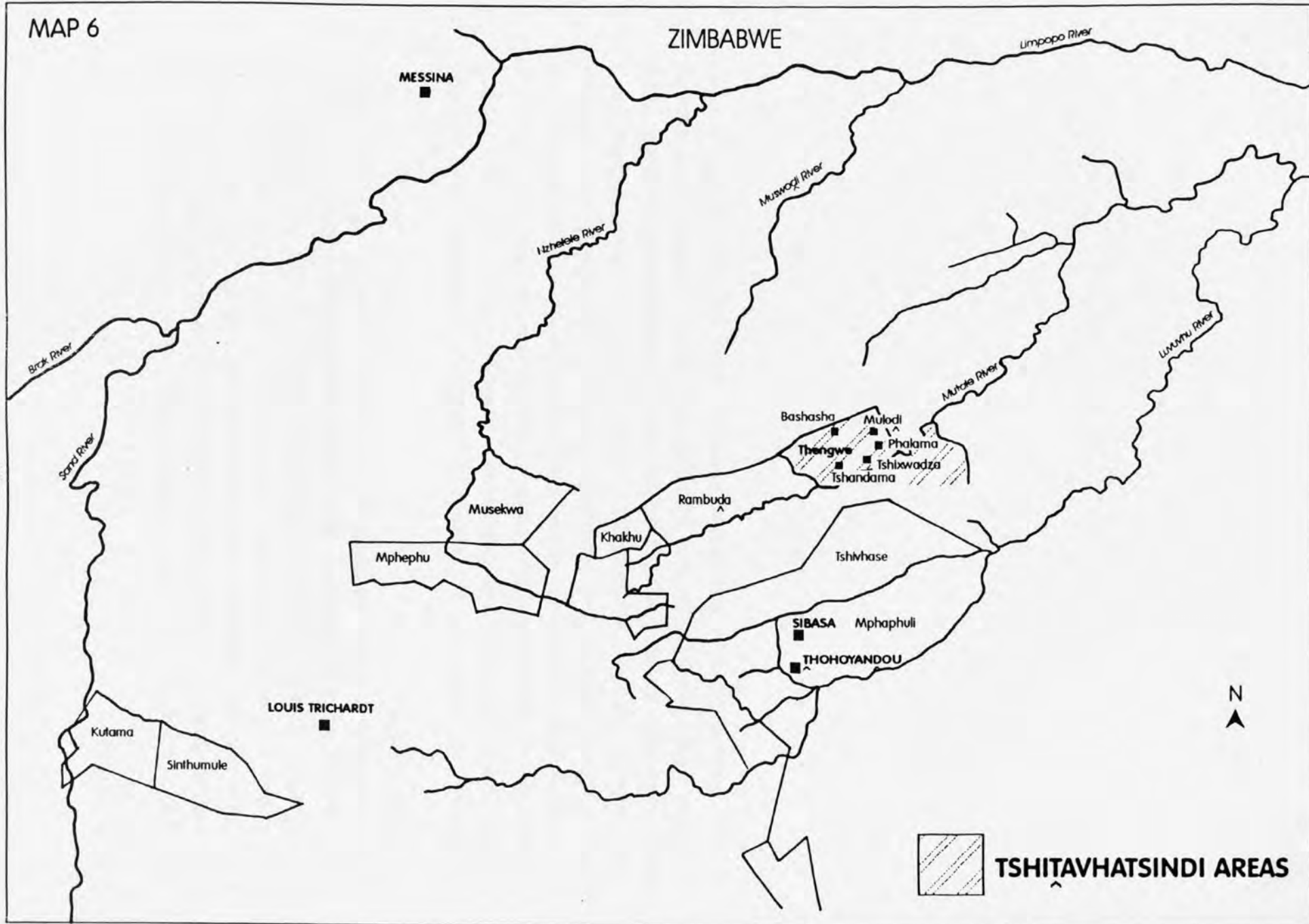
VhaŃia is a blanket term used to refer to various groups, namely the Vhaṭavhatsindi, VhaŃia, Vhambedzi and Vhalembethu, commonly characterised by tone idiosyncrasies which distinguish them from Tshiphani speakers. Sometimes a speaker using Tshiṭavhatsindi, Tshimbedzi and Tshilembethu may be said to be using TshiŃia. An interesting point is that those Lembethu lexical items commonly used at Hamutele, overlap with those used at HamaŃenzhe, Hamakuya and other places while the Mbedzi lexical items also overlap with those used at Thengwe and other neighbouring areas. The speakers of these four varieties have regular contact with the people north of the Limpopo, among them the Lembethu, Kalanga and other Shona dialect speakers.

2.3.5.1 Vhaṭavhatsindi

The people known as the Vhaṭavhatsindi are the Nḁou (clan) of Thengwe, Halambani, Tshiavha and HamaŃenzhe as shown in map 6. The Vhakwevho of Tshiendeulu and Luonde also form part of Vhaṭavhatsindi. People from the Singo clan are also part of the Vhaṭavhatsindi group.

The people known as the Vhaṭavhatsindi are named after a Muṭavhatsindi tree, which is found around the place where these people live. According to Stayt (1931:10), the term 'Muṭavhatsindi' is a compound from the noun muṭa, meaning the small yard surrounding the women's huts, and the noun tsinde, meaning the stem or trunk of a tree. It is not clear why Stayt ignores the prefix mu- of class 1 in muṭavhatsindi. It would be proper to say that this compound is formed by a deverbative noun muṭavhi, meaning the sower, and a primitive noun stem tsindi, meaning a loin dress of men and boys. Anyway the muṭavhatsindi tree is commonly used by Vhaṭavhatsindi medicine men. According to Ralushai (1977:53), only a "few highly qualified medicine men were able to locate this tree".

The variety used by Vhaṭavhatsindi is known as Tshiṭavhatsindi and it is characterised by the extensive use of the absolute pronoun ene (you) for both the second and the third personal pronouns singular. The Vhaṭavhatsindi are also extensively influenced by Tshilembethu, Tshimbedzi and Tshiṅia. In the present time it is extremely difficult to single out the Vhaṭavhatsindi from the Vhalembethu, Vhambedzi and Vhaṅia groups because of interborrowing of lexical items and grammatical features.

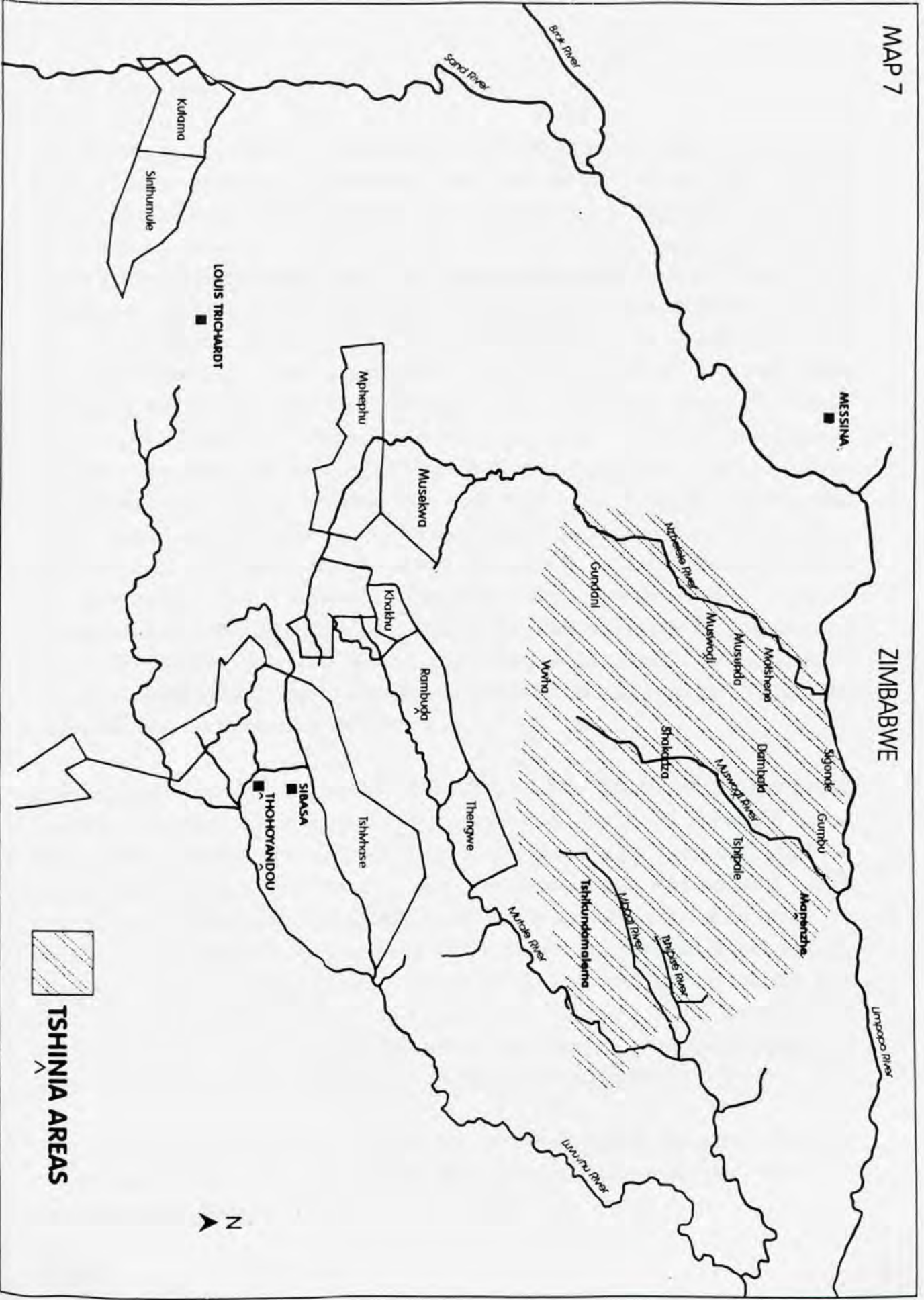


TSHIVHATSINDI AREAS

2.3.5.2 Vhaṅia

The people known as the Vhaṅia are the Vhaṭavhatsindi of Hamapenzhe and Tshiavha; the Vhandalamo of Hatshikundamalema and the Vhanyai of Hagumbu and Hamutele as shown in map 7. The Vhanzhelele and Vhalembethu of Hamutele are also included in this group. Other clans also found at Shakadza and Folovhoḵwe are also known as the Vhaṅia. The clans mentioned above are named after the Miṅii trees because of the large numbers of these trees in these areas.

Their spoken variety is known as Tshiṅia although one cannot distinguish it from Tshilembethu. Tshiṅia uses lexical items, phonological features and grammatical features which also occur in Tshilembethu although a few lexical items from Tshimbedzi are used, such as *mudani* for *muthatha* (basket) and *nimvi* for *murudi* (the herb *Cleome gynandra*). The Vhaṅia, Vhalembethu and Vhaṭavhatsindi share tonal quality which differentiates them from Vhaphani. But the Vhaṅia are exclusively known for the shortening of the second person absolute pronoun *inwi* to *ini* (you).



TSHINIA AREAS



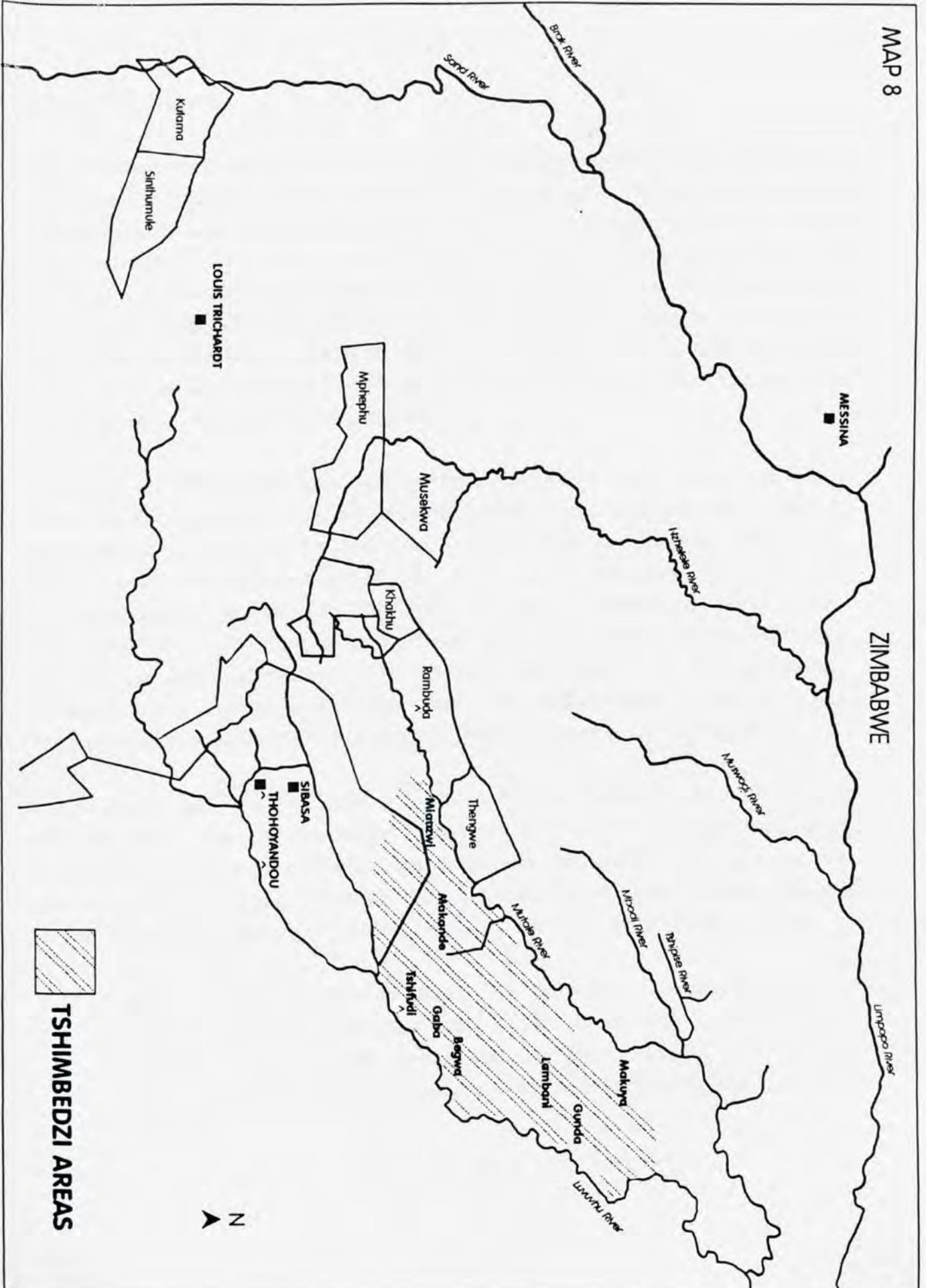
2.3.5.3 Vhambedzi

According to Ralushai (1977:104), the Vhambedzi were originally from Malungudzi in Zimbabwe. On the other hand, Von Sicard (1951:19) referred to Thengwe in the south as the original home of Mbedzi. However, even if this is the case, many informants interviewed claim that they are from Malungudzi in Zimbabwe. They (together with the Vhalembethu, Vhatwanamba and Vhangona) were the first to cross the Limpopo River before the Vhasenzi. Like the Vhalembethu, the Vhambedzi were also found in the then Northern Transvaal by the Vhasenzi, who conquered and suppressed them. The Vhambedzi were made to cast off their language and culture for the preference of the Tshiphani variety and customs. Unfortunately, their conquerers succeeded in putting Tshimbedzi into complete disuse but the Mbedzi culture and religion, particularly at Mianzwi as shown in map 8, were retained. This is because the women survived the enforcement. Their Chieftainess, Vho-Phophi Tshisinavhute, the only remaining Mbedzi chief in South Africa, still pays her political allegiances to Chief Mphaphuli, by going to Malungudzi on a yearly basis to perform some religious rites.

Another section of the Mbedzi people is also found at Haluvhimbi. Unlike the Mbedzi people of Mianzwi, the Luvhimbi dynasty came to an end when their Chief, Itani Luvhimbi was assassinated by Chief Tshivhase. The Mbedzi men and women at Haluvhimbi were forced to attend the circumcision schools and this has made it possible for them to break ties with their customs and religion. This is because the circumcised Mbedzi men and women could not perform religious rites nor attend. Today, the Mbedzi of Haluvhimbi are under Chief Ndaedzo Masikhwa, a Singo chief who pays his political allegiance to Chief Tshivhase.

The traces of Tshimbedzi can still be identified in some lexical items and syntax but they share the same tonal features with the Vhalembethu, Vhaṭavhatsindi and Vhaṅia.

ZIMBABWE



TSHIMBEDZI AREAS



2.3.5.4 Vhalembethu

The Vhalembethu were originally from Southern Rhodesia, presently known as Zimbabwe. They left their place of origin for unknown reasons and went to Nzhelele south of the Limpopo. While they were there, they were also known as the Vhanzhelele but the arrival of the Masingo prompted them to leave and they moved to Hamutele, Hagumbu and other areas as shown in map 9. According to Chief D. Mutele, the Vhalembethu left Nzhelele because they were scared of being killed by the Vhasenzi and the Vhasenzi's holy drum known as Ngomalungundu.

Although the Vhalembethu did attempt to move away from Masingo, they were conquered and suppressed. Those who attempted to speak Tshilembethu were ridiculed and looked down on by the Vhasenzi. This also contributed much to the complete disuse of Tshilembethu, which is referred to as a Shona dialect. The introduction of local government by the then South African government also played a role in the extinction of Tshilembethu because it encouraged the use of Tshiphani rather than Tshilembethu. However, traces of Tshilembethu still remain.

Indicating the relationship between the Vhalembethu in South Africa and those of Zimbabwe, Wentzel (1983:40) points out that the speakers of Tshilembethu in Zimbabwe and South Africa, in the north-east of Venda, belong to one of the oldest Shona groups which arrived south of the Zambezi. He (ibid) further says:

They are part of the Goba (Govha/Gova) cluster which entered Zimbabwe not later than the 13th century, but at any event before the arrival of the founders of the Pre-Mwene-mutapa Butwa-Torwa kingdom.

Today, the speakers of Tshilembethu are found on both sides of the Limpopo River. In South Africa, Lembethu speakers are found in the Hamutele, Hagumbu, Matshakaṭini, Mwarimuhulu and Khononga areas whereas in Zimbabwe they are found in the Chiturupasi and Chikwarakwara areas.

MESSINA



Limpopo River

Madavhika

Gumbu

Masisi

Malshakarini

Duluthulu

Bulepi

Lukou

Mufele

Malatane

Bdribe River

Muxi River

Tshikundamalema

Mutale River

Lurumu River

Muswazi River

Izhelele River

Brook River

Sand River

Thengwe

Musekwa

Rambuda

Khakhu

Tshihase

Mphephu

SIBASA

Mphaphuli

THOHAYANDOU

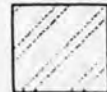
LOUIS TRICHARDT



Kutama

Sinthumule

N



TSHILEMBETHU AREAS

2.4 THE EXISTENCE OF VARIOUS SOCIAL ACTIVITIES AMONG THE VENDA PEOPLE

Several social activities are found among the Venda people. Each social variety binds people according to its needs, belief and norms. These varieties know no regional or geographical boundaries and occur in both rural and urban areas. The following are institutions or social groupings which manifest linguistic varieties. Members of each institution or social grouping are required to use certain lexical items, styles or registers to be socially accommodated in each institution or grouping.

2.4.1 Murundu

Murundu is a circumcision school for males and has recently been adopted from the Northern Sotho people. Although **murundu** is practised among the Vatsonga, the Northern Sotho influence on the Venda people, especially the Vhailafuri is quite evident in this circumcision school. This school is attended by boys ranging from 6 to 12 years old. Older men may attend for various reasons.

Previously it was held at intervals of about five years but these days it is a yearly ordeal. When **murundu** is to be held, the headmen and councillors ensure that there is enough food to eat. In the past this school only lasted three months although nowadays it is staged for one month during the winter holidays. The songs which are sung refer to private parts and some actions during sexual intercourse.

2.4.2 Musevhetho

This institution is also known as **Sungwi** or **Tshikumbana**. The preference for each name differs from area to area. It is held in a small hut outside the village. **Musevhetho**, like **murundu**, is a circumcision school for females which has been adopted from the

2.4 THE EXISTENCE OF VARIOUS SOCIAL ACTIVITIES AMONG THE VENDA PEOPLE

Several social activities are found among the Venda people. Each social variety binds people according to its needs, belief and norms. These varieties know no regional or geographical boundaries and occur in both rural and urban areas. The following are institutions or social groupings which manifest linguistic varieties. Members of each institution or social grouping are required to use certain lexical items, styles or registers to be socially accommodated in each institution or grouping.

2.4.1 Murundu

Murundu is a circumcision school for males and has recently been adopted from the Northern Sotho people. Although **murundu** is practised among the **Vatsonga**, the Northern Sotho influence on the Venda people, especially the **Vhailafuri** is quite evident in this circumcision school. This school is attended by boys ranging from 6 to 12 years old. Older men may attend for various reasons.

Previously it was held at intervals of about five years but these days it is a yearly ordeal. When **murundu** is to be held, the headmen and councillors ensure that there is enough food to eat. In the past this school only lasted three months although nowadays it is staged for one month during the winter holidays. The songs which are sung refer to private parts and some actions during sexual intercourse.

2.4.2 Musevhetho

This institution is also known as **Sungwi** or **Tshikumbana**. The preference for each name differs from area to area. It is held in a small hut outside the village. **Musevhetho**, like **murundu**, is a circumcision school for females which has been adopted from the

Northern Sotho people. The influence of Northern Sotho can be traced in the songs they sing and the language variety used during *musevhetho*. The main aim of this institution is to bring the women on a par with their circumcised men and to instil discipline.

2.4.3 Vhusha

This is one of the puberty institutions. *Vhusha* is held at the village which is under a headman or petty chief. It is normally held when there are three or more girls who can attend. It is attended by girls known as *khomba* who have just experienced their first menstruation. Besides respect, they are taught about sexual relations between men and women.

2.4.4 Vhutuka

According to Stayt (1931:105), this institution is attended by boys who have just experienced their first nocturnal emission. It takes place at the *thondo* in the chief's kraal. The boys are given lessons on sexual intercourse, tribal rules and way of life.

2.4.5 Thondo

According to Van Warmelo (1932:109), *thondo* is the Venda indigenous initiation school. It takes place in an enclosed space in the chief's kraal with a hut in the middle. Outsiders are refused permission to attend the initiation school. The main aim of this institution is to provide a meeting place for the warriors and to instil discipline to young men and women. The children of the chief's clan are given special education. They learn many things which common people never get to know. *Thondo* can be divided into various sections: *thondo* for *vhakololo* (princes); *vhasiwana* (commoners); *ya tshiala* (for the wives of headmen) and *vhadinda* (young men who are ready to be taught to

use arms). There is a special variety which is suitable for this institution. Anything that happens in the thondo is kept secret from strangers.

2.4.6 Domba

This is the last traditional Venda institution before marriage. According to Mrs Nyamaḁala Sannie Mashau, the males and females in this institution are brought together and initiated into mysteries of sex and child-birth. In addition to this, they are warned about the pitfalls of life. After graduating from this institution, they are ready for marriage. Everything in domba is conducted through a language variety which occurs only in this institution. This makes it almost impossible for uncircumcised people, known as mashuvhuru, to know about the happenings.

2.4.7 Musanda

Musanda can be defined as the chief's place. It is an institution for politics and administration. According to Khuba (1993:4), it also serves as the royal residence and the political centre of the community. There are buildings such as pfamo (palace); tshamudane (kitchen) where the chief's food is prepared and the storehouse known as muḁaladzhadzhi. On the lower level, there are houses of the chief's wives with their respective kitchens facing them and there is also the meeting place which is the two-doored council chamber. In this institution, a variety known as the Musanda language is used. Everybody in this institution uses this variety to communicate with.

The musanda language is a Venda social variety used by the Venda royalty in and around musanda (the chief's palace). With regard to this, Khuba (1986:3) says:

It is used as a sign of respect and to show sacredness of all that belongs and is intimate to the chief as ruler. The use of a commoner's

language in and around the chief's kraal would belittle his dignity and show no respect from his subordinates.

2.4.8 Mawa a ʔhangu

This phrase refers to the position of the divining dice. When this takes place, the diviners ascertain the nature of disease, as well as the problems and causes of problems confronting their clients. Through **Mawa a ʔhangu** the diviners determine the remedy for the disease as well as the solution to the problems. Diviners can do these when they are approached by any person or community. During divination the language variety known as **Mawa a ʔhangu** is used. This variety is used in both rural and urban areas.

2.4.9 Malombo

When a person is possessed by the spirit of a departed ancestor, it is said to be **lilombo**. According to Stayt (1931:302), **malombo** is a possession cult which the Venda people adopted from Kalanga. When a person is possessed by **malombo**, he or she speaks in Kalanga. This is evidence of the adoption of **malombo** from the Kalanga people. This theory is contradicted by Mrs Masiavhula, who indicates that some people possessed by **malombo** also speak in one of the Venda varieties. Besides these contradictory versions of **malombo** cult, the spirits of some offended ancestors usually enter into the living body as a victim. The spirit should be pacified in order to have peace in the family. When **malombo** takes place, a variety suitable to the occasion is used. **Malombo** can take place in both rural and urban areas.

2.4.10 The tsotsis

According to Coplan (1985:162),

Tsotsis were originally young, city-bred "confidence men," able to speak some English and

Afrikaans to manipulate the White system. Aided by female counterparts called 'noasisas' (watchers), the tsotsis initially relied more upon their wits than violence. The term tsotsi itself was an urban African pronunciation of "zoot suit", a symbol of urban sophistication drawn from American popular culture, with its ready money and flashy clothes.

In addition to this, Msimang (1987:82) says that the term 'tsotsi' came into being during the Second World War. The birthplace of this term is in the black urban areas of the Witwatersrand. Tsotsis were part of the ethnically mixed society of the traditionally called 'locations', who among themselves spoke the Afrikaans dialect (Vleitaal). In the 1940's this hybrid Afrikaans had become known more widely as tsotsitaal.

Today, the tsotsitaal which used to be spoken in the Witwatersrand is part of the Venda variety because it is also spoken in the rural areas.

2.4.11 The churches

The existence of various Christian religious denominations, such as the Z.C.C., Apostolic, I.C.C.P, Dutch Reformed, Lutheran, Anglican, Roman Catholic and others resulted in many religious groupings. Each group is bound by its belief, activities and affiliation to a particular church. This actually paved the way for the existence of the varieties suitable to each church. These varieties are also part of the Venda language.

2.4.12 SITUATIONAL GROUPING OF PEOPLE

In certain instances people tend to be grouped together because of their occupations, such as surgeons, airline pilots, bank managers, sales clerks, politicians and others. Some people may be grouped together because of common interests (e.g. jazz,

soccer etc), common rank (e.g. high and low classes etc) or gender. The grouping of the people in this manner necessitates their using the varieties which suit each group in its situation. These varieties are known as **situational varieties or registers**.

2.5 RECAPITULATION

This chapter attempted to map out the history of the Venda people. It was pointed out that they migrated from the north, southwards. On their arrival south of the Limpopo, the Venda people conquered the Twanamba, Lembethu, Mbedzi or Pfumbi, Ngona, Tlokwa and Hananwa. This made it possible for the Venda people to be divided into various groups according to the influences they acquired from the tribes they conquered or lived with. The result of this was the manifestation of various regional varieties which are spoken today. The Venda people also practise various social activities which have also resulted in numerous linguistic varieties. The characteristics of these varieties are discussed in detail in chapter 3 and 4.

CHAPTER 3

REGIONAL VARIETIES

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with the regional varieties of Venda. The varieties are identified and described from a synchronic point of view. The focus is on phonological features, as well as grammatical features and lexical items.

3.2 DEFINITION OF REGIONAL VARIETY

The term 'regional variety' refers to the language variety spoken in particular regions of a country. Traditionally, dialectologists viewed a dialect as the variety spoken by a group of people located in the same geographical area and this was a criterion to determine whether a spoken language is a dialect or not.

In support of this view, Bloomfield (1970:321) defines dialect as "...the study of local differentiation in a speech area". In addition, Petyt (1980:27) indicates that the term 'dialect' was used mainly to refer to regional differences within a language. Doke (1954:154), Mathivha (1966:09), Ralushai (1977:46), Van Warmelo (1989:6-7) and others also applied this criterion with reference to Venda. Although they used this criterion to determine whether a spoken language is a variety or not, they did overlook other criteria, such as mutual intelligibility and non-linguistic issues such as cultural, political and social factors.

3.3 REGIONAL VARIETIES

The discussion of regional varieties in this chapter is based on the approach of traditional dialectologists, who examined language varieties of members of communities located within particular geographical areas. The phonological and grammatical features and lexical items of the following regional varieties of Venda are discussed, namely: Tshiilafuri, Tshironga, Tshiguvhu, Tshimbedzi, Tshilembethu, Tshiṭavhatsindi, Tshiṅia and Tshimaanda.

3.3.1 Tshiilafuri

As indicated in chapter 2, Tshiilafuri is mainly spoken in the western, north-eastern and northern areas of Louis Trichardt. This variety is characterised by phonological as well as grammatical features and lexical items from the Tlokwa and Hananwa dialects of Northern Sotho. There is evidence that the speakers of this variety are greatly influenced by the speakers of Tlokwa and Hananwa. This influence is not only limited to linguistic aspects but also extended to social activities, such as traditional dances like the *givha* and *tshikhaba* (*kiba* and *sekgapa*). Another social activity which the Vhailafuri have adopted from the Bahananwa and Batlokwa is known as *murundu*. *Murundu* is a circumcision school for males. The Vhailafuri have adopted various linguistic features from the Bahananwa and Batlokwa:

3.3.1.1 Speech sounds

(a) *Vowels*

The vowel system of Tshiilafuri is exactly the same as that of Tshiphani, which is the Standard variety. Here, too, we find five primary vowels as postulated by Meinhof: [a]; [ɛ]; [i]; [ɔ] and [u]. There are also two raised variants, for example [e] and [o].

The following are examples of these vowels in Tshiilafuri lexical items:

Tshiilafuri	Standard variety
[a] as in [ndaβa] (news) ndavha	mafhungo
[ɛ] as in [-ɛba] (dig) -eba	-bwa
[i] as in [-phagisa] (hurry up) -phagisa	-ṭavhanya
[ɔ] as in [nthɔ] (wound) ntho	tshilonda
[u] as in [nthu] (a thing) nthu	tshithu
[o] as in [hɔgoni] (at the circumcision school) hogoni	murunduni
[e] as in [Murafeni] (a name of a place) Muraleni	Muraleni

(b) *Consonants*

Only two consonants have been adopted from the Batlokwa and Bahananwa:

Tshiilafuri	Standard variety
[βj] as in [k'uguβjana] (small blanket) kuguvhyana*	kuguvho
[k'uŋvuβjana] (small hippopotamus) kumvuvhyana*	kubvuvhu
[-rɔβja] (be broken) -rovhya*	-rohwa
[ϕj] as in [-ϕjɛa] (cowardice or cowardliness) -fhyea*	-ofha
[-riϕja] (be paid)	

-lifhya*

-lixwa

*This is how these forms: [βj] and [ϕj] would probably be represented in the orthography.

Furthermore, the labio-velar [bg] is replaced by labiopalatal [bj] as in -bwa (to dig). The synonym of -bwa in Tshiilafuri is -eba.

The system of other Tshiilafuri consonants is the same as those of Tshiphani, which is the standard variety.

3.3.1.2 Sound changes

The sound change which does not occur in Tshiilafuri but in the Standard variety is velarisation. The following sound changes occur in the Standard variety: hw [ɣw]; xw [xw]; ŋw [ŋw]; bw [bg]; phw [pkh] and pw [pk']. These have been caused by the passive extension -iw- and do not occur in Tshiilafuri. The passive extension -iw- in Tshiilafuri does not cause any sound change. This can be illustrated by the following examples:

Tshiilafuri

-rah- + -iw- + -a > -rahiwa (be kicked)
 -lifh- + -iw- + -a > -lifhiwa (be paid)
 -lum- + -iw- + -a > -lumiwa (be bitten)
 -eb- + -iw- + -a > -ebiwa (be dug)
 -khoph- + -iw- + -a > -khophiwa (be broken)

However, it should be noted that these examples also occur in the Standard variety although most of the Standard variety speakers prefer to use velarised sounds in these cases. Compare the following examples:

Standard variety

- rah- + -iw- + -a > -rahwa (be kicked)
- lifh- + -iw- + -a > -lixwa (be paid)
- lum- + -iw- + -a > -luṅwa (be bitten)
- dob- + -iw- + -a > -dogwa (be picked)
- khoph- + -iw- + -a > -khophwa (be broken)

The sounds r, k and h, which undergo change in the Standard variety, do not change in Tshiilafuri. These sounds are always preceded by the prefix li- of class 5. This can be illustrated by the following examples:

Tshiilafuri

- li- + r > lirambo (bone)
- li- + k > likole (cloud)
- li- + h > lihuyu (wild fig)

These sounds r, k and h change in the Standard variety under the influence of the variant prefix I- of class 5. (Poulos, 1990:25ff, has discussed this variant prefix at length). This can be illustrated by the following examples:

Standard variety

- I + r > sh shambo (bone)
- I + k > g gole (cloud)
- I + h > f fuyu (wild fig)

Under the influence of the homorganic variant N- of classes 9/10, nouns derived from verb roots undergo a phonological change. In the Standard variety the homorganic nasal N- changes to [ŋ] and [ŋg] while in Tshiilafuri it only changes to [ŋg], for example:

Tshiilafuri

ngambo (talk/talks)

ngimbo (songs)

Compare the above with the Standard forms:

nyambo or ngambo (talks)

nyimbo or ngimbo (songs)

In Tshiilafuri *ngosha* is used instead of *ngimbo*.

Ngosha is only used in Tshiilafuri and Tshiguvhu because the speakers of these varieties appear to have borrowed this noun from the noun *koša*, which is commonly used by Northern Sotho speakers.

The use of the allomorph [ŋg] in the Tshiilafuri examples cited in the previous paragraphs is a result of the influence from Hananwa and Tlokwa:

kapo (talk) in Hananwa and Tlokwa

koša (song) in Hananwa and Tlokwa

3.3.1.3 Grammatical features

There are few grammatical features which distinguish Tshiilafuri from other varieties. They are as follows:

(a) Quantitative

Tshiilafuri does not use the quantitative stem *-t_xhe* (alone) for the first person singular. Instead of *-t_xhe*, *nthihi* is used, for example:

Ndo *t_xuwa* ndi *nthihi* (I went alone)

But the stem *-ṭhe/-ọṭhe* is used in all other personal classes, as is the case in the Standard variety.

(b) *Relative*

Tshiilafuri uses two forms of the verbal relative instead of three. These forms are:

- (i) The verbal relative which is formed by relative concord, verb stem and the suffix *-ho*, for example:

Tshiilafuri

Musimana a tshimbilaho.	(The boy who walks)
Habu ɿi vhibvaho.	(The watermelon which ripens)
Malidzwana u shavhisaho.	(The lizard which frightens)

Although Tshiilafuri uses different lexical items from the Standard variety in the given examples, the structure of the relative verb in Tshiilafuri and the Standard variety remains the same. This can be illustrated by the following examples in the Standard variety:

Mutukana a tshimbilaho.	(The boy who walks)
Bvani ɿi vhibvaho.	(The watermelon which ripens)
Tswina u shavhisaho.	(The lizard which frightens)

- (ii) The verbal relative which is formed by relative concord, formative *khou*, verb stem and a suffix *-ho*, for example:

Nwana a khou lilaho.	(The child who is crying)
Nwedzhi i khou limaho.	(The bride who is ploughing)

The second form of verbal relative in Tshiilafuri resembles that of the Hananwa and Tlokwa varieties of Northern Sotho, which is formed by a relativiser, relative concord, verb stem and relative suffix *-go/-ho*:

Hananwa: Ngwana yo a llogo. (The child who is crying)

Tlokwa: Ngwetši ye e lemaho. (The bride who is ploughing)

(c) *Imperative*

Tshiilafuri like the Standard variety also uses the imperative to express politeness. When this occurs, the prefix *ha-* is used in place of *kha-* in a positive command, for example:

Tshiilafuri

Ha vha ɖe ngeno. (Please come here)

Ha vha dzule fhasi. (Please sit down)

Standard variety

Kha vha ɖe ngeno. (Please come here)

Kha vha dzule fhasi. (Please sit down)

(d) *Auxiliary verb vha*

When this auxiliary verb is followed by the participial in Tshiilafuri in order to express the past action, it is used with the normal subject concord only:

Ndi vha ndi tshi bika vhuswa. (I used to cook porridge)

U vha a tshi lisa mbudzi. (He used to look after the goats)

Tshibudzana tshi vha tshi tshi fula hatsi.

(The young goat used to graze grass)

In the Standard variety the subject is used together with the perfect tense prefix:

Ndo vha ndi tshi bika vhuswa. (I used to cook porridge)

O vha a tshi lisa mbudzi. (He used to look after the goats)

Tshibudzana tsho vha tshi tshi fula hatsi.

(The young goat used to graze grass)

The examples in Tshiilafuri depict the influence from Tlokwa and Hananwa, for example:

Ke be/bo ke e apea booswa. (I used to cook porridge)

O be/bo a e disa dipudi. (He used to look after the goats)

(e) *The conjunctions*

Tshiilafuri shares most conjunctions with the Standard variety and other Venda varieties. However, some conjunctions differ, for example:

Tshiilafuri		Standard variety
harali	(if)	arali
ngauvha	(because of)	ngaurali
ivhile	(and moreover)	nahone

3.3.1.4 Lexical items

The following are some of the lexical items which distinguish Tshiilafuri from other varieties. Most of these examples differ mostly in form, but sometimes in form and meaning from their counterparts in the Standard form:

(a) *Verb stems*

Tshiilafuri	Standard Variety
-thunya (delete, demolish)	-thutha
-dia (beat)	-rwa
-fogola (be sick)	-lwala
-nyaga (want)	-ṭoda
-phila (live)	-tshila
-ntsha (subtract)	-ṭusa

-tswenya (trouble)	-dina
-hofha (be afraid)	-ofha
-fhyea [-ɸjɛa] (to be afraid)	-ofha
-eba (dig)	-bwa
-swavha (shame)	-shona
-tshusa (to be frightened)	-shusha
-kwaṭa (angry)	-sinyuwa
-phalisana (compete)	-ṭaṭisana
-khudisa (hide)	-dzumba
-phagisa (to hasten)	-ṭavhanya
-thia (to trap)	-rea
-ṭhoga (lack)	-shaya
-ṭhaga (suffer)	-tambula
-khala (warn)	-kaidza
-fhenya (defeat)	-kunda

Some verb stems like -hofha and -fhyea, -khala and -kaidza are used as synonyms. However, on the other hand -dia means to beat in Tshiilafuri, while in the Standard form -dia means to copulate-unite in sexual intercourse by animals. In some instances -dia and -rwa can be used as synonyms for the meaning beat depending on the context.

These verb stems are probably adopted from Tlokwa and Hananwa because most of them are similar in form and meaning to those of Tshiilafuri. This can be illustrated by examples from Hananwa and Tlokwa.

Tlokwa/Hananwa

Tshiilafuri

-thunya (delete, demolish)	-thunya
-tia (beat)	-dia
-fokola (to be sick)	-fogola
-nyaka (want)	-nyaga
-ntsha (subtract)	-ntsha
-tswenya (trouble)	-tswenya
-ṭhaka (suffer)	-ṭhaga

-fenya (defeat)	-fhenya
-ṭhokomela (take care)	-ṭhogomela

(b) Nouns

Tshiilafuri has adopted some nouns from Tlokwa and Hananwa. Some of these nouns have shifted to other noun classes while some have remained in the same classes.

There are nouns which have been adopted from Northern Sotho dialects with the same form but have retained the original noun classes. This can be illustrated by the following examples:

NOUN CLASS	TSHILAFURI	TLOKWA/ HANANWA	STANDARD VARIETY
(1)	muhalivho (sister in law)	mogadibo	muvhuye
(1)	musimana (boy)	mosemane	mutukana
(3)	mugidi (feast/party)	mokete	munyanya
(3)	mmudele (manure)	mmutele	mupfudze
(5)	habu (watermelon)	legapu	bvani
	likhulu (hundred)	lekholo	ḡana
(7)	tshiema (poem)	siema	tshirendo
	tshithunya (gun)	sethunya	tshigidi
	tshiseseli (cyclone)	sesesedi	tshiḍumbumukwe
	tshiphinya (fart)	sephinya	tshisudzi
	tshiphiri (secret)	sephiri	tshidzumbe
(9)	dziedzi (trouble)	tsietsi	khombo
(11)	luhovhu (chameleon)	legobu	luaviavi
(14)	vhulalu (pus)	boladu	vhulwa
	vhoya (furs)	boya	vhukuse

However, on the other hand, some nouns which have been adopted from Tlokwa and Hananwa differ in noun classes from the Standard form.

NOUN CLASS	TSHILAFURI	STANDARD VARIETY
(1)	mukhodzhi (friend)	khonani (9)
(3)	malidzwana (lizard)	tswina (9)
(5)	livhaka (space)	tshikhala (7)
(5)	lihalima (lightning)	lupenyo (11)
(5)	livhone) (lamp)	luvhone (11)
(6)	matshilo (lives)	vhutshilo (14)
(6)	maphilo (lives)	vhutshilo (14)
(7)	tshithitho (sweat)	biko (5)
(9)	khulu (tortoise)	tshibode (7)
(9)	nwedzhi (bride)	muselwa (1)
(14)	vhurogu/(resin exuded by trees)	
	vhurokhu	nonzhe (9)
(14)	vhurwa (south)	tshipembe (7)

Some nouns, such as *matshilo* and *maphilo*, are used as synonyms in Tshiilafuri.

3.3.2 TSHIRONGA

Tshironga, like Tshiilafuri is mainly spoken in the south-western area of Thohoyandou and south-east of Louis Trichardt. This variety is characterised by few phonological features which are influences from the Luleke and Gwamba dialects of Tsonga. These influences are not only limited to linguistic aspects but are also extended to social activities, such as *murundu*, a circumcision school for males, and *vhusha*, an initiation school for females.

3.3.2.1 Speech sounds

(a) Vowels

Like Tshiilafuri, the vowel system of Tshironga is exactly the same as that of Tshiphani, which is the Standard variety. Here too we find the five primary vowels: [a]; [ɛ]; [i]; [ɔ] and [u].

There are also two raised variants, for example [e] and [o]. The following are examples of these vowels in Tshironga lexical items:

Tshironga				Standard variety
[a] as in [-k'a]	-ka	(pluck)		-fula
[ɛ] as in [-k'ɛrɛra]	-kelela	(draw water)		-ka
[i] as in [-jimɛra]	-yimela	(wait for)		-imela
[ɔ] as in [-romba]	-lomba	(borrow)		-hadzima
[u] as in [madzuru]	madzhulu	(termites)		magege
[e] as in [nɔ̣ɛβeni]	nɔ̣evheni	(on the ear)		nɔ̣evheni
[o] as in [muramboni]		(at the river)		mulamboni
	mulamboni			

(b) *Consonants*

Tshironga shares all consonants with the Standard variety but there is a tendency among the Vharonga speakers to use the ejected voiceless prepalatal [tʃ̣'] instead of the aspirated form. For example:

Tshironga			Standard variety
[βutʃ̣'iβa]	vhutshivha	(jealousy)	vhutshivha [βutʃ̣hiβa]
[βutʃ̣'imba]	vhutshimba	(stool)	vhutshimba [βutʃ̣himba]

The use of the voiceless prepalatal affricate [tʃ̣'] by Vharonga speakers instead of the aspirated [tʃh] used by other varieties in Venda could probably be an influence from the speakers of the Luleke and Gwamba dialects of Tsonga.

(i) *The insertion of the semi vowel [j]*

There is also a tendency to prefix the semi-vowel [j] to most

verb stems which begin with a vowel and those words which have a succession of vowels inbetween.

- [-jima] for -ima (stand)
 - yima
- [-jela] for -ela (flow)
 - yela
- [mmɛjaβɔ] for mme avho (your mother)
 - mmeyavho
- [sɛjisa] for seisa (cause to laugh)
 - seyisa
- [mujɛni] for mueni (visitor)
 - muyeni
- [-jimbelela] for -imba (sing)
 - yimbelela

The use of [j] in this manner by the Vharonga can be traced to the speakers of the Gwamba and Luleke dialects of Tsonga and this can be illustrated by the following examples from the Gwamba and Luleke dialects:

- [-jima] (stand)
 - yima
- [-jela] (flow)
 - yela
- [mujɛni] (visitor)
 - muyeni
- [-jimbelela] (sing)
 - yimbelela

3.3.2.2 Sound changes

There are sound changes which do not occur at all in Tshironga as was the case in Tshiilafuri. For example, velarisation: hw [ɣw]; xw [xw]; nw [ŋw]; bw [bg]; phw [pkh] and pw [pk'] which have resulted from the passive extension -iw- in the Standard variety do not occur in Tshironga. The passive extension -iw-

does not cause any sound change in Tshironga. This can be illustrated by the following examples:

Tshironga

- rah- + -iw- + -a > -rahiwa (be kicked)
- lifh- + -iw- + -a > -lifhiwa (be paid)
- lum- + -iw- + -a > -lumiwa (be bitten)
- eb- + -iw- + -a > -ebiwa (be dug)
- khoph- + -iw- + -a > -khophiwa (be broken)

However, it should be noted that the forms in these examples are also used in the Standard variety although most Standard variety speakers prefer to use velarised sounds in these cases. Compare the following examples:

Standard variety

- rah- + -iw- + -a > -rahwa (be kicked) [-raywa]
- lifh- + -iw- + -a > -lixwa (be paid) [-rixwa]
- lum- + -iw- + -a > -luŋwa (be bitten) [-ruŋwa]
- dob- + -iw- + -a > -dogwa (be dug) [-dɔbga]
- khoph- + -iw- + -a > -khophwa (be broken) [-khɔpkha]

The sounds r, k and h, which undergo a change in the Standard variety, do not change in Tshironga. These sounds are always preceded by the prefix li- of class 5. This can be illustrated by the following examples:

Tshironga

- li- + r > lirambo (bone)
- li- + k > likole (cloud)
- li- + h > lihuyu (wild fig)

The sounds r, k and h change in the Standard variety under the

influence of the variant prefix I- of class 5. This can be illustrated by the following examples:

Standard variety

I + r > sh shambo (bone)
 I + k > g gole (cloud)
 I + h > f fuyu (wild fig)

3.3.2.3 Grammatical features

There are few grammatical features which distinguish Tshironga from other varieties.

(a) *The nouns of class 6*

The nouns of class 6 which have *ma-* as a prefix in Tshironga, have *mone* and *ma* as absolute pronoun and subject concord respectively instead of *one* and *a*. This can be illustrated by the following examples:

Tshironga

Maḍi mone ma khou ḍimuwa. (Water is evaporating)
 Madukana mone ma khou ḍa. (The young men are coming)
 Magama mone ma khou fhufha. (The crows are flying)
 Malamula mone ma a ḍura. (Oranges are expensive)

Standard variety

Maḍi one a khou xa. (Water is evaporating)
 Vhatukana vhone vha khou ḍa. (The young men are coming)
 Mahunguvhu one a khou fhufha. (The crows are flying)
 Maswiri one a a ḍura. (Oranges are expensive)

(b) *Adverbs*

The adverbs *nzhani* and *badi* are commonly found in Tshironga and in the Gwamba and Luleke dialects of Tsonga. For example:

Tshironga

Malamula ma *ḍifha nzhani*. (Oranges are very delicious)

Uku kuḥwanana ku phungela *badi*. (This little child is full of jokes)

Standard variety

Maswiri a *ḍifha hani*. (Oranges are very delicious)

Uku kwana ku na miswaswo nga *maandḗ*. (This little child is full of jokes)

(c) *Enclitic -ka*

Tshironga is characterised by the enclitic *-ka* which is attached to verbs or other word categories. The enclitics, such as *-vho* and *-shu* which are commonly used in other Venda varieties are rarely used in Tshironga. The following are examples where the enclitic *-ka* is used.

Tshironga

Madukana ma khou shuma-*ka*. (The young men are also working)

Kholomo dzi khou fula-*ka*, Mashudu. (Mashudu, the cattle are also grazing)

Standard variety

Vhatukana vha khou shuma-*vho*. (The young men are also working)

Kholomo dzi khou fula-*vho*, Mashudu. (Mashudu, the cattle are also grazing)

(d) *Verbal relative*

Unlike the situation in the Standard form, Tshironga uses one form of the verbal relative instead of three. This form is as follows:

The verbal relative which is formed by relative concord, verb stem and the relative suffix *-ho*, for example:

Tshironga

- Munna ndi tshilaho nae. (The man with whom I live)
 Mutukana a imbelelaho. (The boy who sings)
 Gama li fhufhaho. (The crow which flies)
 Madzhulu ma lumaho milenzhe yashu.
 (The termites which bite our legs)

Standard variety

- Munna ane nda tshila nae. (The man with whom I live)
 Mutukana a imbaho. (The boy who sings)
 Funguvhu li fhufhaho. (The crow which flies)
 Magege a lumaho milenzhe yashu.
 (The termites which bite our legs)

Unlike the Standard variety, where the perfect of this form of the relative verb is formed by the relativiser in the perfect tense, relative concord and a verb stem, the perfect of this form of the relative verb in Tshironga is formed by the perfect tense prefix *o*, relative concord, verb stem and the suffix *-ho*. Compare the following:

Tshironga

- Munna ndo tshilaho nae. (The man with whom I lived)
 Mutukana o imbelelaho. (The boy who sang)
 Gama lo fhufhaho. (The crow which flew)

Madzhulu mo lumaho milenzhe yashu.

(The termites which bit our legs)

Standard variety

Munna we nda tshila nae. (The man with whom I lived)

Mutukana we a imba. (The boy who sang)

Funguvhu le la fhufha. (The crow which flew)

Magege e a luma milenzhe yashu.

(The termites which bit our legs)

The second form of the verbal relative, which is formed by the relative pronoun, relative concord and verb stem, and the third form of the verbal relative, which is formed by the relative concord, formative *no* and verb, do not feature at all in Tshironga.

(e) *The past tense*

The past continuous tense of Tshironga is also characterised by the perfect formative *a* instead of *o*, which is used in the Standard variety. The past formative *a* is used when the continuity of an action is expressed. This can be illustrated by the following examples:

Tshironga

Phambo a dzi khou kudzela hafha. (The hens were laying eggs here)

A dzi khou fula mulamboni. (They were grazing at the river)

Liṭo lawe a li khou vhavha. (His/her eye was painful)

Standard variety

Phambo dzo vha dzi khou kudzela hafha. (The hens were laying eggs here)

Dzo vha dzi khou fula mulamboni. (They were grazing at the river)

Liṭo lawe lo vha li khou vhavha. (His/her eye was painful)

3.3.2.4 Lexical items

The following are some of the lexical items which distinguish Tshironga from other varieties. Most of these examples differ in form, and sometimes in meaning from their counterparts in the Standard variety:

(a) Verb stems

Tshironga	Standard variety
-kelela (draw water)	-ka
-ka (pluck)	-fula
-(y)imbelela (sing)	-imba
-(y)imba (circumcise)	-fumba
-lomba (borrow)	-hadzima
-kwaṭa (to be angry)	-sinyuwa
-anela (hang)	-anea
-tsima (blow out)	-dzima
-phungela (joke)	-swaswa
-ḍuvhuleḷa (joke)	-swaswa
-amukela (receive)	-ṭanganedza
-tshesa (stay until late)	-dzedza
-fhahela (hang)	-anea/-ṅembeledza
-kwotama (squat)	-kotama

Tshironga shares most verb stems with the Standard variety but stems, such as *-phungela* and *ḍuvhuleḷa*, which are only found in this variety, are used as synonyms. These verb stems have been adopted from the Gwamba and Luleke dialects of Tsonga.

(b) *Nouns*

Tshironga	Standard variety
vhumba (clay soil)	vumba
makhelwana (neighbour)	muhura
madukana (boys)	vhatukana
muyeni (visitor)	mueni
masevhe (mother-in-law or father-in-law)	
	makhulu
gama (crow)	funguvhu
zwivhanana (little children)	zwana
mungana (friend)	khonani
tshigalana (the blue-grey tick)	gufha
tshimumu (dumb person)	tshimuma

As with the verb stems, these nouns also appear to have been adopted from the Gwamba and Luleke dialects of Tsonga. In addition, some of them are not found in the same classes as their counterparts in the Standard variety, for example:

Class	Tshironga	Class	Standard variety
1	mungana (friend)	9	khonani
5	madukana (boys)	2	vhatukana

3.3.3 Tshimaanda

The Tshimaanda variety is becoming extinct. It used to be spoken in the south-western area of Thohoyandou in places such as Lwamondo, Gwamasenga, Tshimbupfe and east of Louis Trichardt in places such as Luonde and Masia. This is mainly because of the coming of the Tsonga people who settled among the original speakers of Tshimaanda on their arrival. The contact of the Tsonga people, namely the speakers of the Gwamba and Luleke dialects, and the original speakers of the Tshimaanda variety contributed to the suppression of the Tshimaanda variety. For

example, Tsonga was introduced as the medium of instruction at some schools attended by the children of original speakers of Tshimaanda at Hamasia, Hamashau, Davhana and other areas. In addition, Tshiphani was used at Lwamondo and Gwamasenga schools and this also contributed to the extinction of Tshimaanda.

This variety is characterised by phonological features which are believed to have been acquired from some Northern Sotho clans. As indicated in section 2.3.3, the Vhalaudzi of Tshimbupfe, Hamasia and Gwamasenga once lived among some Northern Sotho clans near Pietersburg. At the same time, like those Northern Sotho clans, they omitted the lateral alveolar tap sound [ɾ] in their speech, for example:

Tshimaanda	Standard variety
-ia (to avoid)	-ila
tshikoi (mealie cob)	tshikoli
-tshia (to live)	-tshila
muamboni (at the river)	mulamboni
-fhea (to finish)	-fhela
-humbea (to ask)	-humbela
-hua (to grow)	-hula

In addition, the speakers of this variety have acquired the labio-prepalatal fricative consonant [β̥], which is quite a common feature of all Northern Sotho clans. Examples in which this consonant features in Tshimaanda are as follows:

Tshimaanda	Standard variety
[β̥3aa] (beer) vhyaa*	halwa
[β̥3ats'i] (grass) vhyatsi*	hatsi
[β̥3uuβ̥3i] (brain) vhyuvhyi*	vhuluvhi

circumcision school for males (These will be dealt with in chapter 4). The following are linguistic features which the Vhaguvhu have adopted from the Balobedu and Batlokwa:

3.3.4.1 Speech sounds

(a) Vowels

The Tshiguvhu vowel system is exactly the same as that of Tshiphani which is the Standard variety. Here too we find five primary vowels: [a]; [ɛ]; [i]; [ɔ] and [u]. There are also two raised variants, for example [e] and [o]. The following are examples of these vowels in Tshiguvhu lexical items:

Tshiguvhu				Standard variety
[a] as in [-aba]	-aba	(speak)		-amba
[ɛ] as in [n̄ɔɛ]	n̄ɔɛ	(outside)		nn̄ɔ
[i] as in [bil̄i]	bil̄i	(front)		phand̄a
[ɔ] as in [ɔ̄the]	ɔ̄the	(all)		ōthe
[u] as in [musi]	musi	(smoke)		mutsi
[e] as in [musil̄ɛni]		(at the tail)		mutshilani
	musil̄eni			
[o] as in [l̄ihogov̄u]	l̄ihogov̄u	(crow)		funguvhu

(b) Consonants

There are only two consonants which have been adopted from the Batlokwa and Balobedu, for example: [βj] and [ɸj].

Tshiguvhu				Standard variety
[βj] as in [maβjogɔ]		(brain)		maluvhi
	mavhyogo*			
[βj] as in [guβjana]		(small blanket)		kuguvho
	guvhyana*			
[ɸj] as in [-ɸjɛa]		(to be afraid)		-ofha

*This is how these words would probably be represented in the orthography.

There is a tendency among the Vhaguvhu to pronounce the Northern Sotho alveolar retroflexive [ɺ] as a voiced alveolar plosive [d]. This can be illustrated by the following examples in Tshiguvhu:

Tshiguvhu	Northern Sotho	Standard variety
[-ɺɔda] (care for) -ɺoda	[-ɺɔt'a]	-londa
[-rɛda] (praise) -reda	[-rɛt'a]	-renda
[βulɛda] (kindness) vhuleda	[βolɛt'a]	vhulenda
[musidɔ] (sound of feet)[moʃit'ɔ] musido		mutsindo
[-khudisa](cause to hide)[-khut'isa] -khudisa		-dzumba
[-rada] (love)	[-rat'a]	-funa

In some instances the Northern Sotho alveolar retroflexive [ɺ] is pronounced as an alveolar tap sound [ɾ]. Compare the following examples:

Tshiguvhu	Northern Sotho	Standard variety
[-ruɺa] (sit) -luɺa	[-ɺula]	-dzula
[-ɺisa](to herd) -lisa	[-ɺisa]	-lisa
[-ɺia] (do) -lia	[-ɺia]	-ita

3.3.4.2 Sound changes

The following sound changes: hw [ɣw]; xw [xw]; nw [ɲw]; bw [bg]; phw [pkh] and pw [pk'] which occur in the Standard variety under the influence of the passive extension -iw-, do not occur in Tshiguvhu. The passive extension -iw- does not cause any sound change in Tshiguvhu. This can be illustrated by the following examples:

Tshiguvhu

- rovh- + -iw- + -a > -rovhiwa (be broken)
- rafh- + -iw- + -a > -rafhiwa (be extracted)
- sum- + -iw- + -a > -sumiwa (be reported)
- dob- + -iw- + -a > -dobiwa (be picked up)
- beb- + -iw- + -a > -bebiwa (be born)
- thuph- + -iw- + -a > -thuphiwa (be piled)
- kap- + -iw- + -a > -kapiwa (be scooped)

However, it should be noted that the forms of these examples are also used in the Standard variety although most Standard variety speakers prefer to use velarised sounds in the above examples. Compare the following examples:

Standard variety

- rovh- + -iw- + -a > -rohwa (be broken)
- rafh- + -iw- + -a > -raxwa (be extracted)
- sum- + -iw- + -a > -suŋwa (be reported)
- dob- + -iw- + -a > -dogwa (be picked up)
- beb- + -iw- + -a > -begwa (be born)
- thuph- + -iw- + -a > -thuphwa (be piled)
- kap- + -iw- + -a > -kapwa (be scooped)

Another observation that can be made is that in Tshiguvhu the verb root which ends with the bilabial fricative [β] becomes palatalised when the extended suffix -w- is affixed to the verb

root. This can be illustrated by the following examples:

- rovh- + -w- + -a > [rɔβja] (be broken)
 -kovh- + -w- + -a > [-k'ɔβja] (be divided)

As noted above, in the Standard variety, when the extended suffix -w- is attached to the verb root which ends in the bilabial fricative, velarisation takes place, for example:

- rovh- + -w- + -a > [rɔɣwa] (be broken)
 -kovh- + -w- + -a > [-k'ɔɣwa] (be divided)

The sounds r, k and h, which undergo a change in the Standard variety, do not change in Tshiguvhu. These sounds are always preceded by the prefix li- of class 5. This can be illustrated by the following examples:

Tshiguvhu

- li- + r > lirabo (bone)
li- + k > likolé (cloud)
li- + h > lihuyu (wild fig)

A sound change in Tshiguvhu also takes place when the perfect tense is expressed. According to Mulaudzi (1996:145),

The perfect tense in Tshiguvhu is characterised by the extension {-il...e}, instead of the perfect tense marker -o- which marks the subject concord of verbs in the perfect tense in Tshivenda. The use of {-il...e} in Tshiguvhu is a clear sign of influence from Northern Sotho as this extension is not used in Tshivenda at all.

Lombard, Van Wyk and Mokgokong (1985:116-117) go on to indicate that the extension {-il...e} is a main feature of the perfect tense in Northern Sotho. The presence of -il- and -e is

obligatory although sometimes their uninterrupted co-existence may be upset by the passive extension -w-, which may be inserted between them. This can be illustrated by this example from Northern Sotho:

-loma (bite)
-lomilwe (was bitten) perfect form

The sound changes which occur as the result of the extension {-i_l...e} in Tshiguvhu have been recorded in Hamashamba and occur as follows:

When the final syllable of a polysyllabic verb is [-l̩a], it is replaced by [-dʒi], for example:

[-sibi _{l̩} a] (walk)	[-sibidʒi] (walked)
-sibi _{l̩} a	-sibidzhi
[-magal̩a] (suprise)	[-magɛdʒi] (suprised)
-magal̩a	

When the final syllable of a polysyllabic verb is [-sa], [-ʃa], [-tʃha] or [-dʒa], it is replaced by [-idʒɛ], for example:

[-t̩usa] (take away)	[-t̩usidʒɛ] (took away)
-t̩usa	-t̩usidzhe
[-ʃaʃa] (joke)	[-ʃaʃidʒɛ] (joked)
-swaswa	-swaswidzhe
[-βontʃa] (show)	[-βontʃidʒɛ] (showed)
-vhontsha	-vhontshidzhe
[-t̩hadʒa] (wash)	[-t̩hadʒidʒɛ] (washed)
-t̩hadzwa	-t̩hadzwidzhe

The extension [-i_l...ɛ] has a shortened form which realizes as [-i]. This extension is affixed to certain roots ending in [n] or [m] for example:

[-βona] (see)	[-βoni] (saw)
---------------	---------------

-vhona	-vhoni
[-aṭhama] (open)	[-aṭhami] (opened)
-aṭhama	-aṭhami
[-ɛma] (stand)	[-ɛmi] (stood)
-ema	-emi

Note that in the Standard variety a perfect tense prefix **o** is used in all cases before the verb stem. Consider the following sentences as examples:

Mutukana **o** vhona mbudzi. (The boy **saw** a goat)
 Masindi **o** aṭama mulomo. (Masindi **opened** her mouth)
 Vhasidzana **vho** vhasa mulilo. (The girls **made** fire)
 Kholomo **dzo** fula hatsi mulovha. (The cattle **grazed** grass
 yesterday)

3.3.4.3 Grammatical features

The following grammatical features distinguish Tshiguvhu from the Standard and other varieties:

(a) *Class Prefixes*

Tshiguvhu shares most of its class prefixes with the Standard and other Venda varieties but class prefix 7 **si-** is identical to **se-** of Tlokwa. The Standard and other varieties on the other hand, have **tshi-** as class prefix. Tshiguvhu, like the Standard variety and other varieties take **zwi-** as a plural prefix of **si-**. For example:

Tshiguvhu		Standard variety
sigolo	(school)	tshikolo
sihwahwa	(frog)	tshidḡula
sikunwane	(toe)	tshikunwane

Tshiguvhu has a class prefix 10 [fi-] which also distinguishes

it from other varieties. The Standard and other varieties have the prefix *dzi-* in this class. This can be illustrated by the following examples:

Tshiguvhu		Standard variety
[rithaβa]	(mountain)	dzithavha
lithavha		
[riŋgwe]	(tigers)	dzinngwe
lingwe		
[riphuthi]	(duikers)	dzintsa
liphuthi		
[rimbo]	(tsetse flies)	dzimbo
limbo		

Tshiguvhu does not have class prefixes 11 and 21. The nouns which were originally in these classes have been shifted to other classes. With regard to class 11, Mulaudzi (1996:40) says that a number of class 5 nouns, which belonged to class 11, have their counterparts in class 11 in the Standard variety. This can be illustrated by the following examples:

Tshiguvhu		Standard variety
ḽiabo	(language)	luambo
ḽinyadzo	(scorn)	lunyadzo
ḽinaḽa	(nail, claw)	luḽala
ḽianakha	(a type of a shrub)	luanakha

Augmentative nouns occur in class 5 in Tshiguvhu, and not in class 21. This can be illustrated by the following examples:

Tshiguvhu		Standard variety
ḽiḽo	(orge, monster)	ḽithu

ḷigwada (large clod, flat on one side overturned by plough)
gwada

(b) *Pronouns*

Besides displaying structural features which are found in the Standard variety, Tshiguvhu also displays structural features which occur in Lobedu and Tlokwa. The following are Tshiguvhu pronouns displaying structural features from Lobedu and Tlokwa:

Absolute pronouns

The absolute pronouns in Tshiguvhu are characterised by the suffix *-na*, which is identical to that of Lobedu and Tlokwa, for example:

Personal pronouns

Tshiguvhu		Standard variety
nna	(I)	n [̣] ne
rina	(we)	ri [̣] ne
wena	(you)	iwe
ḷina	(you)	inwi
yena	(he/she)	ene
vhona	(they)	vhone

Non-personal pronouns

Examples of these pronouns are:

Tshiguvhu/Tlokwa		Standard variety
[sɔna]	(it)	tshone
sona		
[dʒɔna]	(they)	dzone
dzhona		

The possessive

The possessive also displays structural features found in Lobedu, for example:

Tshiguvhu/Lobedu		Standard variety
[fɛsu]	(our)	hashu
hesu		
[fɛnu]	(your)	ha <u>ɲ</u> u
henu		

Demonstratives

Unlike the Standard and other varieties, Tshiguvhu has only three forms instead of four. These three positions resemble those of Lobedu, for example:

Tshiguvhu/Lobedu

Class	Position 1	Position 2	Position 3
3	[wɔ]	[wɔ <u>ɔ</u> la]	[wɔ <u>ɔ</u> laa]
4	[jɛ]	[jɛ <u>ɔ</u> la]	[jɛ <u>ɔ</u> laa]
6	[a]	[a <u>ɔ</u> ɛ]	[a <u>ɔ</u> lee]
7	[sɛ]/[khɛ]	[sɛ <u>ɔ</u> la]/[khɛ <u>ɔ</u> la]	[sɛ <u>ɔ</u> laa]/[khɛ <u>ɔ</u> laa]
10	[dʒɛ]	[dʒɛ <u>ɔ</u> la]	[dʒɛ <u>ɔ</u> laa]
14	[βjɔ]	[βjɔ <u>ɔ</u> la]	[βjɔ <u>ɔ</u> laa]

There are four demonstrative forms in the Standard and other varieties, for example:

Class	Position 1(a)	Position 1(b)	Position 2	Position 3
3	uno	uyu	uyo	u <u>ɔ</u> la
4	ino	iyi	iyo	i <u>ɔ</u> la
6	ano	aya	ayo	a <u>ɔ</u> la

7	tshino	itshi	itsho	tshila
10	dzino	idzi	idzo	dzila
14	vhuno	uvhu	uvho	vhula
	huno	uhu	uho	hula

Reflexive pronoun

Tshiguvhu has the reflexive stem *-nyi* (self) which resembles that of Lobedu whereas the Standard and other varieties use *-ne* (self). With regard to this, Mulaudzi (1996:96) says:

In Tshiguvhu the reflexive pronoun is formed by a concordial prefix which is in agreement with the noun to which is being referred. The concordial prefix is attached to the stem *-nyi*. This is applicable to both personal reflexive pronouns and non-personal reflexive pronouns. The personal reflexive pronouns of first, second and third person singular are formed by the concordial prefix *mu-* and the stem *-nyi*. The plural of these personal reflexive pronouns is formed by the concordial prefix *vha-* and the stem *-nyi*. The concordial element of each reflexive pronoun is identical to the corresponding subject concord.

This can be illustrated by the following examples where the concordial prefix of class 9 *i* is used:

Tshiguvhu/Lobedu

[i ɔ̌o ibuɔ̌aja jɔ̌na iɲi] (It will kill itself)
i ɔ̌o ibuɔ̌aya yona inyi.

Standard variety

[i ɔ̌o ɔ̌iβuraɲa jɔ̌nɛ iɲɛ] (It will kill itself)

i ɔ̣o ɔ̣ivhulaha yone iɲe.

Concords

Tshiguvhu also has two unique concords. The subject concord of the first person singular is [gi] instead of the [ndi] of the Standard variety. The subject concord of class 10 is [ri]. The following are examples of these two concords in sentences.

Tshiguvhu

[nna gi a sibiɓa] (I am going)

nna gi a sibiɓa.

[buri ri fuɓa βjaɲi] (The goats are grazing grass)

buli li fuɓa vhyanyi.

Standard variety

[nɲe ndi a tʃhimbifa] (I am going)

nɲe ndi a tshimbila.

[mbudzi dzi fura hats'i] (The goats are grazing grass)

mbudzi dzi fula hatsi.

Tshiguvhu also uses the reflexive prefix [i-] whereas the Standard variety uses [ɔ̣i-]. This can be illustrated by the following examples:

Tshiguvhu

[guluβe i ɔ̣o ibuɓaja ga thada] (The pig will kill itself with
the stick)

guluβhe i ɔ̣o ibuɓaya ga thada.

Standard variety

[ŋguruβε i ɔ̣o ɔ̣iβuraɦa ŋga thanda] (The pig will kill itself with
the stick)

nguluvhe i ɔ̣o ɔ̣ivhulaha ŋga thanda.

(d) *The perfect tense*

As already mentioned, Tshiguvhu uses the perfect suffix [-iɫɛ], which is also used in Lobedu and all varieties of Northern Sotho to mark the perfect tense. The Standard variety and other Venda varieties use the perfect marker [-ɔ-]. This can be illustrated by the following examples:

Tshiguvhu/Lobedu

[bula i niɫɛ] (It rained)

Bula i niɫe.

[musimana u gidimiɫɛ] (The boy ran away)

Musimana u gidimiɫe.

[βana βa ʃumiɫɛ] (The children worked)

Vhana vha shumiɫe.

Standard variety

Mvula yo na. (It rained)

Mutukana o gidima. (The boy ran away)

Vhana vho shuma. (The children worked)

The following are the equivalent examples from Northern Sotho:

[p'ula e niɫɛ] (It rained)

[moʃemane o k'it'imilɛ] (The boy ran away)

[βana βa ʃomilɛ] (The children worked)

(e) *The relative*

As in Tshiilafuri, Tshiguvhu has one verbal relative structure, which is similar to the one used in Lobedu. On the other hand, the Standard variety has three verbal relative structures. These structures are all different from that of Tshiguvhu. The verbal relative structure in the present tense in Tshiguvhu and Lobedu is as follows:

It is formed by a relativiser, relative concord, verb stem and relative suffix *-ho*. In Venda, the verbal relative is formed by a relative concord, verb stem and a relative suffix *-ho*. This can be illustrated by the following examples:

Tshiguvhu/Lobedu

[musafi jɔ a ŋwalahɔ maina a βana, u φiṭhiḽɛ]

Musali yo a ṅwalahɔ maina a vhana, u fhiṭhiḽe.

(The lady, who writes children's name, has arrived)

[βasimana βa βa fisahɔ ribufi, gi βa βɔni]

Vhasimana vha vha lisahɔ libuli, gi vha vhoni.

(I have seen the boys who look after the goats)

The following are the equivalent examples of the verbal relative in the Standard variety:

[musadzi a ŋwafahɔ madzina a βana, ɔ šik'a]

Musadzi a ṅwalahɔ madzina a vhana, o swika.

(The lady who writes children's name, has arrived)

[βat'uk'ana βa fisahɔ mbudzi, ndɔ βa βɔna]

Vhatukana vha lisahɔ mbudzi, ndo vha vhona.

(I have seen the boys who look after the goats)

The verbal relative structure in the perfect tense in Tshiguvhu

and Lobedu is as follows:

It is formed by a relativiser, relative concord, verb stem with the perfect extension *-ile* and the relative suffix *-ho*. This is also comparable to Northern Sotho in general. With regard to the Venda structure Mulaudzi (1996:177) says:

...the perfect of the verbal relative is formed by the relativiser which ends on the vowel *-e*, the relative concord, the verb stem which ends on the vowel *-a* and the relative suffix *-ho*.(sic)

This can be illustrated by the following examples from Tshiguvhu, Lobedu, Northern Sotho and Venda:

Tshiguvhu

Vhasali vha vha rudileho vhasimana u gidima....

(The women who taught the boys to run...)

Lobedu

Vyalwa vyo vo ṭhoḏilweho vo a nwea.

(Beer which has been filtered can be drunk) (Kotze', 1995:366)

Northern Sotho

Nku ye e nwelego meetse or

Nku ye e nweleng meetse.

(The sheep that drank water)

Standard variety

Vhakegulu vhe vha lima tsimu...

Vhakegulu vho limaho tsimu...

(The old women who ploughed the field...)

Other grammatical features are used in the same way as in the Standard variety.

3.3.4.4 Lexical items

Lexical items play a crucial role in distinguishing Tshiguvhu from the Standard and other varieties. Some of these lexical items differ greatly in form from their counterparts in the Standard variety.

(a) Verb stems

Tshiguvhu		Standard variety
[-aba]	(speak)	-amba
-aba		
[-εbε]	(sing)	-imba
-ebe		
[-khuda]	(hide)	-dzumba
-khuda		
[-dziβa]	(know)	-ḍivha
-dzivha		
[-ts'ɪ̣ɛ]	(dawn)	-tsha
-tsɪ̣ɛ		
[-suβɛ̣ɪ̣a]	(set)	-kovhela
-suvhɛ̣ɪ̣a		
[-rja]	(eat)	-ɫa
-lya		
[-φiṭha]	(arrive)	-swika
-fhiṭha		
[-thia]	(lay the foundation of a house)	-tea
-thia		
[-suβa]	(pinch)	-tota
-suvha		
[-ruwa]	(rear, tame)	-fuwa
-ruwa		
[-βia]	(place, put)	-vhea

-vhia		
[-khavhisa]	(decorate)	-nakisa
-khavhisa		
[-ɛba]	(dig)	-bwa
-eba		
[-thunya]	(delete, demolish)	-thutha
-thunya		
[-ruḁa]	(leak)	-bvuḁa
-luḁa		
[-βiḁa]	(boil)	-vhila
-vhila		
[-βiḁa]	(demand money)	-vhila
-vhila		
[-haʃa]	(plant, sow)	-zwala
-hasa		
[-pjha]	(dry up)	-xa
-phyā		

Today, some verb stems, like -khuda and -dzumba (hide); -hofha and -fhya (afraid); -phyā and -xa (evaporate); -hasa and -zwala (plant), are used as synonyms. As in Tshiilafuri, the verb -dia means copulate-unite in sexual intercourse. Some verb stems, like -vhila (demand money or boil) and -thia (give a name or trap), have more than one meaning.

Most of the verb stems are probably adopted from Lobedu and Tlokwa because they are similar in form and meaning to those of Tshiguvhu. This can be illustrated by examples from Lobedu and Tlokwa:

[-ʃaβa]	(shame)
[-thia]	(trap)
[-ʃiḁa]	(grind)
[-suβa]	(pinch)
[-suβɛḁa]	(dawn)
[-φiɛḁa]	(sweep)
[-ḁisa]	(allow, let)

- [-khura] (be satisfied)
 [-phiḷa] (live)
 [-dia] (beat)
 [-phiṭha] (arrive)

Compare the above examples with Tshiguvhu examples:

- swavha (shame)
 -thia (trap)
 -shiḷa (grind)
 -suvha (pinch)
 -suvheḷa (dawn)
 -fhiḷa (sweep)
 -ḷisa (allow, let)
 -khura (be satisfied)
 -phiḷa (live)
 -dia (beat)
 -fhiṭha (arrive)

(b) *Nouns*

Tshiguvhu		Standard variety
[ḷigoba]	(cliff)	luwa
ḷigoba		
[bidʒa]	(big pot)	khali
bidzha		
[βubi]	(meal)	vhukhopfu
vhubi		
[ḷihodɔ]	(mouse)	mbevha
ḷihodɔ		
[mphegwa]	(lizard)	tswina
mphegwa		
[ŋwɛdʒi]	(bride)	muselwa
ŋwedzhi		
[makhwiβi]	(daybreak)	mapfuvhi
makhwivhi		

[mamabɔ]	(honey)	mutoli
mamabo		
[musi]	(smoke)	mutsi
musi		
[mudzi]	(village)	muḁi
mudzi		
[maada]	(strength)	maanda
maada		
[ḁou]	(elephant)	nḁou
ḁou		
[ḁambatʃhekwa]		
	(crab)	ḁabatshekwa
ḁambatshekwa		
[ḁidʒɛbɛ]	(hoe)	dzembe
ḁidzhebe		
[khufu]	(tortoise)	khamba/tshibode
khulu		
[ḁihɔgɔβu]	(crow)	funguvhu
ḁihogovhu		
[mphɛŋi]	(axe handle)	mufhini
mphenyi		
[marifa]	(winter)	vhuriha
mariha		
[beu]	(seed)	mbeu
beu		
[inɔk'a]	(waists)	khundu
linoka		
[ḁidvi]	(white hair)	mmbvi
ḁibvi		

Most of the nouns given as examples have been adopted from Lobedu. These nouns can be identified from others by the presence of the voiced plosive phonemes [b], [g], [dʒ], [d], [dz] and [ḁ]. These phonemes are not used at all in Tlokwa. Compare these phonemes with Tlokwa phonemes:

Tshiguvhu/Lobedu**Tlokwa**

[b] buli (goat)

[p] [p'ui] (goat)

[g] guvho (blanket)

[k] [k'uβɔ] (blanket)

[dʒ] ɫidzhadzhi (sun)

[tʃ] [lɛtʃ'atʃ'ɛ] (sun)

[d] -dia (beat)

[t] [-t'ia] (beat)

[dz] dzevhe (ear)

[ts] [ts'ɛβɛ] (ear)

[ɖ] nɖu (house)

[ɖ] [nɖɔ] (house)

3.3.5 Tshimbedzi

Tshimbedzi is spoken in the eastern and north-eastern areas of Thohoyandou. The speakers of this variety used to speak Pfumbi, also known as Mbedzi in South Africa. Pfumbi is still spoken in southern Zimbabwe. In 1993 while conducting field research at Mianzwi, at Chieftainess Vho-Phophi Tshisinavhute's place, I found an old lady who still speaks Pfumbi very well. Today, there are very few Pfumbi phonological features as well as grammatical features which distinguish this variety from other varieties. Although the Mbedzi in these areas still maintain cultural ties with those in Zimbabwe, they have lost most linguistic aspects because of Tshiphani's influence. Tshimbedzi, which is spoken today is also influenced by Tshilembethu, spoken in the north-east of Thohoyandou.

3.3.5.1 Speech sounds**(a) Vowels**

Tshimbedzi shares the same vowel system as other varieties. There are five basic vowels, namely: [a]; [ɛ]; [i]; [ɔ] and [u]. There are also two raised variants, namely: [e] and [o]. The following are examples of these vowels in Tshimbedzi lexical items:

Tshimbedzi	Standard variety
[a] as in [sadza] (porridge) sadza	-vhuswa
[ɛ] as in [-t'ɛt'ɛdza] (request for help)-luvhelela -tetedza	
[i] as in [ɲwija] (air) nwiya	muya
[ɔ] as in [ɔsɛ] (all) ose	othe
[u] as in [mudani] (basket) mudani	muthatha
[e] as in [βuɲɛβɛɲɛβeni] (niceness) vhunyevhenyevheni	vhunzhilinzhilini
[o] as in [nɛmbɛɾoni] (at the fruits of munembelo) nembeloni	nombeloni

(b) *Consonants*

Tshimbedzi shares most consonants with other varieties but the labio-palatal [[bj], [pj], [pjh] and [mj] do not occur in Tshimbedzi. In place of these consonants, the labio-velar [bg], [pk'], [pkh] and [ɲɲ] are used, for example:

Tshimbedzi	Standard variety
[-bga] (dig) -gwa	[-dɔbja] -bwa
[-pk'afa] (break) kwasha	[-pjafa] -pwasha
[pkhapha] (armpit) khwakhwa	[gɔpja] gopwa
[gɔpk'a] (armpit) gokwa	[gɔpja] gopwa
[-riɲga] (be ploughed) -linwa	[-riɲwa] -linwa

3.3.5.2 Sound changes

Palatalisation does not occur in Tshimbedzi when the extended suffix *-w-* is affixed to the verb stem ending with phonemes [p] and [b]. When the extended suffix *-w-* is affixed to the verb stem ending with [p] and [b], velarisation occurs, for example:

-tap- + *-w-* + *-a* > [t'apk'a] (be flicked away)

-dob- + *-w-* + *-a* > [dɔbga] (be picked up)

However, palatalisation only occurs in Tshimbedzi when the suffix [-j-] is affixed to the verb stem ending with the phoneme [n], for example:

-ṭangan- + *-y-* + *-a* > [ṭangaj̥a] (cause to meet)

-lingan- + *-y-* + *-a* > [liŋaj̥a] (make equal)

3.3.5.3 Grammatical features

A few grammatical features distinguish Tshimbedzi from other Venda varieties and these are as follows:

(a) *Class Prefixes*

Tshimbedzi shares almost all class prefixes with the Standard and other Venda varieties. But, in addition, Tshimbedzi uses class prefix 12 *ka-*, which does not even occur in Pfumbi; however it occurs in Central Shona. The use of this prefix in Tshimbedzi is limited because only one noun is frequently used, for example:

Tshimbedzi

Standard variety

kana (little child)

kwana

Unlike in Central Shona, where prefix 13 *tu-* is used as the

plural of 12 ka-, in Tshimbedzi, the plural is as follows:

Tshimbedzi/ Standard variety

zwana (little children)

(b) Pronouns

Absolute pronoun

Tshimbedzi like other varieties uses the absolute pronoun of the first person singular and plural namely:

Singular	n̄e	(I)
Plural	rīne	(we)

However, Tshimbedzi is characterised by the use of the personal absolute pronoun of the third person singular ene (he/she) for both second person singular and third person singular. This means that this pronoun ene has a dual meaning in Tshimbedzi, for example:

Second person singular ene meaning you

Third person singular ene meaning he/she

Ene for the second person singular replaces iwe (you), which commonly features in Tshilembethu and the Standard variety. The second person singular form ene also features prominently in the Tshiṭavhatsindi variety, which is also spoken in the east of Thohoyandou. The plural of ene (of the second person singular) is vhoiwi instead of inwi, which features prominently in the Standard variety. The plural of the third person singular ene is vhone.

Quantitative

Tshimbedzi has the unique quantitative stem -se/-ose (all)

whereas the Standard variety uses the quantitative stem ~~the~~/~~o~~the. The quantitative stem ~~se~~/~~ose~~ also occurs in Tshilembethu and all dialects of the Western Shona dialect cluster, such as Lilima, Kalanga, Pfumbi and others. The concords are prefixed to the quantitative stem, for example:

Class	Concord	Quantitative pronoun
3	w-	wose
5	ḷ-	lose
7	tsh-	tshose
8	zw-	zwose
20	kw-	kwose

Compare the Tshimbedzi quantitative pronouns with those of the Standard variety:

Class	Concord	Quantitative pronoun
3	w-	woṭhe
5	ḷ-	loṭhe
7	tsh-	tshoṭhe
8	zw-	zwotḥe
20	kw-	kwotḥe

Other pronouns used in Tshimbedzi are similar to those used in the Standard variety.

(c) *Relative*

Tshimbedzi has a verbal relative structure similar to the one used in the Standard variety. This verbal relative structure, which is formed by a relative concord, formative 'no' and the verb stem, is also used in other dialects of the Western Shona dialect cluster. The Standard variety has two additional verbal relative structures which do not occur at all in Tshimbedzi. The following are examples of the verbal relative in Tshimbedzi:

Vhatukana vha no lisa mbudzi, ndo vha vhona.

(I have seen the boys who look after the goats)

Musadzi a no n̄wala madzina a vhana, o swika.

(The lady who writes children names, has arrived)

(d) *Adverbs*

Tshimbedzi is also distinguished by certain adverbs which are only used by Vhambedzi speakers, namely:

kwae for a nice person

ene-ene for a good person

(e) *Tone*

In this section, the detailed characteristics of tone will not be discussed. However, reference is made to role of tone in distinguishing the Tshimbedzi variety from the Standard variety. Tshimbedzi like Tshilembethu has a tendency to use high tone where the Standard variety uses low tone. Unlike Tshilembethu (which will be discussed later), there is no deletion of the vowel in aspect prefixes. This can be illustrated by the following examples:

Tshimbedzi: Ó tóú t̄úwá é é̀sè. (He/she went alone)

Standard variety: Ò tòú t̄úwà é é̀thè. (He/she went alone)

Tshimbedzi: Ndí múthú éné-éné. (He/She is a good person)

Standard variety: Ndí mùthù mùvhùya. (He/she is a good person)

Tshimbedzi: Sálani hánéfhanó. (Stay here)

Standard variety: Sàlani hènèfhanò. (Stay here)

Tshimbedzi: Ní khóú bváfhi? (Where do you come from?)

Standard variety: Nì khòú bvàfhi? (Where do you come from?)

3.3.5.4 Lexical items

Lexical items play a crucial role in distinguishing Tshimbedzi from the Standard and other varieties. Some of these lexical items differ greatly in form and meaning from their counterparts in the Standard variety.

(a) *Verb stems*

Tshimbedzi		Standard variety
-kwasha	(break)	-pwasha
-tanga	(encircle)	-tinga
-vanga	(mix)	-ṭanganya
-vangula	(extract a thorn)	-ṭomola
-vaya	(prick)	-ṭhavha
-tetedza	(request for help)	-luvhelela
-vhumbuluka	(roll)	-vhumbuluwa
-futshedza	(cover)	-fukedza
-ṭavhutshedza	(explain)	-ṭalutshedza
-ṭanela	(bask)	-ṭavhela/-ora
-kanga	(fry)	-hadzinga
-kadzinga	(fry)	-hadzinga
-gadza	(put a pot on the fire)	-ṭadzia
-enda	(go)	-ṭuwa
-ngwandamela	(setting-of sun)	-mbwandamela
-ṅwenwela	(smile)	-mwemwela/ -ṅwethuwa

(b) Nouns

Some of the nouns which distinguish Tshimbedzi from other varieties are as follows:

Tshimbedzi		Standard variety
ṅwiya	(air)	muya
mudani	(basket)	mufaro

nombe	(cattle)	kholomo
nngwa	(dog)	mmbwa
gokwa	(armpit)	gopwa
khwakhwa	(armpit)	gopwa
khuri	(mist)	khuli
matshana	(naughty children)	maḁana
vhusese	(family relatives)	lushaka
tshigwanana	(puppy)	tshibwanana
ngwanana	(puppy)	tshibwanana
mutshenzhe	(termites)	muḁwa
muḁwadzi	(hat)	muḁadzi
nkhwe	(ostrich)	mphwe
tshulu	(ant-hill)	tshiulu
khwidzi	(sheep)	nngu/phwidzi

Nouns, such as *gokwa* and *khwakhwa*; *tshigwanana* and *ngwanana*, are used as synonyms. Most nouns resemble those found in Pfumbi in Zimbabwe.

tshulu from *tshulu* in Pfumbi
nombe from *n'ombe* in Pfumbi
khwizi from *khwizi* in Pfumbi
ngwa from *ngwa* in Pfumbi

3.3.6 Tshiḁavhatsindi

Tshiḁavhatsindi is spoken in the north-east of Tḁohoyanḁou. Although Tshiḁavhatsindi is regarded as a Venda variety, it manifests features which occur in Tshimbedzi as well as Tshilembethu. Tshiḁavhatsindi is well known for the extensive use of the absolute pronoun *ene* (you) for both second and third personal pronouns. This appears to be the only linguistic difference between this and the Standard variety. On these grounds, it is debatable whether Tshiḁavhatsindi should be regarded as a separate variety. For this reason, aspects such as speech sounds, sound changes, grammatical features, tone and differences in lexical items are not dealt with here because

they are similar to those used in the Tshimbedzi and Tshilembethu variety.

3.3.7 Tshilembethu

Tshilembethu is spoken in the north-east of T̄hohoyandou and in the southern part of Zimbabwe. This variety is characterised by phonological as well as grammatical features from Lembethu in Zimbabwe. Although the Vhalembethu in these areas still maintain cultural ties with those in Zimbabwe, they have lost some linguistic aspects through the influence of Tshiphani.

3.3.7.1 Speech sounds

(a) Vowels

The vowel system of Tshilembethu is exactly the same as that of Tshiphani, which is the standard variety. There are five basic vowels: [a]; [ɛ]; [i]; [ɔ] and [u]. There are also two raised variants: [e] and [o]. The following are examples of these vowels in Tshimbedzi lexical items:

Tshilembethu	Standard variety
[a] as in [-ɾamba] -lamba (refuse)	-hana
[ɛ] as in [sie] sie (eye brow)	-tsie
[i] as in [-βiga] -vhiga (report)	-suma
[ɔ] as in [-p'ona] -pona (escape unhurt)	-ponya
[u] as in [-ɾunzu] -lunzwu (upward)	-gonya
[e] as in [mutʃhenʒɛni] mutshenzheni (at termites)	mutʃwani
[o] as in [map'it'oni] mapitoni (at entrance)	khroni

(b) Consonants

Unlike other Venda varieties, Tshilembethu shares all consonants with the Standard variety. Although many lexical items in which

these consonants are employed, are similar, some lexical items may look different to those in the Standard form. The lexical items in Tshilembethu will be dealt with in 3.3.7.3 (e).

3.3.7.2 Sound changes

(a) *Occlusivation*

Unlike in the Standard and other Venda varieties, occlusivation does not occur in verb stems in Tshilembethu although it does occur in noun stems. The reason for the nonoccurrence of occlusivation in verb stems may be attributed to the little influence of the homorganic nasal N- on a few verb stems in some dialects of Western Shona, namely Kalanga and Lilima. Occlusivation can be illustrated in the following examples of nouns which are derivative in nature:

N- + -r > th	thumi (one who sends)	-tum-	(send) in Kalanga
N- + -l > nd	ndevho (story)	-leb-	(talk) in Kalanga
N- + -vh > mb	mbuzo (question)	-buzw-	(ask) in Kalanga

But occlusivation occurs in non-derived noun stems in Tshilembethu, for example:

N- + s > ts	tsime (fountain)	-sime
N- + fh > ph	phanga (knives)	-fhanga
N- + v > mv	mvo (beestings)	-vo
I- + f > pf	pfumo (spear)	-fumo

(b) *De-aspiration*

De-aspiration in Tshilembethu occurs when the diminutive prefix

tshi- is followed by an aspirated sound. This is in contrast to the Standard and other Venda varieties where de-aspiration occurs when the diminutive prefix ku- precedes an aspirated sound. This can be illustrated by the following examples:

Tshilembethu

tshi- + th	>	tshitumbu	(small stomach)
	<	thumbu	(stomach)
tshi- + ph	>	tshipulu	(small bull)
	<	phulu	(bull)
tshi- + ṭh	>	tshiṭoho	(small head)
	<	ṭhoho	(head)

Standard variety

ku- + th	>	kutumbu	(small stomach)
	<	thumbu	(stomach)
ku- + th	>	kupulu	(small bull)
	<	phulu	(bull)
ku- + ṭh	>	kuṭoho	(small head)
	<	ṭhoho	(head)

(c) *The influence of the homorganic variant N- of classes 9/10*

The influence of the homorganic variant N- can be noticed in Tshilembethu and can result in velarisation or palatalisation.

(i) *Velarisation*

This occurs with certain nouns which are derived from verb roots that commence in a vowel, for example:

N + V > ngV

N + i > ngi

N- + imb- > ngimbo (song)

-imb- (sing)

N + e > nge

N- + end- > ngendo (journey)

-end- (go)

N + a > nga

N- + adz- > ngadzo (spreading out)

-al- (spread)

N + i > ngi

N- + ilafh- > ngilafho (a cure)

-ilafh- (cure)

N + a > nga

N- + amb- > ngambo (a talk)

-amb- (talk)

This type of sound change also occurs in Tshiilafuri and not in the Standard variety.

(ii) *Palatalisation*

This sound change occurs in Tshilembethu and the Standard variety and with certain nouns which are derived from verb roots that commence in a vowel, for example:

N + V > ngV

N + i > nyi

N- + imb- > nyimbo (song)

-imb- (sing)

N + a > nya

N- + aluw- > nyaluwo (growth)

-aluw- (grow)

Other sound changes which occur in Tshilembethu are the same as

those which occur in the Standard and other Venda varieties.

3.3.7.3 Grammatical features

(a) *Pronouns*

Absolute pronoun

Tshilembethu shares the absolute pronoun of the first person singular and plural with the Standard and other Venda varieties namely:

Singular: *n̄e* (I)
 Plural: *rīne* (we)

But it is characterised by the use of the personal absolute pronoun of the second person singular *iwe* (you) and second person plural *ini* (you). This pronoun *ini* (you) has probably been adopted from *imn'i*, which is used in Lembethu, Lilima, Kalanga and other dialects of the Western Shona dialect cluster. As in the Standard variety, the third person singular, is characterised by *ene* (his/her) whereas its plural becomes *vhone* (they).

Quantitative

Tshilembethu like Tshimbedzi has the unique quantitative stem *-se/-ose* (all) whereas the Standard variety uses the quantitative stem *-the/-othe*. The quantitative stem *-se/-ose* also occurs in all dialects of the Western Shona dialect cluster such as Lilima, Kalanga, Pfumbi and others. The concords are prefixed to the quantitative stem, for example:

Class	Concord	Quantitative pronoun
2	<i>vh-</i>	<i>vhose</i>
3	<i>w-</i>	<i>wose</i>
5	<i>l̄-</i>	<i>l̄ose</i>

7	tsh-	tshose
8	zw-	zwose
14	h-	hose
20	kw-	kwose

Compare the Tshilembethu quantitative pronouns with those of the Standard variety:

Class	Concord	Quantitative pronoun
2	vh-	vhoṭhe
3	w-	woṭhe
5	ḷ-	ḷoṭhe
7	tsh-	tshoṭhe
8	zw-	zwoṭhe
14	h-	hoṭhe
20	kw-	kwoṭhe

Other pronouns used in Tshilembethu are similar to those used in the Standard variety.

(b) *Relative*

Tshilembethu like Tshimbedzi has one verbal relative structure, which is similar to the one used in the Standard variety. This verbal relative structure which is formed by a relative concord, formative 'no' and the verb stem, is also used in other dialects of the Western Shona dialect cluster. The Standard variety has two additional verbal relative structures which do not occur at all in Tshilembethu. The following are examples of the verbal relative in Tshilembethu which are also similar to those of the Standard variety:

Vhanna vha no lisa mbudzi, ndo vha vona.

(I have seen the men who look after the goats.)

Musidzana a no nwala madzina a vhana, o swika.

(The girl who writes children's names, has arrived.)

(c) *Indicative*

The structure of the indicative verb in the positive in Tshilembethu is the same as in the Standard variety, but in the negative, Tshilembethu has its own form, which is different to that of the Standard and other Venda varieties. The negative form in Tshilembethu is formed by the subject concord, formative *si*, *nga* and the verb stem with terminative vowel *-i*. This can be illustrated by the following examples:

A si nga limi tsimu. (He/she does not plough the field)
 Tshi si nga nwi maḍi. (It does not drink water)
 Ngambo yavho i si nga ndi dini. (Your statement does not worry
 me)

The structure of the negative form in Tshilembethu resembles that of the dialects of the Western Shona dialect cluster. Unlike in Tshilembethu, the negative form of the Standard variety is formed by the negative prefix, subject concord and verb root with a terminative vowel *-i*, for example:

Ha limi tsimu. (He/she does not plough the field)
 A tshi nwi maḍi. (It does not drink water)
 Nyambo yavho a i nndini. (Your statement does not worry me)

(d) *The potential*

The structure of the potential verb in the positive in Tshilembethu is the same as that in the Standard variety, but in the negative, Tshilembethu has its own form different to that of the Standard and other varieties. The negative form in Tshilembethu is formed by the negative prefix, subject concord, formative *nga* and the verb stem with the terminative vowel *-i*. This can be illustrated by the following examples:

Kholomo a i nga fuli hatsi. (The cow may not graze the grass)
 Muñwadzi a u nga wi. (The hat may not fall)
 Limbo lavho a u nga lu koni. (You may not be able to sing their
 song)

On the other hand, the structure of the negative form in Tshilembethu resembles that of the dialects of the Western Shona dialects cluster. Evidence of this can be seen in the existing differences between the structure of the negative form in Tshilembethu and the Standard variety. The negative form of the Standard variety is formed by the subject concord, formatives nga, si and the verb root with a terminative vowel e, for example:

Kholomo i nga si fule hatsi. (The cow may not graze the grass)
 Muñadzi u nga si we. (The hat may not fall)
 Luimbo lwavho u nga si lu kone. (You may not be able to sing
 their song)

(e) *Tone*

In this section, the detailed characteristics of tone will not be discussed. The discussion centres on the role of tone in distinguishing the Tshilembethu variety from the Standard variety. Tshilembethu like Tshimbedzi has a tendency to use high tone where the Standard variety uses low tone. Here, Tshilembethu differs from Tshimbedzi because there is a deletion of vowels in aspect prefixes. This can be illustrated by the following examples:

Tshilembethu: Ó tó t'úwá é ése. (He/she went alone)
 Standard variety: Ò t'òu t'úwà e' èthè. (He/she went alone)

Tshilembethu: Ndi múthú káyé. (He/She is a good person)
 Standard variety: Ndi múthú múvhúyà. (He/she is a good
 person)

Tshilembethu: Sálání hanéfhánó. (Stay here)

Standard variety: Sàlani hènèfhàno. (Stay here)

Tshilembethu: Ini ni kho bvafhi? (Where do you come from?)

Standard variety: Inwi ni khòu bvafhi? (Where do you come from?)

(f) *Adverbs*

Tshilembethu is also distinguished by the use of certain adverbs. These adverbs differ from those used in the Standard variety and they are as follows:

Tshilembethu	Standard variety
kaye (nice person)	wavhuḍi (nice person)
kale (already)	no 'an aspect prefix' (already)

Below follow examples of these adverbs in sentences:

U to vha nwana kaye (He/she is just a nice kid)

Ndo wana kale o no ḷa (He/she has already eaten)

Kale in the Standard variety means long ago.

(g) *Interjections*

The following interjections occur in Tshilembethu and differ from those of the Standard and other Venda varieties. Compare the following:

Tshilembethu	Standard variety
eye! (yes)	ee!
akwe!/ikwe! (surprise)	evho!/tshukhwi!
kani! (it is used at the end of sentences in order to get an affirmative answer)	No equivalent in Standard variety

Examples of these interjections in sentences:

Eye! iwe ndo u vhona. (Yes, I saw you)

Akwe!/Ikwe! mathina ndi ayo. (Is it so?)

Ndi **ḁise** badza kani? (May I bring the hoe?)

3.3.7.4 Lexical items

Tshilembethu has a number of lexical items which distinguish it from the Standard variety. Most of these examples differ greatly in form and sometimes in form and meaning from their counterparts in the Standard variety. These lexical items are used exclusively by the Vhalembethu speakers:

(a) *Verb stems*

Tshilembethu		Standard variety
-vhiga	(report)	-hwedza
-kukula	(carry)	-hwala
-gadza	(put pot on fire)	-ṭadzia
-vhevhula	(shave)	-vheula
-levha	(talk)	-amba
-xwilo	(go upwards)	-gonya
-lunzu	(go downwards)	-tsa
-gwenya	(ascend)	-gonya
-timbela	(make porridge stiff)	-nyonga/-bvulela
-lamba	(refuse)	-hana
-ḁwa	(drink)	-nwa
-funda	(treat generously)	-thakha
-femedzeka	(breath hard)	-femeleka
-ṭafunya	(chew)	-ṭafuna
-enda	(go for a visit)	-dala
-gala	(sit)	-dzula
-ḁza	(doubt)	-kanakana
-ḁwa	(drink)	-nwa

-da	(love/like)	-funa
-dagaila	(boast)	-ṭonga

Nowadays some verb stems, like -funda and -thakha; -enda and -dala; -lamba and -hana; -vhiga and -hwedza, are used as synonyms.

Most of the verb stems are probably adopted from Kalanga and Lembethu, which belong to the dialects of the Kalanga dialect cluster. The examples which have been adopted from Kalanga and Lembethu are as follows:

- lamba is adopted from -lamba in Lembethu and Kalanga
- enda is adopted from -yenda or -enda in Lembethu and Kalanga
- nwa is adopted from n'wa in Lembethu
- levha is adopted from -leba in Lembethu
- kukula is adopted from -kukula in Lembethu and Lilima
- vhevhula is adopted from -vhevhula in Lembethu and Kalanga
- gwenya is adopted from -gwenya in Lembethu
- xwilo is adopted from -xwilo in Lembethu
- lunzu is adopted from -lunzu in Lembethu
- ṭafunya is adopted from -ṭafunya in Lembethu
- da is adopted from -da in Lembethu/Kalanga
- daigala is adopted from -dagaila in Lembethu

(b) *Nouns*

Tshilembethu

Standard variety

mbewu	(seed)	mbeu
liambo	(language)	luambo
gandwa	(pool of water)	tivha
nombe	(cattle)	kholomo
nwiya	(air)	muya
khuri	(mist)	khuli
badza	(hoe)	dzembe
matshana	(naughty children)	maḁana

mudani/	(basket)	muthatha
tshidani	(basket)	tshithatha
munwadzi	(hat)	munadzi
mulonga	(hole)	mulindi
mudzonga	(biltong)	muhwaba/mukoki
liimbo	(song)	luimbo
mavhala	(colours)	mivhala
ive	(stone)	tombo

Most of the nouns appear to have been adopted from the dialects (Lembethu, Kalanga and Pfumbi) of the Western Shona dialect cluster, for example:

liimbo adopted from lumbo in Lembethu/Kalanga
 badza adopted from ibadza in Lembethu
 mudani adopted from idani in Lembethu
 nombe adopted from n'ombe in Lembethu/Pfumbi
 mbewu adopted from mbewu in Lembethu/Pfumbi
 munwadzi adopted from mun'wadzi in Lembethu/Kalanga
 matshana adopted from matjana in Lembethu
 khuri adopted from khuri in Lembethu
 mulonga adopted from mulonga in Lembethu
 ive adopted from ive in Lembethu/Kalanga

3.3.8 Tshin̄ia

This variety is spoken in the far northern area of Thohoyandou. Tshin̄ia like Tshiṭavhatsindi does not have its own features. Even though the Vhaṅia regard their spoken form as a variety or dialect, they use grammatical and lexical features which are found in Tshilembethu and to a lesser extent Tshimbedzi. The existence of Tshin̄ia as a separate variety is debatable as Mathivha (1966:03) and Stayt (1931:192) have indicated. For this reason, aspects such as speech sounds, sound changes, grammatical features, tone and differences in lexical items are not dealt with here because they are similar to those used in the

Tshilembethu and Tshimbedzi variety.

3.4 RECAPITULATION

In this chapter, an attempt has been made to give the characteristics of all the regional varieties. Most of these characteristics are grammatical, phonological and lexical in nature. These features, which differentiate the Standard variety from other regional varieties, have resulted from the influences various clans acquired from the non Venda tribes conquered by the Venda people. This can be illustrated by the following:

Most features which differentiate Tshiilafuri from the Standard variety have been acquired from the Hananwa and Tlokwa varieties of Northern Sotho. The Tshiguvhu variety is characterised by features from the Lobeđu variety (of Northern Sotho). The same can be said of the Tshironga variety, which is characterised by features acquired from the Luleke and Gwamba varieties of Tsonga. The Tshimaanda variety which displays few Northern Sotho features, is becoming extinct due the influences from Tshironga speakers. Tshiṅia on the other hand, has also been indicated as a variety of Venda by Stayt (1931:192) and Van Warmelo (1989:3). Vhaṅia like Vhaṅavhatsindi regard their spoken variety as a variety even though they use grammatical features and lexical items which are found in Tshilembethu and to a lesser extent Tshimbedzi. The existence of Tshiṅia and Tshiṅavhatsindi as separate regional varieties is debatable.

CHAPTER 4

SOCIAL VARIETIES

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The term 'social varieties' refers to varieties of certain groups regardless of the geographical area from which they come. The existence of social varieties is determined by various factors, such as occupation, education, religious practice, class, politics, sex, age and culture. These factors appear to be related fairly directly to how people speak. The existence in a speech community of social distinctions, such as class and occupation gives rise to differential rates of linguistic change, favouring the creation of new speech differences or the preservation of existing ones. With regard to social varieties, Bolinger as quoted by Hudson (1980:28) says:

There is no limit to the ways in which human beings league themselves together for self-identification, security, a gain, amusement, worship or any of the purposes that are held in common; consequently there is no limit to the number and variety of speech communities that are to be found in a society.

The social varieties in Venda may be divided into two groups namely, those spoken only in the rural areas (e.g. *domba*, *thondo*, *vhusha*, *musevhetho*, *murundu*, *luambo lwa musanda* and others) and those spoken in both rural and urban areas (e.g. *mawa a thangu* and *tsotsi* language). In Venda, there are no conservative urban varieties, such as *fanakalo*. The social

varieties in Venda are characterised by phrases and registers. According to Hudson (1980:51),

...so within a single sentence some items (say, words) may reflect the speaker's region of origin, others his social class, others his relation to the addressee, others the formality of the occasion, and so on.

In addition, Wardhaugh (1992:49) says: "Registers are sets of vocabulary items associated with discrete occupational or social groups."

To avoid confusion, the varieties are not referred to as speech registers but as social varieties, since their very existence depends on various social factors. The social varieties in this chapter are discussed in terms of the two groups referred to above. The existence of lexical items or grammatical features are also considered.

4.2 RURAL SOCIAL VARIETIES

The term 'rural social varieties' in this chapter refers to the varieties spoken across all regional boundaries. Their existence depends on social groups rather than physical boundaries or artificial boundaries. With regard to some rural social varieties, Saville-Troike (1982:79) says "...varieties of language are often used when the purpose is to be secretive, or to deceive". The *murundu*, *domba*, *musevhetho*, *vhutuka*, *thondo* and *vhusha* varieties are secretive in nature in Venda. Most of the lexical items and expressions of these secretive varieties are not standardised because they are either restricted to males or females. On the other hand, some varieties, such as traditional religion, mourning, taboo and other varieties are characterised by lexical items and expressions which are also used in the Standard variety. As Brook (1979:13) says, "Sometimes a variety of language seems to depend not on the people using it but on the

occasion when it is used." His view is also supported by Halliday, McIntosh and Stevens (1964:87) who say, "Some varieties are also selected as appropriate to a given situation."

The social rural varieties discussed here also refer to the speeches of lower, middle and higher classes. The rural varieties can also be subdivided into 'closed' and 'open' rural varieties.

4.2.1 'Closed' rural varieties

In this thesis the term 'closed' varieties refers to varieties restricted to initiates of the initiation schools. For example, the use of the murundu variety is restricted to males who are attending or have attended murundu. The same can be said of the vhusa variety, whose use is restricted to females who are attending or have attended vhusa. Most of the lexical items and expressions of the 'closed' varieties are not standardised because it is taboo to utter them in public.

The nature of each social sub-group is discussed first followed by the special variety which characterises it.

4.2.1.1 Murundu variety

Like any other social group, the people who attend murundu, have their own variety. Hudson (1980:28) defines this type of group as "...a set of people who have something in common linguistically..." This variety helps this group to maintain its social identity.

According to Mr A Magudulela and Mr Andries Mudau, murundu is a circumcision school for males and a custom which was recently adopted from Northern Sotho clans. It is also practised by the Vatsonga. Because of this adoption, the influence of these two ethnic groups on the Venda people is evident and can be traced in the three areas inhabited by the Venda people namely the

north-western, the western and the south-western areas of Louis Trichardt. The Venda people in these areas have not only adopted the practices of *murundu* but have also adopted the social variety used during *murundu*. Because it is kept secret, this social variety enables males who have been initiated at *murundu* to detect those who have not been initiated. According to Van Warmelo (1932:125),

The main features of the institution among the Venda would appear to be:

- (a) circumcision, which takes place at the beginning, and is usually accepted as sufficient proof that an individual has been in the *murundu*.
- (b) *milayo*, which must be kept secret, and which serve, in the case of a stranger, as a means of ascertaining whether he has been initiated.
- (c) harsh treatment in the *murundu*, hardships and privations.

Although the Venda people have adopted the practices and the language used during *murundu*, they have neglected the educational purposes of *murundu*. These days *murundu* is also spreading to those areas which predominantly practised *thondo* as a form of initiation and not circumcision.

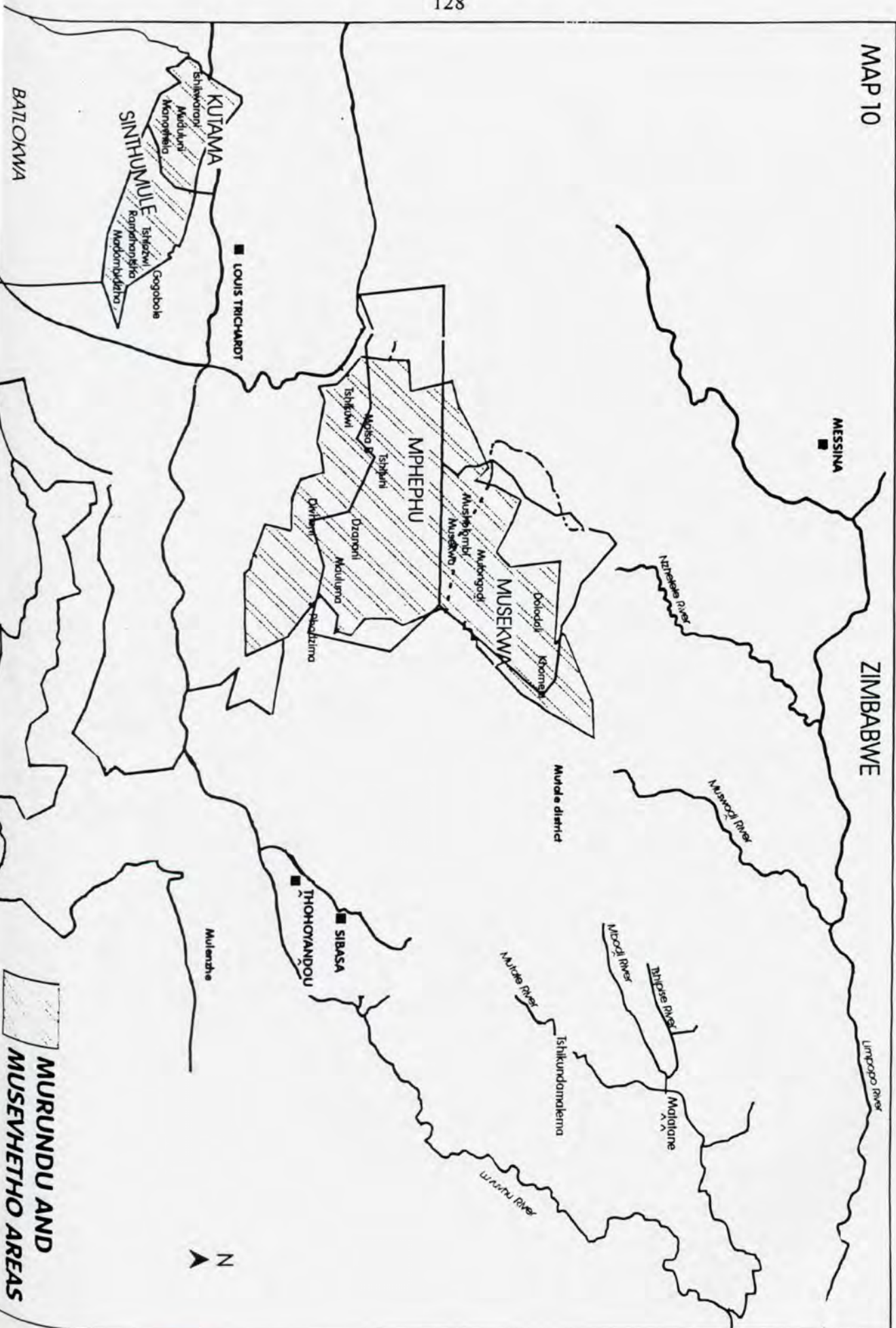
Mr Andries Mudau confirms Van Warmelo's (1932:125) statement that boys ranging from six to twelve years are admitted to the *murundu*. Because of pressure from the community or their families or for their own reasons, grown-up men are also admitted to *murundu*. In addition Stayt (1931:127) says,

It is held at intervals of about five years,

provided that at least one of the chief's sons is ready to take part in the ceremony and that a good harvest has been reaped. The school lasts for three months and is always held in winter.

The areas as indicated in maps 10 and 12 are mainly distinguished by Northern Sotho lexical items which are used in murundu. On the other hand, the area on the south-eastern side of Louis Trichardt as indicated in map 11 is distinguished by Tsonga lexical items used during murundu. It is also interesting to note that at the same time the Venda people also invented their own lexical items to replace some Northern Sotho and Tsonga lexical items during murundu. Most of these lexical items are kept secret.

MAP 10



**MURUNDU AND
MUSEVHEITHO AREAS**

ZIMBABWE

MESSINA

LOUIS TRICHAARDT

Mulembhe

THOHOVANDOU

SIBASA

MPHEPHU

MUSEKWA

Murida district

KUTAMA

SINTHUMULE

BATLOKWA



Shikwani
Muduna
Munofela

Isikhazi
Rumfanjika
Madombidzho
Cagobole

Mosho
Isikhazi
Dzananzi
Muduna
Dzibanzi

Mushegombi
Mushegombi
Mushegombi

Mutongodi
Dolobol
Kxome

Ntshenele River

Muzozvi River

Muzore River

Mudlatare

Muzore River

Isikhundamleina

Muzore River

Limpopo River

MAP 11

ZIMBABWE

129

MESSINA

Gumbu Masisi

Matshakatini

Duluthulu

Lukau

Mulele

Majatane

Tshikundamalema

Luvuvu River

Brok River

Nzhelele River

Muswazi River

Bhipha River

Mutale River

Limpopo River

Musekwa

Mphephu

Makwarela

SIBASA

THOHWANDOU

LOUIS TRICHARDT

KUTAMA

SINTHUMULE



TSONGA

Nesangani

Tshimbupfe

Mashau

Masa

Mhangani

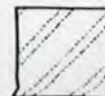
Davhana

Bhungeni

Njakanjaka

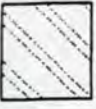
Majosi

VUMANI

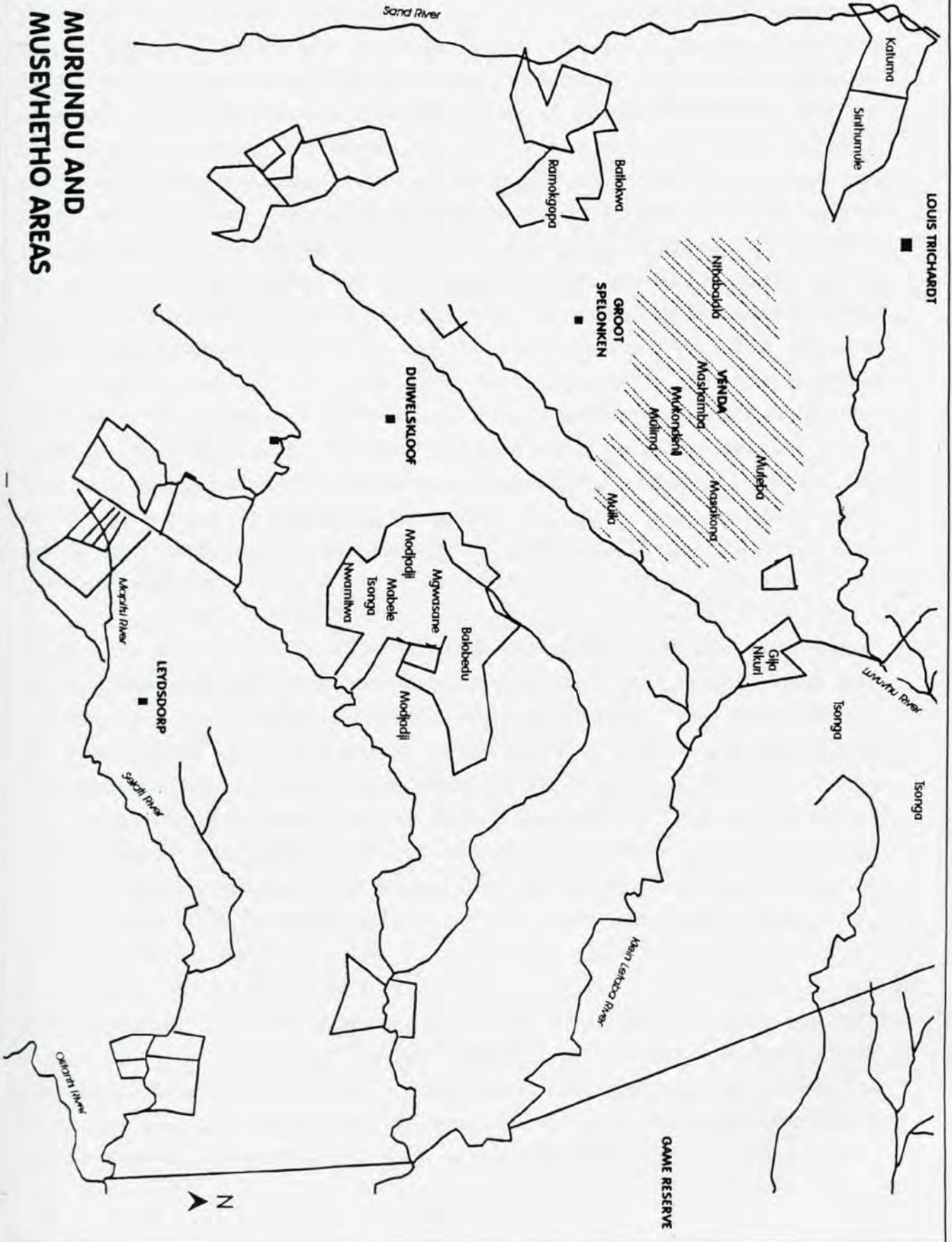


MURUNDU AND MUSEVHETHO AREAS

MAP 12



**MURUNDU AND
MUSEVHETHO AREAS**



LOUIS TRICHARDT

GROOT
SPELONKEN

DUIVELSKLOOF

LEYDSDOORP

GAME RESERVE



The boys who are not circumcised in all areas where *murundu* is practised are known as *mashuvhuru* (uncircumcised lads or men). The singular of *mashuvhuru* is *shuvhuru*. The noun *shuvhuru* appears to have been borrowed from the noun *lešoboro* in Northern Sotho. *Vhaimbi*, the term used in areas east of Louis Trichardt refers to all males who are going to be circumcised. It also appears to have been borrowed from the Tsonga verb stem *-yimba* meaning to be circumcised. The term *madzinga* (initiates) is used in the north-western and south-western areas of Louis Trichardt to refer to the circumcised males. The singular of the noun *madzinga* is *dzinga*. This noun appears to have been borrowed from the Northern Sotho *ledikana* derived from the infinitive verb *go dika* meaning *to encircle* referring to the process of circumcision. The meaning of the noun *dzinga* is different to the Northern Sotho noun *go dika* because *dzinga* means *deaf* whereas *go dika* means *to encircle*. The uncircumcised males known as *mashuvhuru* are admitted at the place known as *dzikhareni* (meaning *coil of grass or cloth used as a pad when carrying things on the head*) before they are circumcised.

Each male who is to be circumcised, is made to sit on the stone called *tshikalaha* meaning *little old man* while his eyes are covered by the hands of one of the assistants. The association of the *tshikalaha* with stone suggests the role to be played by old men during the operation. This is done so that the initiates may not witness how he is being operated. The process of operation in the north-western and south-western areas is known as *u fhefha* meaning *to sharpen* whereas in the eastern areas it is known as *u geḁa* meaning *to operate*. The verb stem *-fhefha* is polysemous in nature since it may also mean *to entertain*. The doctor in charge of this operation in the north-western and south-western areas is known as *Ramalia* whereas in the eastern areas he is known as *maine*. *Ramalia* has been adopted from *Rabadia*, which is a Northern Sotho name meaning the master of the lodge at initiation school. On the other hand, the eastern areas opted for *maine* rather than *ramalia*. *Maine* does not carry the

same meaning as *ramalia* because it refers only to 'operate'. The blood resulting from the operation is known as *munege* in all areas where *murundu* is practised. *Munege* appears to have been borrowed from *moneke* in Northern Sotho. Then the medicine known as *luṭala* is *made from foreskins of operated penises and certain herbs*. The noun *luṭala* has been invented by the Venda people who practise *murundu*. After the operation the bodies of all initiates are covered with white clay known as *khibi*. This white clay protects the initiates against coldness. *Khibi* has been formed from the Northern Sotho noun *kgetli* meaning *white clay daubed on initiates bodies* in the circumcision lodge.

The gateway to be used by initiates in all areas where *murundu* is practised is known as *vhaloi* meaning *wizard*. On the other hand, the one which is used by old men is known as *tshiwiliwi*. *Madzinga* are housed in huts known as *mpadi* in the north-western and south-western areas of Louis Trichardt. In the north-eastern areas of Louis Trichardt *vhaimbi* are housed in *ritsimba*. *Ritsimba* appears to have been formed from *ritsembe* in Tsonga meaning *young person of narrow build, not yet developed*. This noun *ritsimba* suggests that the boys who are housed in *ritsimba* are on the verge of attaining maturity. The houses of the old men are known as *kuḏi* meaning *little family* in all areas where *murundu* is practised. The males who were circumcised at the previous lodge, namely *vhadabe*, are largely responsible for taking care of *madzinga* or *vhaimbi*. They also have to see to it that the initiates eat properly. The porridge they eat is known as *tshivhanelo*. The initiates are forced to eat *tshivhanelo* without beef or pork or chicken or vegetables or water. The deverbative noun *tshivhanelo* suggests that the initiates are going to eat porridge being naked while porridge is displayed on the reeds known as *ngoma* referring to initiation. The initiates are also supposed not to vomit because if they do, they are punished. The ideophone *Khaṭha! Khaṭha!*, which is derived from the verb stem *-khaṭhamedza* (swallow something quickly), is used to encourage the initiates to eat. When this ideophone is uttered the

initiates are supposed to eat like wild animals. The initiate who is always unwilling to eat is referred to as *mangoḍa* meaning *somebody who knows very little*. *Midabe* are supposed to eat porridge known as *minaululo* referring to slices of porridge. The women who bring *tshivhanelo* to a place where the *vhadabe* are supposed to fetch *zwivhanelo*, shout out, "Ri a swa" meaning *we are burning*. The *vhadabe* in their answer say, "Iswai zwau, Nyankongo" meaning *burn Madam Clitoris*. *Vhadabe* use this foul language to show the women that there is nothing to be hidden from the initiates because they now learn the secrets of manhood.

The initiates are punished if they misbehave. One of the initiates is nominated to carry the instruments to be used for punishment known as *tshipata* or *mbudzi*. This deverbative noun *tshipata* is derived from the verb stem *-pata* meaning to press the fingers together in order to get the information from the initiates. The carrier of these instruments is known as *mufara-mbudzi* meaning *to carry the instruments for punishment*. This noun is a translation from *moswara-pudi* in Northern Sotho. *Mufara-mbudzi* is used in all areas where *murundu* is practised. This phrase *dzi khou mu mama* is usually uttered when one of the initiates misbehaves and it implies that the offender is getting the right punishment. It is said so because this instrument is placed between fingers while his hands are clasped.

The lexical items and expressions used during *murundu* express the immediate surrounding of the initiates and some parts of the bodies of initiates. Some lexical items and expressions used during the circumcision school are as follows:

The noun *ndou* refers to *mulilo* meaning fire and the phrase *u thavha tsetse* is usually used with the noun *ndou*. The noun, *ndou* has symbolic meaning because it shows the greatness of attending circumcision school. *U thavha tsetse* means to kindle the fire. The noun *ndau* refers to *tshivhaso* in Standard Venda meaning *hearth*. The noun *ndau* symbolically shows the strength which the

initiate will have after graduating from circumcision school. The noun *mafhefho* refers to *khuni* meaning firewood. The phrase *u diwa nga nngu* refers to *u vha na dzungu* in Standard Venda meaning to be *dizzy*. The noun *tshitswonyo* refers to *tshitungulo* in Standard Venda meaning *penis* and the phrase *u vala baga* refers to *u thivha tshivhunu nga tshirethe* in Standard Venda meaning *to block the anus with your heel*.

According to Mr Mudau, the phrase *murundu u a fhindlela* is used when the circumcision school is about to come to an end. This expression suggests that the initiates are now matured men and they can be answerable for any action they take. When this happens, the initiates are allowed to eat porridge with either beef or chicken or vegetables. An initiate known as *liḍaganana* (masked and completely disguised with grass and brushes) accompanies *midabe* to fetch *zwivhanelo* and dances in front of the women. On the eve of the closure of *murundu* the initiates are called to come and witness *u fa ha makhulu* (the grandfather or grandmother is dead). On the following day *murundu* closes down and it is said that *murundu u a swa* meaning *the circumcision school is being closed down*. This is said because *vhazhe*, the initiates who are in charge of kindling the fire at *murundu*, burn everything when other initiates go home. In some areas, the initiates are called in to come and greet *makhulu* referring to the pole known as *mulagalu*.

(a) Lexical items and expressions

The following are some of the lexical items and expressions which distinguish the *murundu* variety from other social varieties.

(i) Verb stems and nouns (lexical items)

Murundu variety	Meaning	Standard variety
-fhefha	to entertain	-fhungadza/ -dzingadza
-fhefha	to sharpen	-fumbiswa
-geḁa	to operate	-ara
-yimba	to circumcise	-fumbisa
tshivhanelo	porridge	vhuswa
nḁou	fire	mulilo
mafhefho	firewood	khuni
ndau	hearth	tshivhaso
shuvhuru	uncircumcised	shuvhuru
ngoma	reeds	ṭhanga

Table 1.

(ii) Some expressions are as follows:

Murundu variety	Meaning	Standard variety
u diwa nga nngu	to be dizzy	u vha na dzungu
murundu u a fhindulela	circumcision school is about to come to an end	murundu u tsini na u swa
dzi khou mu mama	getting the right punishment	u pfiswa u vhavha
u thavha tsetse	to kindle a fire	u khuṭhedza mulilo

Table 2.

4.2.1.2 Musevhetho variety

The musevhetho variety functions as a social maintenance among the people who attend musevhetho and helps them to express their needs and values. With regard to this type of social variety, Wardhaugh (1992:221) says:

...it determines how speakers perceive and organize the world around them, both the natural world and social world.

Musevhetho is also known as sungwi or tshikumbana or hale and is a circumcision institution for females. The designation of various names to this institution varies from area to area. According to informants who were consulted on musevhetho, there is no special reason for using different names for the females' circumcision institution. It seems as if these are given at random. For example, the people at Tshikwarani Hakutama call the circumcision school for females tshikumbana whereas in other

areas of Hakutama, this institution is known as musevhetho. Musevhetho cannot be held at the same time as murundu because it is practised in the same way as murundu. On this, Stayt (1931:138-139) says:

The musevhetho is very popular among a small section of people, particularly where the murundu has the strongest influence.

Like murundu, the practice of musevhetho has been adopted from the Sotho speaking people. Evidence of this can be traced in the variety used in this institution. Stayt (1931:139) defines musevhetho as,

More in the nature of a secret society than a recognised feature of the social organisation. The most important part of the proceedings is the operation, which all the initiates must undergo.

The most striking feature of musevhetho lexical items is that most of them have been borrowed from the Northern Sotho speaking people while some have been created.

The lexical items, such as *nonyana* meaning *god or spirit*, are used by initiates and other people attending musevhetho. *Nonyana*, a noun borrowed from Northern Sotho, refers to *tshinoni* in Venda meaning *a bird*. The seat of this *god or spirit* is known as *tshitendeledi* meaning *the circle* and the hut of *nonyana* is known as *tshiludo* meaning *the place representing the maternal ancestors*. *Nonyana* is assisted by a little girl, known as *muluvhe* meaning *the one who manages*, and three boys, known as *vhahwira* meaning *masked dancers*. The singular of *vhahwira* is *muhwira* and is borrowed from the Northern Sotho *mogwera*. *Vhahwira* are responsible for recruiting new members for musevhetho and beg for gifts for *nonyana*. The initiates of musevhetho are known as *vhale* meaning *the initiates are passing a certain stage*. *Vhale* is

borrowed from the Northern Sotho *byale*. The singular of *vhale* is *mule*. The encounter of *nonyana* with initiates is known as *u dzinginya* meaning *to shake*. This is said because when *vhale* enter *tshiludo*, each *mule* is supposed to shake the head of the big monstrous thing. When *nonyana* leaves its hut, "*e ya rakga*" is said, meaning to come forth and put out the fires. *E ya rakga* is a Northern Sotho expression and has been adopted as it is into Venda. *Vhale* also go through the process known as *phephenyane* referring to a small pronged stick which the initiates are made to hold between their thighs while hopping forward. This ordeal makes this rite very painful.

(a) Lexical items and expressions

The following table shows some of the lexical items and expressions which distinguish the *musevetho* variety from other social varieties. Most of these lexical items appear to have been borrowed from Northern Sotho as indicated in the above discussion.

Musevhetho variety	Meaning	Standard variety
-sevhetha	singing	u guda u imba nyimbo dza musevhetho
-dzinginya	to come face to face with Nonyana	u vhoneana na Nonyana
Nonyana	god or spirit	mudzimu
tshitendeledzi	seat of Nonyana	tshidzulo tsha Nonyana
tshiludo	hut of Nonyana	nndu ya Nonyana
muluvhe	one who manages	muthusi wa Nonyana
muhwira	masked dancer	muhwira
vhaḽe	initiates	vhafumbi
phandu	fire	mulilo
khedebu	the name of musevhetho drum	khedebu
thungwa	the name of musevhetho drum	thungwa

Table 3.

4.2.1.3 Vhutuka variety

The people who attend vhutuka use a certain speech variety because they share the same norms and set of social attitudes towards language. According to Saviile-Troike (1982:15),

Linguistic features are often employed by people, consciously or unconsciously, to identify themselves and others, and thus serve to mark and maintain various social categories and divisions.

According to Stayt (1931:104), *vhutuka* is attended by boys who have just experienced their nocturnal emission. This takes place at the chief's kraal known as *thondo*. These boys are given lessons on sexual intercourse, the tribal rules and way of life.

The variety used during *vhutuka* revolves around sexual intercourse, tribal rules and way of life. *Mukoma* is the man in charge of the initiates who are attending *vhutuka* and is also the chief's aide. Those who look after the initiates are known as *midabe* and are responsible for assisting the newly circumcised. The noun *mudabe* (singular) or *midabe* (plural) is derived from the verb stem *-dabela* meaning to assist in the teaching of newly circumcised. If the initiates misbehave, they are punished with instruments known as *tshipata*. This noun is derived from the verb stem *-pata* meaning to press the fingers together in order to extract the information from the initiates. *Vhutuka* only lasts for six days.

The variety associated with *vhutuka* is characterised by various expressions, including the following:

Tshivhaso ndi shimba la ndou: *tshivhaso* is a hearth and *shimba la ndou* is an elephant's foot. *Tshivhaso* represents the vagina and *shimba la ndou* represents the penis. These reproductive organs function hand in hand for the sake of procreating. This expression promotes the practice of heterosexual activities in the community.

Miora ndi muṭavha: *miora* refers to ashes and *muṭavha* refers to sand. Ashes have resulted from the burning wood and sand has resulted from rock erosion. This phrase refers to the release of sperm.

U tswa hu pfi u dzhia: This expression refers to the activities of stealing by the initiates. The initiates who engage in stealing during *vhutuka* are not supposed to be punished or taken to court if they are caught stealing a goat or a fowl. These initiates are always protected by the headmen or chief.

Tshitungulo: This is the stick used to administer punishment. *Tshitungulo*, an amulet, is a sacred object which protects any person who carries it or looks after it, from evil. So this stick which is used during *vhutuka* is regarded as a sacred object.

Every part of the hut is likened to a part of the human body or parts of the most important animals or reptiles, such as the python, lion or elephant. Like all parts of a hut, the parts of the human body are important for man's survival. This can be illustrated by how the parts of the human body are likened to the structures of a hut in some of the following examples:

ṭhanga (roof) is called *ngoma* (thempanum).

Phuphu dza nnḡu (big poles of the hut) are called *milenzhe* (feet).

The initiates have to perform the rite of *u kama* (soaking initiates in the river) before they graduate from *vhutuka*. The rite of *u kama* tests the initiates if they are man enough to endure the hardship.

(a) Lexical items and expressions

The tables below show some of the lexical items and expressions which distinguish the *vhutuka* variety from other social varieties.

(i) Some nouns (lexical items) with the shift of meaning:

Vhutuka	Meaning	Standard variety
mafhali	firewood	khuni
tshivhindi	liver	sale
khuli	mist	khuli
phandu	fire	mulilo
mudugudugu	lightning	lupenyo
zwivhoḁe	small twigs	maḁasana

Table 4.

(ii) Some expressions with the shift of meaning:

Vhutuka variety	Meaning	Standard variety
luvhabvu lwa țharu	the wall surrounding the houses	mutshețo wa muđi
ițo la ndau	the wash-basin	sambelo
muthenga wa mphwe	the central pole supporting the roof	muțovhori
milenzhe	the pillars of the house	phuphu dza nņđu
tshițana tsha phele	the highest rafter of the roof	tshiaramo

Table 5.

4.2.1.4 Vhusha variety

Like other initiation institutions, **vhusha** has its own variety, which makes it different from other social institutions. Hudson (1980:106) says "What makes one variety of language different from another is the linguistic items it includes,..."

According to Stayt (1931:106), **vhusha** is the passage from childhood to adolescence. It is attended by all girls who have just experienced their first menstruation, which is known as **u vhona nwedzi**. The initiate who attends **vhusha** is known as **khomba**. This implies that she is now dangerous because an involvement in sexual intercourse with **muțhannga**, a boy who has experienced his nocturnal emission, may result in pregnancy.

According to Mrs Khomola, *vhusha* takes place at the petty chief or chief's place. The fire is lit at *khoro*. All women who dance should put on *shedo*. The hut of the initiates is known as *tshivhambo*. In some areas among the Venda people, the girl should go through the rite of *u shangula* before she attends the proper *vhusha*. The verb stem *-shangula* appears to have been borrowed from Kalanga *-shangura* meaning *to strip off clothes*. *U shangula*, meaning *to strip or to undress*, is seen as the first step to initiate girls into *vhusha* and to womanhood.

When *vhusha* is in session, a girl goes to the river early in the morning to perform *u kama*, meaning *she gets into the water until the water reaches her neck*. If *khomba* endures the coldness in the water, it is said that *I khou dzwidela*. This expression implies that she is showing some signs of maturity. With the *khomba* from the royal family the expression *vha a fhisa* is used. This expression implies that the princesses are not treated harshly as the commoners are.

According to Mrs Nyamaḍala Mashau, supported by Mrs Nyamaḍala Maphiri, some lexical items pertaining to *vhusha* are used by *dzikhomba* and refer to sexual relations between man and woman, and also life in general. The lexical items used are mostly metaphoric because all parts of the hut mentioned during *vhusha* refer to sexual relations between man and woman and also life in general. The following examples illustrate this:

Tshiukhuvha refers to *musadzi* meaning *doorstep*. This noun *doorstep* refers to a woman because the woman in the family is regarded as an initiator in everything. *Tshiaramo* refers to *munna* meaning *the crossbar*. *Tshiaramo* refers to a man because the man must show his strength in sexual activity. *Vothi li tshi kweiwa* refers to *munna a tshi ḍa* meaning *to fit in the door* refers to a penis penetrating the vagina because the man must show his ability to perform well during sex.

Every part of the hut is likened to a part of the human body. Like all the parts of a hut, the parts of a human body are vital for man's survival. This can be illustrated by how the parts of the human body are equated to the structures of a hut in the following examples:

Mutshila wa vothi refers to *tshitungulo* meaning the hinge-pin on the door which refers to the penis. *Basha la nduni* refers to *marambo a muthu* meaning the poles of the hut referring to a person's bones. *Mbalelo* refers to *mbavu* meaning the wattling of the hut/roof refers to a person's ribs. *Maḍinga* refers to *thindi* meaning the plastering mud and refers to *malofha a muthu* meaning the water that has mixed with the plastering mud which refers to human blood.

The following lexical items and expressions indicate how sexual activities are valued among the Venda people:

Ngomu nduni nḥa nḥangani na fhasi kha tshivhaso refers to the fully grown up boy and a girl having sexual intercourse. *Vothi lo valwa* refers to *musadzi e na thumbu* meaning the closed door which refers to a pregnant woman. *Vothi lo vulwaho* refers to a woman who has just given birth. *Luvhondo lu u lavhelesaho* refers to *munna a konaho mabaini* and the wall behind you refers to the man who is sexually weak. There is also a general belief that sexual intercourse should take place in a secluded place.

(a) Lexical items and expressions

The table below show some of the lexical items and expressions which distinguish the *vhusha* variety from other social varieties.

(i) Some nouns (lexical items) with the shift of meaning:

Vhusha	Meaning	Standard variety
tshiukhuvha	woman	musadzi
tshiaramo	man	munna
mbalelo	ribs	mbavu
maḍinga	human flesh	ḡama ya muthu
mboloma	penis	tshitungulo
vothi	crocodile	ngwena

Table 6.

(ii) Some expressions with the shift of meaning:

Vhusha	Meaning	Standard variety
mutshila wa vothi	penis	tshitungulo
basha la nduni	human bones	marambo a muthu
vothi lo vulwaho	to give birth	u vhofholowa
luvhondo lu u lavhelesaho	the man who is sexually active	munna a konaho mabaini
maḍi o sukaho matope a nḍu	human blood	malofha a muthu
u pfulwa	to be deflowered	khomba yo no dzhenelaho zwa mabai
vothi lo valwaho	to be pregnant	u vhifha muvhilini
ngomu nduni nḥa na fhasi kha tshivhaso	the young man and young girl having sexual intercourse	muḥhannga na musidzana vhe kati kha zwa mabai
vothi li tshi kweiwa	penis penetrating the vagina	munna u ita zwa mabaini na musadzi

Table 7.

4.2.1.5 Thondo variety

As indicated in section 2.4.5 of chapter 2, thondo is the indigenous initiation school although its place today is being taken by murundu. Thondo is held in an enclosed space in the chief's kraal inside a hut. Outsiders are refused permission to attend the initiation school. The main aim of this institution

is to provide a meeting place for the warriors and to instil discipline into young men, women and young women. The man in charge of *thondo* is known as *Negota* and is always assisted by some of the older men. *Thondo* as a social institution has its own variety. The variety used in this institution is mainly characterised by a few lexical items and *thondo* as such can be divided into:

(a) Thondo ya vhakololo

This is for princes and princesses. During initiation, they gather special knowledge which is not known to commoners. The woman, known as *Maliwashe*, sees to it that all the initiates are well fed. The porridge dish is known as *luselo vhuḍinḍa*. The princes eat together, and separate from the princesses.

(b) Thondo ya vhasadzi

Women also attend *thondo* and it is known as *thondo ya vhasadzi*. Women at *thondo* are taught to be submissive. The wives of headmen put on an ornament known as *tshiala*. *Tshiala* symbolises the higher status they occupy over other women. After graduating, each graduate is assigned the title *Nya*- meaning *the mother of* and it always precedes the existing name.

(c) Thondo ya vhaḍinḍa

Only young men who have reached the age of puberty are allowed to attend *thondo ya vhaḍinḍa*. The noun *vhaḍinḍa* means the messengers who do everything for the chief, even certain dangerous duties. The singular of *vhaḍinḍa* is *muḍinḍa*. These lads are also taught how to use arms (spears) and to provide security for the chief. Each graduate is given the title *Ne*- meaning *the owner of* and it always precedes the existing name.

As part of the *thondo* variety, each *muḍinda* learns to praise the chief. This praise poem is full of metaphors, including the following:

Iwenzhe lwa shango: The chief is likened to the light which makes people see. This is because he is regarded as the wisest person who sees everything in his area.

Nḍou-lume: The chief is likened to the male elephant because of the superior position he holds in his area.

Mudzimu-muhulu: The chief is likened to the Almighty God because of the protection he gives to his subjects.

Mambo-wa-Galanga: The chief is likened to the mighty king who ruled at *Vhukalanga* because of the respect he has from his people.

Muḷa-vhathu: The chief is likened to the cannibal because he can punish his subjects severely.

Iwe-ane-wa-ri Ifani, ra fa: the chief is likened to a person who is vested with all powers.

Thondo as a variety has few lexical items which separate it from the standard variety.

(i) Lexical items and expressions

There are few lexical items of *thondo* which are similar to those of the *vhutuka* institution. The following are some of the lexical items with the shift of meaning which distinguish the *thondo* variety from other social varieties.

Thondo variety	Meaning	Standard variety
milenzhe	the pillars of the house	phuphu dza nndu
mbavu	wattling	mbalelo
ngoma	roof	thanga
mudugudugu	lightning	lupenyo
lusie	built-in-seat	tshidzulo
khuli	smoke	mutsi

Table 8.

4.2.1.6 Domba variety

This is the variety used in the *domba* initiation school or when referring to aspects of the *domba* institution. According to Mrs Nyamaçala Mashau, *domba* is the initiation school for both girls and boys. It does not take place regularly. This type of school takes place when there are a number of girls ready to participate, as well as a good harvest. If there is plenty of food, this enables members of the school to have the necessary leisure.

The main aim of this school is to prepare the grown up boys and girls for marriage. When the school is in session, they are taught to understand the importance of marriage, child-birth and other matters.

Mrs Khomola, an informant, maintains that *domba* is held throughout the areas where the Venda people are found, but some practices of *domba* do differ from one area to another.

Like other social institutions, *domba* has a language variety

which enables the initiates and other people to distinguish themselves from other social groups. Saville-Troike (1982:51) states that within each community "there is a variety of language codes and ways available to its members". In this section, lexical items and expressions which are associated with the *domba* institution will be discussed.

The noun *domba* appears to have been formed from the verb stem -*dombela* meaning *to become more mature*. This can be illustrated by what happens to all phases of *domba*, namely *Tshikanda*, *Ludodo* and *domba* proper, all of which are discussed later. Like other institutions, *domba* has its own variety which is characterised by lexical items and unique expressions which are suitable for this variety. Mrs Nyamaḍala Muṭheiwana Sannie Mashau confirms Stayt's (1931:112) statement that the man who is in charge of *domba* is known as *Nyamungozwa* and is a song leader. He is also assisted by a woman, known as *Nyamatei*, who supervises girls.

The noun *Nyamungozwa* is formed by adding the prefix *Nya-* meaning *the mother of* to the noun *mungozwa* meaning the woman who has just given birth. This noun *mungozwa* appears to have been borrowed from Shona and means a woman who is nursing a baby up to one month. The name *Nyamungozwa*, although feminine in its semantic content, explains the role played by the man in charge. He is regarded as the mother of all the initiates and they should all listen to him. On the other hand, the name *Nyamatei*, which is a title assigned to a woman who supervises girls, is also formed by incorporating the prefix *Nya-* meaning *the mother of*, the plural prefix *ma-* and the verb stem *-tea* meaning *to lay the foundation*. She is the one who provides the basics of life to the initiates. Both *Nyamungozwa* and *Nyamatei* see to it that *domba* is properly run and the initiates carry out all the instructions of this institution until they graduate. They perform these duties like all mothers who look after their children and homes.

Mrs Nyamaḍala Maphiri confirms Van Warmelo's (1932:53) statement that the *domba* is preceded by the practices of *Tshikanda* and

Ludodo. Some lexical items and expressions which characterise *domba* are discussed according to these two phases.

(a) Tshikanda

Tshikanda is a secret initiation rite for females. It is known as *tshikanda* because initiates wear pieces of raw hide. It takes place on the first day before *domba*. During the *tshikanda*, *vhadabe* (those who were initiated previously when *domba* was in session) teach the initiates the morals or formulae of what is traditionally right, customary, ethical and obligatory. With the knowledge of all these formulae and terminology, the initiates are regarded as the foundation of the future generation, that is why they are known as *vhatei*. This noun *vhatei* is derived from the verb stem *-tea* meaning *to lay the foundation*. *Vhatei* gather at the gate known as *khoro*. *Khoro* is the main gateway to the outside and is also an access to the rest of the village. This is the place where the men usually gather and strangers wait before they make any contact with other people. Then, the *vhatei* like strangers, who know nothing about *tshikanda*, wait at the *khoro* before they proceed to the hut known as *tshivhambo* for initiation. The noun *tshivhambo*, which appears to have been formed from the verb stem *-vhamba* meaning *to crucify*, is known for its vigorous treatment of the initiates. As the name *tshivhambo* suggests, *vhatei* are taught to endure hardship and are taught their first lesson in the python dance. During this phase, *tharu* (an ornament) is presented to *Nyamatei* and it forms part of the proceedings of *tshikanda*. The presentation of *thahu* to *Nyamatei* is an honour and a symbol of motherhood.

(b) Ludodo

This is the second phase of *domba* and takes place on the second day before *domba*. The noun *ludodo* has been formed from the verb stem *-dodoma* meaning *to run quickly with frequent halts to cower down and hide*. This name suggests some of the practices which the *vhatei* engage in during *ludodo*. These practices reveal the

beliefs of the Venda people. According to Stayt (1931:113), the significance of *ludodo* is to teach grown-up girls about the signs of pregnancy, the hardship of marriage and child-birth. During *ludodo*, the *vhatei* also receive lessons on the python dance. Although they are allowed to practise *u ḍavhula* (meaning *to practise pseudo coitus*), they are not supposed to be penetrated during the sexual activities with men. If one of them is found to be penetrated, she is punished by the *vhadabe*, and the type of punishment meted out to the girl found guilty is known as *tshipata*. The noun *tshipata* has been formed from the verb stem *-pata* meaning *to squeeze or compress*. As this noun *tshipata* suggests, the *vhatei* are punished by squeezing their fingers between two sticks known as *tshipata*. This expression *u ḍavhula* teaches the initiates that a mature woman should have a male lover and this makes her acceptable to society. They are also taught to sing various songs which will be performed when *domba* commences. When they are busy practising the songs, the big drum known as *gangalilagovhamilenzhe* and the small one *thungwa* are played.

(c) The *domba* proper

The *domba* proper is attended by both females and males. It takes place on the third day and the start of *domba* proper is known as *domba lo tshoṭa* or *u kwasha gumbu*. The expression *domba lo tshoṭa* (meaning *break through a fence*) indicates that *domba* is in progress. This expression suggests the disruption of normal family life and other activities performed by society. The expression *u kwasha gumbu* meaning *to let the unknown be known*, indicates that the initiates are believed to know nothing when they come to *domba* for the first time. By attending *domba* they will know all the secrets of life. At this stage, the *vhatei*, who comprise grown-up boys and girls, are brought to *tshivhambo u wela* meaning *to be initiated*. The expression *u wela* is used to signify that the initiates are going to cross over into another state of adulthood by being initiated.

The noun, *tshiṭanza* meaning *the money which is paid by commoners, the princesses and princes in order to gain entry into domba*, is formed by the noun prefix *tshi-* and the verb stem *-ṭanza* meaning *to vomit*. In the case of *domba* the parents hand over the control of their sons and daughters to *Nyamungozwa* and *Nyamatei* who will henceforth exercise parental control. Girls from the royal family put on *sheḁo* (a narrow strip of cloth between legs which hangs in front and behind) and *palu* (bluish cloth with many white or coloured spots and stripes). These two items symbolise high status. *Musiwana* (a commoner) puts on only *sheḁo* which symbolises low status. The chief's wife puts on *musisi* (cloth worn as back-apron by female) and *palu*. The combination of *musisi* and *palu* symbolise high status while the putting on of *musisi* without *palu* by the commoners' wives symbolises low status.

On the first day of *domba*, the traditional doctor makes a fire with a stick known as *tshiregu* meaning *the female piece of wood in which fire is drilled*. This fire cannot be extinguished. This becomes possible because *hala ḁa mafhaṭa* (hot embers) are covered with ashes when they go to bed. The *hala ḁa mafhaṭa* is always associated with babies who are twins because the original member is resembled by another one to light the fire the following morning.

On the first day of *domba*, the *vhatei* are taken to *tshivhambo* where the initiation takes place. Inside *tshivhambo*, each *mutei* climbs two poles onto the roof and then hangs upside down in the same way as a bat. When initiates do this, it is said that they are performing *mulema* meaning *bat in a sleeping position*. This practice signifies the entrance into a new stage as the initiates will have to do away with the practice of *u ḁavhula* (the practice of false sexual intercourse) and become responsible mature adults.

When *domba* is in session, *vhatei* should come to terms with the lexical items and expressions which are a core part of *domba*

variety. They learn to know these lexical items and expressions when they are first admitted to *domba*. They also use these lexical items and expressions during their stay at *domba* for three months or more since it is forbidden to use any variety other than the *domba* variety. Some of the lexical items and expressions are characterised by a shift of meaning. The following examples illustrate this:

U vala khoro (to close the gate) refers to pregnancy. This phrase symbolises pregnancy because once the sperm enters the egg cell, the opening of the egg cell closes.

U vula khoro (to open the gate) means to give birth. This phrase symbolises the process of giving birth. As a result of attending *domba*, *vhatei* become new people after going through all the stages of *domba*.

Khoro (gate of the courtyard) is known as *Dzivha Fundudzi* (lake Fundudzi). *Dzivha Fundudzi* is a place of ancestors and gods and it is regarded as the scared place. Lake *Fundudzi* is respected by all Venda people. Like *Dzivha Fundudzi*, *khoro* of *domba* is a scared place and should be respected by all people who are attending this institution.

Thungo ya tshamonde tsha khoro (the left hand side of the gate) referred to *milenzhe* or *fumi la malembe* (ten hoes). If a man possesses ten hoes, he should be regarded a wealthy man. Traditionally, on the left hand side of the kraal, there are always cattle kraals and goat pens which are regarded as a symbol of wealth to any Venda man.

Ntsha ha khoro (the top side of the gate) is referred to as *tshitaha tsha tshiruxwe* (the nest of a bird known as *tshiruxwe*). According to Mrs Mutele, this expression refers to the position of the chief's kraal, which cannot be pointed at by a commoner because it is considered taboo. This expression serves as

reminder to all the initiates that the chief is above all people and should be protected from strangers by not letting anyone know where the chief's kraal is.

Zwa u fara ngoma (the handles of drums) are known as *magona a lutshele* (young frog's knees). This refers to the importance of the handles of the drums because they make it easier for the drum carriers to carry it.

Thovuma ya ngoma (the middle of the baby's head) refers to the smooth centre of the thempanum of the drum because the movement which is always seen in the middle of the baby's head is an indication of life. This brings joy to the family of the baby. Like the middle of the baby's head, the beating of the thempanum of the drum brings joy to the dancers.

Kubuli ku re fhasi ha ngoma (the little hole under the drum) is referred to as *tshivhunu tsha nwana* (the anus of a child). So the little hole of the drum is associated with the anus, the part of the body which plays an important role in excretion. Like the anus of the baby, the little hole of the drum relieves the pressure of the drum in order to give the audience a good sound.

Lukanda lwa tharu (python's skin) refers to the fence around the gate. Like the python's skin, the fence around the gate should be very strong and this could help prevent intruders from going in through any other entrance.

U vhofholola (to give birth, untie) refers to the pouring out of beer. Beer is usually served if the family is blessed with a baby. So the pouring out of beer is associated with giving birth, a symbol of happiness.

Masale (embers) refers to a woman who does not menstruate. This word symbolises menopause in a woman. In other words, the stage of menopause in a woman plays no role in reproduction.

Milora (ashes) refers to sperms. This word symbolises the end product which comes into existence as a result of sexual intercourse between a man and a woman

Tshiuludza (the top of the roof) refers to a man. This word symbolises the superiority of the man and the role he plays during intercourse.

Tshivhaso (hearth) refers to a woman. *Tshivhaso* is the place where fire is made and where the cooking is also done. So a woman, like *tshivhaso*, has a vagina which is responsible for sexual intercourse and giving birth. Although the woman plays such an important role, she is inferior to the man.

Phandu (adopt new good habits) refers to fire. This noun symbolises the adoption of the new habits by *vhatei*. The fire which is lit during the *domba* ceremony bears testimony to this.

Matombo a maḍini (stones in the water) refer to testicles. This word symbolises the testicles which are surrounded by pubic hair. The testicles are the pillars of the man's reproductive organs.

Mahatsi a mulamboni (grass in the river) refers to pubic hair. This phrase symbolises the existence of reproductive organs.

When the *domba* is in session the *vhadabe* and *vhatei* form a queue known as *deu* (meaning *queue*) and perform a python dance. This is the central feature of this institution. Every evening *nyamungozwa* plays a drum and this is known as *tshilondo*. When he does this, he invites the *vhadabe*, *vhatei* and others to come and attend the *domba* ceremony.

Domba becomes a complete institution when demonstrative lessons known as *maḵano* (shows which demonstrate the practical life) are presented to the initiates. During these lessons, the initiates, known as *vhatei* learn about sex, marriage, care and childbirth

and are forced to perform certain feats of endurance which humiliate and harden them. The following are some of the demonstrative lessons, known as *maṭano* of *domba*:

(i) *Ngoma ya ṭharu* (the demonstrative lesson of the python). *Domba* is centred around a woman. The python here refers to a woman. *Vhatei* (only males) are warned not to have sexual intercourse with a woman if she has experienced abortion or miscarriage.

If they do, they will die. The woman is equated to a python swallowing an animal or a human being. The swallowed animal or person dies inside the belly of a python.

(ii) *Ngoma ya sali* (the demonstrative lesson of embers). Here the initiates are taught the hardship of life by making them hold hot embers. The noun *sali* is formed from the noun *sale* meaning *embers*.

(iii) *Ngoma ya mavhavhe* (the demonstrative lesson for hurting). The noun *mavhavhe* is derived from the verb stem *-vhavha*. During this lesson, the initiates are ordered to engage in strenuous physical exercise and, if they fail to do it properly, they are beaten severely. The purpose of this lesson is to prepare the initiates to face hardship after graduating from the *domba* institution.

(iv) *Ngoma ya muṭoṭombudzi* (the demonstrative lesson for the grasshopper). *Muṭoṭombudzi* is a female grasshopper and it represents the females. It is bigger in size than the male grasshopper. During this demonstrative lesson, the *vhatei*, who are only females, are taught that men are superior to women. This is demonstrated when a female, who is disguised as a grasshopper with rushes and grass, thrashes male initiates but in the end, she is defeated.

- (v) *Ngoma ya phalana* (the demonstrative lesson of impala). The noun *phalana* is derived from the noun *phala*. During this lesson, the *vhatei*, who are referred to as *phalana* (small impala), learn that in whatever they do, the chief, who is equated to *phala* (impala), should get a share.
- (vi) *Ngoma ya singwele* (the demonstrative lesson of falling). The noun *singwele* is derived from the verb stem *-wela*. The purpose of this lesson is to teach *vhatei* who are females to be faithful to their husband because this may cause trouble for them.
- (vii) *Ngoma ya mbudzi na nngwe* (the demonstrative lesson of goat and leopard). This is demonstrated by male initiates who play the role of drunken men. While they are still drinking beer, the goat which they are supposed to take is killed by a leopard. During this lesson, *vhatei* who are males are warned to be always alert and protect their properties.
- (viii) *Ngoma ya muvhoro* (the demonstrative lesson of young married man). The noun *muvhoro* is derived from *muvhora* meaning *young married man*. During this lesson the *vhatei* who are males are taught to defend themselves if they happen to be in trouble.
- (ix) *Ngoma ya Thovhela na Tshishonga* (the demonstrative lesson of Thovhela and Tshishonga). This is demonstrated by male initiates who play the role of Thovhela and Tshishonga. These two characters, Tshishonga and Thovhela, are married men. When the fight breaks out, Tshishonga is defeated and his wives are taken by Thovhela. During this lesson the *vhatei*, who are males, are taught to be strong and to protect their wives.
- (x) *Ngoma ya nyalilo* (the demonstrative lesson of crying). The

deverbative noun *nyalilo* is derived from the verb stem -*lila*. During this lesson, the *vhatei* who are males are taught to show their manliness over their female partners during sexual intercourse.

(d) **Tshilalandoima**

The last phase of *domba* is called *tshilalandoima* because *vhatei* stay standing the whole night as implied by the compound noun *tshilalandoima*. This compound *tshilalandoima* is formed by the noun prefix *tshi-*, the verb stem *-lala*, the subject concord *nd-*, the perfect tense marker *-o* and the verb stem *-ima*. According to Mrs Nyamaḁala Muḁheiwana Sannie Mashau and Mrs Nyamaḁala Maphiri, the initiates are ordered by *mme a domba*, known as *Nyamatei*, to hold their arms straight up over their heads by saying *vhulimu* meaning *to hold up the arms straight*. The chief may come and say "*Vho rulwa*" meaning 'to let them rest'. This ordeal goes on the whole night until the following morning when they are told to go to the river to bathe separately. Men go in a certain direction to the river while the women follow another direction of the river. After bathing, the women are inspected to determine whether they involved themselves in sexual intercourse while the *domba* was in session. After this, the *vhatei* who are females, shave off hair around their heads and leave a patch on the top of the heads known as *ndobo* for men and *tshiundu* for women. Women put on a *tshirivha*, a skirt made of sheep skin. Then they all go home.

(a) **Lexical items and expressions**

The following table includes lexical items and expressions which distinguish the *domba* variety from other social varieties.

(i) Some nouns (lexical items) with the shift of meaning:

Domba variety	Meaning	Standard variety
miłora	sperm	vhunna
tshivhaso	woman	musadzi
tshiuludza	man	munna
ṭharu	woman	musadzi
masale	menopause	musadzi o vhinaho/ musadzi a sa tsha vhonaho nwedzi/ musadzi a sa tsha ya maḍuvhani

Table 9.

(ii) Some expressions with the shift of meaning:

Domba variety	Meaning	Standard variety
u vala khoro	pregnancy	thumbu
u vula khoro	give birth	u vhofholowa
matombo a maḍini	testicles	matshende
lukanda lwa ṭharu	fence	luhura

Table 10.

(iii) Some nouns which are used during domba and which also occur in the Standard variety:

- tshiṭanze (the money which is paid by commoners)
- Nyamatei (the mother of the domba-female leader)
- Nyamungozwa (the mother of the domba-male leader)
- tshikanda (a secret initiation rite for females)

ludodo (the second phase of domba where the initiates are taught the secrets of life)

gangalilagovhamilenzhe (the name of a big drum)

tshipata (the sticks to punish the initiates who are guilty)

tshiregu (the female piece of wood in which fire is drilled)

vhatei (initiates)

(d) Some expressions which are used during domba and which also occur in the Standard variety:

domba lo tshoṭa (the start of the domba) or

u kwasha gumbu (the start of the domba)/

domba lo ima (the start of the domba)

hala la mafhaṭa (hot embers)

who rulwa (let them rest)

u wela (to be admitted to the domba institution for the first time)

4.2.2 'Open' rural varieties

The term 'open' rural varieties in this thesis refers to the varieties used when traditional activities are performed and which are not secretive. With regard to this Brook (1979:13) says: "Such varieties have sometimes been called situational dialects..." Because of this, most of the lexical items and expressions used in these varieties are part of the Standard variety. The varieties, such as the traditional religion variety, the mourning variety, taboo variety and others are classified as 'open' rural varieties because they are not traditionally secretive in nature.

The nature of each social sub-group will be discussed first and then followed by the variety it uses. Hereunder follow the rural social varieties:

4.2.2.1 The musanda variety

The so-called 'musanda language' is a Venda social variety which is used by the Venda royalty in and around musanda (the chief's palace). With regard to this Khuba (1986:3) says:

It is used as a sign of respect and to show sacredness of all that belongs and is intimate to the chief as ruler. The use of a commoner's language in and around the chief's kraal would belittle his dignity and show no respect from his subordinates.

Khuba (1993:2), defines the variety known as the musanda variety, saying that it:

...is used primarily by the musanda community members. It may also be used by any person who may through contact with the Venda hierarchy, or who may have learnt this variety somewhere, may then use this language when on the musanda premises (*sic*).

This type of variety appears to be diglossic in nature because it is used in and around the musanda premises. Ferguson (1959:336) defines diglossia as follows:

Diglossia is a relatively stable language situation in which, in addition to the primary dialects of the language (which may include a standard or regional standards), there is a divergent, highly codified (often grammatically more complex) superposed variety, the vehicle of large and respected body of written literature, either of an earlier period or in another speech community,...

The **musanda variety** may be regarded as a highly codified variety but is not standardised although it revolves around the chief and is used in the presence of the chief wherever he goes.

Although the **musanda variety** is referred to as a language, it is, in fact, a social variety. According to Khuba (1993:4), the **musanda language** remains unique because it occurs in all the areas where regional varieties are spoken. This variety is **diaglossic** in nature.

In this thesis the **musanda variety** will be referred to as a Venda variety used as a social form of identifying people from **misanda**. Its phonological, morphological and syntactical rules are also the same as that of the standard Venda. In addition to this, Khuba (1993:17) says:

Some words have been so totally assimilated into the Venda lexicon that we tend to discredit their origin as being pure **musanda** words. For instance the noun **mufaro** (3/4) which means 'basket' at **musanda** in the standard Venda is **tshitundwana**. Another example that can be given is the verb - **tswa** which in Venda literally means 'steal', and may be applied in the following sentences in both Venda and the **musanda** language:

Venda: Vhaselwa vha ḁo tswa maḁi
matshelo.

Musanda: Vhaḁanuni vha ya u tswa
madzivha.

English: The young wives will fetch
water.

Mrs Nyamaḁala Sannie Mashau supports Khuba's (1993) statement that items used in the **Musanda** variety revolve around social structure and certain persons who have status. They may also

revolve around certain persons who are fluent in the **musanda** language. The chief's mother is known as **vhakoma** or **vhatshiozwi**. **Vhakoma** can also be used for the headman. The noun **vhakoma** is thus also used as a homonym. **Vhakoma** is also used as part of the standard variety. The principal wife is known as **themamuḏi**. **Vhomakhadzi** is the chief's sister. The noun **vhomakhadzi** is also used commonly in the Standard variety. The same can be said of **vhokhotsimunene** (the chief's brother) which is used in both the **musanda** variety and standard variety. The princes and princesses are known as **mavhoḏa**.

There are also lexical items in the **musanda** variety which are used in relation to the chief himself or chieftainess herself, for example:

The musanda variety	Meaning	Standard variety
thavha	head	ṭhoho
vhuṭambo	hair	mavhudzi
vhuṭambo	beard	ndeḃvu
thama	ears	nḏevhe
ndalama	eyes	maṭo
nitsha	nails	ṇala
tsetshela	teeth	maṇo

Table 11.

The noun **vhuṭambo** is used as a homonym. A noun like **thavha** is symbolic to the chief because it shows his/her superiority.

There are also lexical items in the **musanda** language which are used to express different activities in **musanda**. Among these lexical items, there are verb stems such as:

The musanda variety	Meaning	Standard variety
-ponda	punish in anger	-vhaisa
-shuma	eat or punish	-vhaisa/-la
-vhulaha	call	-vhidza
-tanzwa	sweep/plaster	-swiela/-hulunga/ -fulela
-zwa	talk	-amba
-vhumba	install	-vhea
-fama	sleep	-lala
-tivha	close	-vala
-tivhula	open	-vula
-pembela	boil	-vhila
-luzwa	bath	-tamba
-luvahulula	shave	-vheula
-luvahulula	remove the outer pellic of the mealies	-tohola
-dzikuwa	be angry	-sinyuwa

Table 12.

Some nouns also refer to the musanda buildings and surrounding structures for example:

The musanda variety	Meaning	Standard variety
tshamudane	kitchen	tshiṭanga
pfamo	palace	pfamo
phedza	grain storage	maḍulu/zwiṭaṭari
thondwana	hut	nnḍu
tshivhambo	council's hut	tshivhambo
mirango	walls	mitsheṭo
mafasho	fence made by woven branches	luhura
maṭeswi	fence made with poles sharpened at the tips	luhura

Table 13.

Some of the nouns which are used to refer to the building and surrounding structures at *musanda* are deverbatives, for example:

Pfamo meaning *palace* is derived from the verb stem *-fama* meaning *to sleep*.

Mafasho meaning *place of woven branches* is derived from the verb stem *-fasha* meaning *to weave*.

The noun *phedza* refers to *muḍulu* or *zwiṭaṭari* or *zwisiku* meaning *grain storage or head of cattle or wealth* etc.

Morphologically and syntactically, there are no differences between the *musanda* variety and Standard Venda, for example:

Musanda variety: Muṭanuni o luvhedzwa vhuṭambo

Standard variety: Muṭanuni o ambara tshiala

English: The chief's wife is given a headgear

Musanda variety: Vhuṭambo ha musanda vhu dzula ho luvhelwa.

Standard variety: Vhulungu ha musanda vhu dzula ho ambarwa.
 English: The chief's necklace is always around his neck.

Musanda variety: Thavha yo tseremuwa.
 Standard variety: Vhamusanda vho țuwa.
 English: The chief has left.

Musanda variety: Masindi u luvha vhuțambo musanda.
 Standard variety: Masindi u humbela fola ha vhamusanda.
 English: Masindi begs for snuff from the chief.

Musanda variety: Malinga a fhaladzelwa kha phondelo.
 Standard variety: Vhuswa vhu avhelwa kha phondelo.
 English: Porridge is dished up into the wooden dish.

The given examples, in **musanda variety** and **Standard variety**, are the same from a syntactic viewpoint. However, note that in certain instances different lexical items are used to express the same meaning.

4.2.2.2 The malombo variety

Like any other social institution, **malombo** has its own variety. The use of lexical items and certain expressions denote the social unity, and reinforce communicative norms and the expectation of **malombo** as a social institution.

The noun **malombo** is used when the spirit wishes to take possession of the patient. With regard to this, Van Warmelo (1932:141) says:

Such visitation is looked upon as an honour and the subsequent proceedings are designed, not to exorcise the spirit, but on the contrary to let it in.

In addition, Stayt (1931:302) says:

The spirit, tshilombo (pl. zwilombo), which is supposed to enter the host, is usually the spirit of some offended ancestor, sometimes absurdly remote. This spirit will cause its victims illness and subsequent death if it is not pacified.

According to Mrs Masiavhula, a specialist of the institution of malombo, the people who are usually possessed by malombo are women. Men are rarely possessed by malombo. Malombo may mean the visitation of the spirit in the body of a patient or the people who are possessed by a spirit. The singular of malombo is lilombo. When an ill person shows symptoms of malombo, the traditional doctor, known as vhomaine vha tshele, meaning *the diviner of the rattle*, prepares the patient for the arrival of tshidzimu (the spirit of an ancestor who is troubling the patient). When the process of invoking the ancestral spirits, known as tshele, takes place, vhomaine vhatshela organises the drum known as ngoma and tshele (rattles). These two instruments play an important role in invoking the spirit of an ancestral spirit troubling the patient. A female drummer, known as matsige (the one who plays the drum), is requested to come and play the drum while the diviner and other people who are possessed by malombo are dancing. According to Van Rooy (1971:50) malombo are also known as midzimu.

The patient joins the dancing later with vhomaine vhatshela after he or she has rubbed his or her body with the mixture of leaves from the murandela, bunganyunyu trees, the nest of thaha bird and a lump of the root of muvuvhu. This mixture is known as khumela. The rubbing gives the patient energy and this makes him or her start dancing, if he or she collapses while dancing, he or she is possessed by malombo. The dancing and collapsing is known as u hwelwa meaning *to be possessed*. This symbolises the arrival of makhulu (the ancestral spirit). If it is a female spirit, it is known as u vuwa makhulu tshisadzi and if it is a male ancestral

spirit, it is known as *u vuwa makhulu tshinna*. The attire of *makhulu tshisadzi* is *maṭongo* (ornaments) and *nwenda* (a female upper garment, just a length of cloth with a strip sewn on crosswise at the top to make it longer and with two tapes of the same material to tie over the shoulder) whereas *makhulu tshinna* dresses up with *maṭongo* and *tshinorovhagi* (waist jacket).

Some ancestral spirits use the standard variety as a means of communication while some use *Kalanga* as a means of communication. Some lexical items uttered by *makhulu* when using *Kalanga* are *mavuto-tobacco*, *mavula-water*, *nombe-cattle* and etc. When the ancestral spirits depart, the expression *dzo fhalala* is uttered meaning that the ancestral spirits are gone. The phrase *dzo fhalala* suggests the departure of ancestral spirit spiritually.

(a) Lexical items and expressions

The following are some of the lexical items and expressions which distinguish the *malombo* variety from other social varieties.

- (i) There are nouns which are used during *malombo* and which also occur in the *Standard variety*:

makhulu (the ancestral spirit)
midzimu (gods)
tshele (rattles)
matsige (a drummer)
maṭongo (ornaments)
malombo (the visitation of the spirit in the body of a patient)

- (ii) There are also expressions which are used during *malombo* and which also occur in the *Standard variety*:

u vuwa makhulu tshisadzi (the female ancestral spirit)
u vuwa makhulu tshinna (the male ancestral spirit)
dzo fhalala (the departure of ancestral spirits)

vhomaine vha tshela (the diviner of rattles)
 u wisiswa (the invoking of ancestral spirits)
 u lidzelwa (the invoking of ancestral spirits)

(iii) Lexical items from the Kalanga dialect can also be used by vhadzimu to express their needs and complaints. These Kalanga lexical items are not part of the Standard variety:

Malombo variety	Meaning	Standard variety
nyadala	the host	muthu a re na lilombo
mavula	water	maḍi
sadzha	porridge	vhuswa
nombe	cattle	kholomo
-levha	talk	-amba
-nyepa	lie	-zwifha

Table 14.

4.2.2.3 The traditional religion variety

Lexical choice related to this variety revolves around religious belief and communication with God through gods. According to Stayt (1931:230), a certain section of the Venda people believe in Raluvhimba as the Creator or Supreme Being. The name raluvhimba is formed by the incorporate prefix ra- meaning the *owner of* and the noun luvhimba meaning an *eagle*. Raluvhimba is associated with everything seen in the sky or anything which cannot be performed by a human being. When a chief visits Raluvhimba, he addresses him as Makhulu meaning *grandfather*. On the other hand, Raluvhimba addresses the chief as maḍuhulu meaning *nephew or grandchild*.

There is another section of the Venda people who regard Nwali as the Creator or Supreme being. Nwali and Raluvhimba cannot be

communicated with by *common people*, because the *common people* communicate with God through *vhadzimu* (ancestors). The expression *Iwe ndi sa mu ḍi* meaning *the one whom I do not know* is used during the communication process to refer to God. This expression implies that God is not known and nobody can see Him.

The communication with God through *vhadzimu*, is known as *u phasa maḍi*. This communication does not only serve the purpose of communicating to God through *vhadzimu* but does also help to soothe the angry spirits of the ancestors or appease the spirits who feel that they are being neglected. When this rite of *u phasa maḍi* takes place, *zwitungulo* are used. Any objects or animals can be used as *zwitungulo* which assist the ancestors to be able to come into contact with the living. Such objects can be axes, bows, arrows, hoes, old horns, copper, stone etc e.g. *tombo* (stone) is known as *mboho* meaning *bull* etc. This stone which represents a bull is the symbol of strength and it usually represents the paternal family. Animals which are regarded as *zwitungulo* are goats, cattle etc, e.g. the cow or a goat is known as *makhulu* and it represents the matrilineal lineage; the bull or a he-goat is also known as *makhulu* representing the patrilineal lineage. The noun *zwitungulo* (singular *tshitungulo*) has been formed by the prefix of class 8 *zwi-* and the verb stem *-tungula* meaning *to divine*. There is a belief that the use of these objects or animals during *u phasa* meaning '*make an offering*' solves problems.

Although any person can perform the rite of *u phasa maḍi* meaning '*to spit out water*', *makhadzi* (the father's sister) is an important figure who should first be contacted and asked whether she can perform this rite. After this rite of *u phasa maḍi*, *fola* (snuff) is sprinkled on the place where water was spat. This is done to appease the ancestral spirits.

According to Mrs Nyamaḍala Mutele, the spirit of a young man who died before he married or experienced sex or parenthood is known

as *lubumbukavha* meaning *simpleton*. This spirit is pacified by performing the rite which symbolises female genitals. According to Van Rooy (1971:61); this rite is also known as *u isa khombe mafhandeni* meaning *to provide a symbolical wife for a bachelor who dies unmarried*. On the other hand, the spirit of a young girl who has died without any knowledge of sexual life is known as *lupofu*. This spirit is comforted by performing the rite which symbolises the male organ.

The Venda people also perform the rite of *thevhula*. The noun *thevhula* means *to spill or pour out*. When *thevhula* takes place, the family lineage concerned performs some sacrifices in order to appease their ancestors, hence the verb stem *-tevhula* which implies that *'we eat together with our ancestors what we have'*. The beer which must be prepared during *thevhula* is known as *mpambo*, and *makhadzi* (the father's sister) is the most important figure during *thevhula*.

(a) Lexical items and expressions

The following are some of the lexical items and expressions which distinguish the traditional religion variety from other social varieties.

- (i) The following nouns which are used in the traditional religion variety also occur in the Standard variety:

Raluvhimba (the Creator or Supreme Being)
Nwali (the Creator or Supreme Being)
vhadzimu (gods)
thevhula (spill or pour out)
lubumbukavha (simpleton)
lupofu (the spirit of a young girl who has died without any knowledge of sex)
makhadzi (father's sister)
mpambo (beer for *thevhula*)

- (ii) There are also expressions which are used in the traditional religion variety and which also occur in the Standard variety:

Iwe ndi sa uḍi (meaning the one whom I do not know i.e. God)
 uphasa maḍi (to spit out water)
 u isa khombe mafhandeni (to provide a symbolical wife for a bachelor who dies unmarried)

4.2.2.4 The mourning variety

The lexical choice for this variety revolves around death, funerals and the cleansing activity which rounds off the mourning period. With regard to this, Saville-Troike (1982: 47) says:

...their meaning is dependent on shared beliefs and values of the speech community coded into communicative patterns, and they cannot be interpreted apart from social and cultural context.

Like other social varieties, this variety is characterised by lexical items and expressions which express the feeling of people during this time. For example *vhalidzi* (mourners) refers to the *closest relative of the deceased*. *Tshilikadzi* (widow) refers to *the wife of the deceased*. *Vhana vha mufu* are referred as *the children of the deceased*. The infinitive noun *u tovhowa* means 'to pay the last respect' and this expression refers to the contact of relatives and friends with the body of the deceased for the last time. This is the recent practice whereby the children are allowed to see the body of the deceased. Culturally, the children were used to be told that their deceased relative has gone for a visit. The rite of *u palulwa* meaning *to shave off the head*, is done immediately after the burial. This is done to show that the relatives of the deceased are mourning. The male deceased is

always referred as *munna-wa-vhane* meaning the man who belongs to them (ancestors). There is a belief that if a man dies, he belongs to the ancestors. The female deceased is also known as *musadzi-wa-vhane* meaning *the woman who belongs to them* (ancestors). Like the male deceased who belongs to the world of the ancestors, the female deceased also belongs to the world of the ancestors. When the shaved hair begins to grow, they are referred as *thotshi* and the beer brewed after the growth of the hair is known as *halwa ha thotshi*. This beer symbolises the new lease of life. The noun *thotshi* means the new lease of life after losing the beloved member of the family.

The rite of *u vhuisa mufu* meaning *to bring back the spirit of the deceased within the family*, is performed immediately after the burial. This expression implies that the spirit of the deceased is brought back within the family by burying the bones of the goat slaughtered for the burial together with the soil scooped from the grave of the deceased.

The rite of *u bvisa murunzi* means *to remove the spirit of the deceased among the living*. This is done by consulting the diviner who informs the relatives about the cause of death of their relative.

(a) Lexical items and expressions

The following are some of the lexical items and expressions which distinguish the mourning variety from other social varieties.

(i) The following nouns which are used during the period of mourning and also occur in the Standard variety:

vhalidzi (mourners)

tshilikadzi (widow)

muṭahabvu (the deceased)

(ii) The expressions below are also used during the mourning period and are also part of the Standard variety:

u ɬovhowa (to pay the last respect)

vhana vha mufu (the children of the deceased)

u vhuisa mufu (to bring back the spirit of the deceased within the family)

u bvisa murunzi (to remove the spirit of the deceased within the family)

4.2.2.5 Taboo variety

This variety is associated with people of a particular community and it encourages them to conform to the norms of the society in which they live. This variety is like the Hlonipha variety or iSihlonipho sa bafazi among the Nguni and Southern Sotho women. Unlike the Hlonipha variety, the taboo variety among the Venda people is not restricted to a single sex but the participation of both sexes. According to Mrs Masiavhula, this variety is characterised by lexical items and expressions which are considered undesirable and socially unacceptable. With regard to this, Trudgill (1974:24) says:

Taboo can be characterised as being concerned with behaviour which is believed to be supernaturally forbidden or regarded as immoral or improper - it deals with behaviour which is prohibited or inhibited in an apparently irrational manner.

In addition, Mrs Masiavhula regards taboo known as zwiila in Venda as a descriptive term used with reference to words (or acts) that are not used in a polite society. Such lexical items or expressions referring to the taboo acts are avoided because they are considered undesirable.

These expressions and lexical items are governed by values and customs of those societies which do not allow a speaker to use them. With regard to the values and beliefs Zungu, (1986:13) says:

The types of words which are taboo'd in language are a good reflection of the system of values and beliefs of the society in question.

The taboo variety can be used to restrict the society at large not to mention certain lexical items and expressions in order to uphold the values and beliefs of that society. This can be illustrated by the following examples:

It is taboo to kill a tharu (python) among the Venda people when rain begins to fall or during the six months which is the time of planting, growth or ripening of fruits. It is believed that there will be infertility and rain. Tharu is an important snake among the Venda because its skin may induce pregnancy. It is always found lurking around the river bank and because of this it is associated with rain.

The birth of maphata (twins) or malwelavanda (in the case of human beings) should be avoided. It is believed that misfortune will befall the family or community. In fact, the Venda people preferred the families to have few children so that it will be easy for the family to run away if there is war.

Zwi a ila uri mufhiri wa gondo a dobe zwiliwa zwe a fhiwa uri ale musu zwo wela fhasi. This expression indicates that it is taboo for a stranger to eat food which has fallen down. It is believed that his/her spirits are warning him/her against eating the food which would have killed him.

This variety can also be used to encourage the young minds to conform to the norms of the society in which they live. The following examples should prove a point:

Ni songo fhufha mulilo, ni ḍo runda malofha. (You must not jump over the fire because you will urinate blood.) This expression warns the youngster not to run the risk of jumping over the fire as he or she may fall into it and this keeps them safe while they are seated around the fire.

Ni songo sumba tshalo/vhiḍa nga munwe ngauri u ḍo kongonyala. (You may not point a finger at a grave because your finger will shrink.) This expression encourages the youngsters to give the dead the honour they deserve. Traditionally, it is believed that the dead are immortal and they are always with us but one can meet them at their graves. Because of this, the youth should regard the graveyard as a sacred place and it should be respected at all times.

Ni songo kokota lufo ngauri ni ḍo tunga maḍamu. (You must not lick the cooking spoon because you will grow breasts.) This expression warns the boys not to interfere with women in the kitchen. It also encourages the boys to carry out heavier duties entrusted to them and not to neglect their manly responsibilities.

Ni songo ṭavha mukosi vhusiku, ngauri vhaloi vha ḍo ni dzhia ipfi. (You must not shout at the top of your voice at night because the witches will get hold of your voice). This expression teaches the youngsters to maintain as much silence as possible. Traditionally, this was done to secure safety of the society against the fear of unexpected invasions and attacks by enemies.

In view of the given examples, taboo forms apply to both youth and adults. Through the taboos, the youth and adults can maintain the values and beliefs of the society.

The examples of lexical items and expressions given in the discussion are part of the Standard variety.

4.3 URBAN AND RURAL SOCIAL VARIETIES

The phrase 'urban and rural social varieties' in this section refers to those varieties which are spoken in the rural and urban areas. They came into being as a result of labourers' migration from rural areas to urban areas. With regard to these varieties Brook (1979:13) says: "Such varieties have sometimes been called situational dialects..." Because of this, most of the lexical items and expressions used in some rural and urban varieties are part of the Standard variety, for example: church varieties, gender variety etc. On the other hand, there are linguistic features of certain varieties which are not part of the Standard variety, for example: tsotsitaal and others.

The urban and rural social varieties which will be discussed here also refer to the speech varieties of different social classes. Hereunder follow the rural social varieties:

4.3.1 The speech variety of diviners in Venda

This speech variety, known as *Mawa a thangu* meaning *to throw down the divinity dice*, is spoken in the rural areas as well as urban areas. *Mawa a thangu* as a speech variety originated in the rural areas but these days is also popular in the urban areas because it is used by diviners from rural areas who frequent urban areas. With regard to this social variety, the focus will be the lexical items and selected praise poems which are used.

As already noted 'a speech variety' is a term used for a form of speech used in a community. The group of people who use a certain speech variety should be those who share the same norms with regard to a language and have the same set of social attitudes towards language. With regard to the type of variety, Bolinger (Hudson 1980:28) says:

There is no limit to the ways in which human

beings league themselves together for self-identification, security, a gain, amusement, worship or any of the purposes that are held in common; consequently there is no limit to the number and variety of speech communities that are to be found in a society.

This definition implies that any diviner in Venda is expected to know what to say to whom and how to say it appropriately in any given situation. An individual diviner is expected to adopt the norms and patterns of communication of the community of diviners in Venda. This adoption will ultimately mean an adjustment to the communicative norms of the speech of diviners. In this manner the use of a register will result in social identity within a speech community.

Mawa a ṭhangu as a speech variety is characterised by lexical items and some praise poems which are used by diviners during divination. Through **Mawa a ṭhangu**, diviners can communicate the nature of disease, problems and causes of problem confronting their clients. Diviners can give bits of advice on the remedy for disease as well as the solution to the problems. They do counsel when they are approached by any person or community troubled by something.

4.3.1.1 The main lexical items of this variety

Mawa a ṭhangu is centred on four dice, namely: *tshilume* (which represents a man) *hwami* which represents paternal ancestors or an old man), *luṁwe* (which represents a woman) and *thwalima* (which represents maternal ancestors or an old woman). All these four dice are normally marked differently.

During the divination, the interpretation of the dice is usually preceded by the mentioning of the subject concord *dzi* of the

plural noun *ṭhangu* and the verb stem *-dia* or *-vhuya*. The use of the subject concord and the verb stem assists the diviner to identify the source of the problem. *Mawa a ṭhangu* is used in accordance with the groupings of dice when they have fallen. Each grouping should reveal the gender of the person with a disease or problem, the nature of disease or problem and in some cases the manner in which the disease can be treated or the way in which the problem can be solved. Each grouping may have more than one interpretation. The diviner may also use two sets of dice. This helps him or her to elicit more information about the client

4.3.1.2 Terminology employed during divination

According to Mulaudzi (1999:40), this speech variety revolves around the names assigned to each grouping of dice which is determined by the markings or shapes of the dice when they fall. To simplify the discussion, the system of marking dice when they fall will be followed. The grouping of divining dice will also be given and the symbol '+' represents up whereas '-' represents down. These groupings are as follows:

- (a) If one marked die faces up and the rest down, the following terminology is used by the diviner:
- (i) **THWALIMA** (old woman): This occurs when a die representing *thwalima* faces up and the rest face down. That is:

Thwalima + hwami-
Tshilume - luñwe-

In this situation, a diviner will say, *dzi dia thwalima* meaning that the divination indicates an old woman or maternal ancestor or a female relative on the maternal side.

- (ii) **HWAMI** (old man): This occurs when a die with marks representing *hwami* faces up and the rest down. That is:

Hwami + Thwalima-
Tshilume - lunwe-

If the dice are in this position, a diviner will say, *dzi dia hwami* meaning that the divination is about an old man or paternal ancestors or a male relative.

(iii) **TSHILUME** (Young man): The divination can indicate *tshilume* if a die with marks representing *tshilume* faces up and the rest down. That is:

Tshilume+ Thwalima-
Hwami - Lunwe-

When the diviner looks at these dice, he or she will say, *dzi dia tshilume*, meaning that the divination indicates a man or a male person.

(iv) **LUNWE** (young woman): The divination can indicate *lunwe* if a die with marks representing *lunwe* faces up and the rest down. That is:

Lunwe+ Thwalima-
Hwami- Tshilume-

When the dice are in this position, the diviner will say, *dzi dia lunwe*, meaning that the divination is about a woman or any female person.

(b) If two marked dice face up and the rest down, the following terminology is used by diviners:

(i) **MIRUBI** (maternal ancestors). This occurs when *lunwe* and *hwami* face up while *thwalima* and *tshilume* face down. That is:

Luñwe+ Hwami+
Thwalima- Tshilume -

If the set of dice is in this position, the diviner will say, *dzi dia murubi*. This means that the maternal ancestors or spirits are causing trouble to the client or to the family of the client.

- (ii) **THAMBADZIVHA** (washing in the pool): This also occurs when *luñwe* and *tshilume* face up while *thwalima* and *hwami* face down. That is:

Luñwe+ Tshilume +
Thwalima- Hwami-

When dice are positioned in this manner, the diviner will say, *dzi dia thambadzivha*. This means that the consultant should perform the ritual rite of *u phasa* the ancestors.

If *thambadzivha* is completed by *tshilume* in the other set of dice, this means that the man who is consulting the diviner had sexual intercourse with a woman who then had performed an abortion. So the client should be treated immediately.

- (iii) **VHUKATA** (to appease ancestors): The divination can indicate *vhutaka* if *thwalima* and *luñwe* face up and the rest down. That is:

Thwalima + Luñwe+
Hwami- Tshilume -

If the set of dice is in this position, a diviner will say, *dzi dia vhukata*. This means that there will be peace in the family of the client or it may mean that the client should perform the ritual rite of *u phasa* (to spit out water or to make an offering)

in order to appease his or her ancestors because there is no medicine to be used to treat ancestral spirits.

- (iv) **MUHULURI** (happiness or disaster in the family): The divination indicates *muhuluri* if *thwalima* and *hwami* face up and the rest down. That is:

Thwalima + hwami+

Tshilume - Luñwe-

In this situation, the diviner will say, *dzi dia muhuluri* or *dzi vhuya na muhuluri*. This means that there will be happiness in the family of the client. If *muhuluri* is complemented by any die from another set, for example, *mufhirifhiri* it means death.

- (v) **TSHITANGU** (shield): The divination can indicate *tshitangu* if *tshilume* and *thwalima* face up and the rest down. That is:

Tshilume + Thwalima+

Hwami - Luñwe-

This means that the client will have a peaceful journey and if this is complemented by *mufhirifhiri* (when all four dice face down), this means that the client will have to end the quarrel in order to appease his ancestral spirits.

- (vi) **NGA MAHE** (appease the ancestral spirits of the deceased): This occurs when *hwami* and *tshilume* face up and the rest down. That is:

Hwami+ Tshilume+

Luñwe- Thwalima-

When dice group themselves in this position, the diviner will

say, *dzi dia nga mahe* or *dzi vhuya nga mahe*. This means that the client has not performed the ritual rite of *u bvisa murunzi* (to remove the spirit of the deceased among the living) since death occurred in the family.

(c) If three marked dice face up and the remaining one faces down, the following terminology is used by the diviner:

(i) **NGA MAHE A KHADZI** (recovery or return): This occurs when *hwami*, *tshilume* and *luŋwe* face up and *thwalima* faces down. That is:

Hwami+ Tshilume +
Luŋwe+ Thwalima-

When dice are positioned in this position, the diviner will say, *dzi dia nga mahe a khadzi* or *dzi vhuya nga mahe a khadzi*. This means that the lost property will be recovered or somebody who has run away will return.

If this interpretation is complemented by *murubi*, this means that the ancestors are fighting for a certain member of the family.

(ii) **MURORWANE** (awareness of danger): The divination can indicate *murorwane* if *thwalima*, *tshilume* and *luŋwe* face up and the remaining one down. That is:

Thwalima +Tshilume+
Luŋwe+ Hwami-

When a set of dice positioned itself in this manner, the diviner will say, *dzi dia murorwane*. This means that the consultant should be aware of danger which may befall his or her family.

Makulelela

(iii) **MAKULELA** (hardship): When a set of dice indicates *makulela*,

hwami, *thwalima* and *tshilume* face up while *luŋwe* should be facing down. That is:

Hwami+ Thwalima +
Tshilume+ Luŋwe-

If a set of dice is in this position, the diviner will say, *dzi dia makulela*. This means that it is going to be tough for the client. This is always connected with the head of the lineage who should perform the ritual rite of *u phasa*.

Muraru

(iv) **MURARU** (cause of trouble within the family): When a set of dice indicates *muraru*, *hwami*, *thwalima* and *luŋwe* face up while *tshilume* should be facing down. That is:

hwami+ Thwalima +
Luŋwe+ Tshilume -

When a set of dice is in this position, it means that the person who is causing trouble is within the family or not far away from the family.

(d) When all four marked dice face down, the diviner will say, *dzi dia muŋangula* (strip everything). That is:

Tshilume - Thwalima-
Hwami- Luŋwe-

This means that the client, who is seriously ill, is going to die.

(e) When all four marked dice face up, the diviner will say, *dzi dia mufhirifhiri* (conflict). That is:

Tshilume + Thwalima+

Hwami + Lunwe+

The grouping of dice in this manner, means that there will be fighting in the family of the client.

Normally the diviner uses two sets of dice. This helps him or her to elicit more information about the client. A few examples of the combination of two sets will be given.

If one set indicates *tshilume* while the other set indicates *mufhirifhiri*, it will mean that the client, who may be a man or even a young man, will be involved in fighting or some danger will happen to him.

If two sets are again used, one set may indicate *lunwe* while the other set indicates *mutangula*. This will mean that the client who is a woman or a young woman will die.

Although Milubi (1988:94) and Murwamphida (1993:17) have indicated that any name mentioned during divination can also be praised, these praise poems which are recited during divination, should be regarded as part of this speech variety. Praising each name of die or the name given to each grouping of dice gives more meaning or emphasis on the information given by the diviner and it also helps the diviner to elicit more information.

4.3.1.3 The chanting of divining dice

In some communities only four sets of divining dice are chanted. This is a clear indication that the chanting in the Vhumbedzi area is different from that of the Vhuronga area. This can be illustrated by the chanting of the different sets of divining dice in Stayt (1931:287-290) which were collected by me at Vhuronga. The discussion on these will be restricted to *Mahe a khadzi*, *tshiṭangu* and *lunwe* as examples. The chantings of all

groups from all areas in Venda need separate discussion. Compare the following:

(a) VHUMBEDZI: Mahe a khadzi

Dze khasa wo ya

(Running away so quickly)

Khasa wo vhuya

(Coming back so quickly)

(b) VHURONGA: Mahe a khadzi

Tshi ya kale tshi a vhuya

(Those who went away long ago are coming back)

Tshifhefho tshi vhuya na mphwe dzatsho

(They are coming back like autumn with its sugar canes)

(c) VHUMBEDZI: Tshiṭangu

Kunga tshiṭangu ri ende

(Entice the shield that we may undertake a journey)

U sa nge munyadzi wa lwendo

(Do not behave like a person who undertakes no journey)

(d) VHURONGA: Tshiṭangu

Nga tshiṭangu tsha khakhamela

(With the strong shield)

Ya vha thimbi vhulungu ri ya nga vhukati

(We may be able to divide beads among ourselves)

(e) VHUMBEZI: Luṅwe

Ndi nga thenga a tho ngo dzula

(I am like a feather)

ndo dzula nga u tou tundumala

(...that has not got a firm seat)

(f) VHURONGA: Luṅwe

Ndi nga thenga a tho ngo dzula

(I am like a feather)
 ndo dzula nga u tou tenyama
 (that has not got a firm seat)

4.3.1.4 The characteristics of praise poems as part of this variety

The chanting of praise poems of the certain sets of divining dice generally helps to emphasize what the person wants to say.

The chanting of a praise poem is characterised by poetic features when each set of divining dice is being praised. The following poetic features are identified:

(a) LINKING

This refers to the repetition of an item that could be a morpheme or a word usually in adjacent or successive lines. The morpheme or word may occur at the beginning of lines and this will be referred to as initial linking or in the middle of lines and this will be referred to as final linking (Kunene 1971:79). The focus in this discussion will be on vertical linking.

Vertical linking: This occurs when a word in the first line corresponds almost vertically with the one in the second line.

This can be illustrated in the following chanting praise poems:

(i) MURUBI- Dzi ri : Murubi ndi a ruba-ruba
 (The complete lap or thigh)

Murubi ndi vhula ha mma
 (The lap is the womb of the mother)

The praise murubi ndi in the first line and in the second line form vertical linking. The anger of the ancestor in the first line is linked to the trouble caused by ancestors in the second line.

(ii) **ṬHAMBADZIVHA- Dzi ri:**

Ṭululu ndi u wela tivhani
(Going down deep into the lake)

Ṭululu ndi u bvela nnḁa
(Coming out from the lake)

The praise **Ṭululu ndi u...** in the first line and in the second line form vertical linking. The ritual of 'u phasa' in the first line is linked to the appeasement of ancestors in the second line.

The formation of vertical linking by the indicated lexical items in the praise poems enhances the meaning of each grouping of divining dice.

(b) **PARALLELISM**

This refers to the use of successive lines or lines close to one another, or the identical or similar construction or patterns carrying identical or similar or contrasting ideas (Olatunji (1984:26)).

Synthetical parallelism

This refers to lines connected by similar ideas.

This can be realised in the following example:

(i) **LUNWE- Ndi nga thenga a tho ngo dzula**
(I am like a feather that has not got a firm seat)

Ndo dzula nga u tou tundumala
(There is no comfort in my seat)

The first line of the praise poem expresses the discomfort of the client and the same idea is also conveyed in the second line. When the diviner does this he or she emphasizes the discomfort on the side of the client.

- (ii) **VHUKATA-Tshikateli tsho katela,**
 (The enfolding is unfolded)
A tshi na mukatululi mukoni.
 (It cannot be folded)

The first line of the praise poem expresses the need to have peace and the same idea is also conveyed in the second line.

(c) **ALLITERATION**

According to Peck and Coyle (1984:17), this refers to the repetition of the same consonant or vowel sound within a syntactic unit or line. The first is called consonance and the latter assonance.

This can be realised in the praise poem:

- (i) **TSHILUME-Ndi mbandambanda muḍini**
 (He is the man who slouches about in the village)
Masiari ndi pfumbupfumbu ya musanda
 (During the day he becomes the influential man
 at the chief's palace)

The use of the compound consonants 'mb' and 'nd' which have the effect of a plosive express the difficulties to be faced by the client. The repetition of compound consonants 'pf' (affricate plosive) and 'mb' (plosive) which are coupled by the vowel 'u', express the struggle faced by the consultant.

- (ii) **MURARU- Tsha muraru a tshiho kule,**
 (The solution is not far)

Tshi mavuleloni a tswinga.
(It is at the gate)

The use of the alveolar tsh and r in the first line expresses the difficulties of attempting to find a solution which is near. The repetition of alveolar l emphasizes the closeness of a solution.

(d) FIGURES OF SPEECH, e.g.

(i) Personification

This is the figure of speech which gives human qualities to inanimate objects.

This can be realised in this praise poem:

(i) THWALIMA- Ndi tshivhasa mulilo dugudugu
(It enkindles the red light fire)
Musadzi mutswuku ha malwi
(The light coloured woman is not worthy for
marriage)
Ndi tshiṭangu tsha phaladza muḍi
(It hides the dispersion of the family)

Thwalima personifies an old lady who kindles the fire which destroys the property. This die warns the client to be aware of a lady who can be dangerous.

(ii) HWAMI-Tsha hwami ndi u lulamisa,
(He brings peace in the world)
U vhonisa mmbi ndi haḷo.
(He also protects his people)

Hwami personifies an old man who always strives for peace and protects his family. This die warns the client to try to appease his ancestral spirits.

(e) THE REPETITION OF VERB STEM

This refers to the repetition of verb stem and this type of repetition can be realised in this praise poem:

- (i) MURUBI- Dzi ri: Murubi ndi a ruba-ruba
(The complete thigh or lap)

The repetition of this verb stem -ruba expresses the trouble caused by the maternal ancestral spirits.

(f) THE USE OF SYNONYMS IN ONE LINE

This refers to words of the same language that have a similar meaning and the use of the synonyms can be realised in this praise poem:

- (i) MUHULURI- Ndo vala nda hoṅa
(I have closed and locked)
Tsho ḷaho mukoma tsho bvafhi?
(Where does the killer of my master come from?)

The use of -vala (close) and -hoṅa (close) expresses the safety of life which the client enjoys. With the type of safety expressed by muhuluri nothing will harm the client.

(g) THE USE OF COMPOUND NOUNS

This refers to nouns which are made up of a combination of words or items which represent either the same or different parts of speech. The use of compound nouns can be realised in this poem:

- (i) MUFHIRIFHIRI- Vhumbedzi ha vhu unga ḍumbu
(Vhumbedzi is full of storm)
Vhu sa ungi mvula-mubvumbi
(It is not accompanied by country-wide prolonged rain)

- (ii) **MAKULELA**- Masunda phuli mahulu a vho ndoungwana
 (The great chaser of slaves is like a small elephant)

Mvula-mubvumbi refers to the time when it rains continuously and in the praise poem of **mufhirifhiri** the use of this compound noun expresses unending conflict within the family of client or unending conflict which faces the client. The compound noun **ndoungwana** refers to 'the baby elephant' calf and the use of this compound noun in the praising of **makulela** expresses the belittling of the client because of the problem he or she faces.

N.B. These compound nouns are rarely used in the Standard variety.

The lexical items of this variety can also be illustrated in the following table:

Diviners' variety	Meaning	Standard variety
thwalima	old woman	mukegulu
hwami	old man	mukalaha
tshilume	young man	munna/muṭhannga/ mutukana
luṅwe	young woman	musadzi/khomba/ musidzana
murubi	maternal ancestors	vhadzimu vha ha mmeni
ṭhambadzivha	washing in the pool	u phasa
vhukata	appease ancestors	mulalo muḍini
muhuluri	happiness or disaster in the family	ḍakalo kana khombo muḍini
tshiṭangu	shield	tsireledzo
murorwane	awareness of danger	u limusa khombo
makulela	hardship	u konḍa ha zwithu
muraru	cause of trouble within the family	u ḍisa khakhathi
nga mahe	appease the ancestral spirits	u phasa vha fhasi
nga mahe a khadzi	recovery or return	u wana tsho xelaho

Table 15

Diviners' variety	Meaning	Standard variety
mufhirifhiri	<i>trouble</i>	khakhathi
muṭangula	<i>death</i>	lufu

Table 16

4.3.2 The church varieties

The term 'church varieties' in this section refers to speech varieties used by the members of various churches, namely indigenous churches and western churches. The churches known as indigenous churches are the Zion Church, the Zion Apostolic Church, the Zion Christian Church and others while the Dutch Reformed Church, the Anglican church, the Roman Catholic Church and others are known as western churches. The term 'church varieties' is also used for a form of speech used in churches. The group of people who use a certain speech variety should be those who share the same norms with regard to language and this is the case with members of various churches.

If a person is a member of a certain church, he or she should be able to speak the relevant variety; should know how to use it, or should have a joint knowledge of norms of lexical items, expressions and norms of use.

The indigenous churches have some lexical items which are not used in the western churches, for example *Vhakhokheli* (Priest wife) in the Zionist Apostolic Church while in most western churches *Vhakhokheli* has been derived from the verb stem -*khokhela* in Zulu meaning 'to pay'. The priest's wife is named *Vhakhokheli* with the assumption that she is the one who keeps the

church dues or annual contributions. In the western churches *Vhomme* has the image of the mother and this is an indication that she is regarded as the mother of the congregation.

The varieties used by various churches are regarded as social varieties because they are used by members of various churches regardless of the geographical area from which they come. The existence of these social varieties is based solely on their religious beliefs. They are used in both rural and urban areas.

The varieties spoken in the indigenous churches are different to those spoken in western churches. These churches have a majority of black members whereas the western churches have less. The indigenous churches, with so many black members have to conform to the African way of life and culture. For example, these churches offer their members protection against witchcraft and superstitious beliefs because African people need protection and assurance by the church against witchcraft or an illness (Lukhaimane 1980:4). In addition, Rev. Mutshembele, who is a priest in one of the Zion Churches and a staunch supporter of these churches, says that most leaders of indigenous churches have made it possible to present something African to the people which could make them self-sufficient even in health. They have brought in some traditional practices and different ways of faith healing with the result that faith healing has often become more important than spiritual salvation. These churches have also become successful in having a hold on some of the tribal chiefs who found in it an instrument of peace and order. These chiefs have found in these churches explanations and solutions to their problems of administration. This became possible because the structures of these churches resemble the normal tribal council. All rules and regulations applied in the tribal council are also applicable to the church council.

On the side of the western churches, Rev. Kruger, a minister of the Dutch Reformed Church, maintains that they have less black members because they are based on the European way of life and

culture. For example, these churches discourage superstitious belief, witchcraft and traditional practices. As a result, the majority of black people have turned away from the western churches.

According to Rev. Mutshembele, some indigenous churches do not restrict their members from making sacrifices to their ancestors but members are encouraged to worship God and honour their ancestors. Some churches, such as the Dutch Reformed, the Anglican, the Roman Catholic and others do not practise this. The indigenous churches do not forbid polygamy whereas polygamy is forbidden in the western churches.

All these ideas and practices of the various churches are transmitted through the varieties which are used by the members of these churches. According to Rev. FM Menziwa from the Department of Old Testament and Mr VS Molobi from the Research Institute for Theology and Religion at the University of South Africa, there are lexical items among the indigenous churches and western churches which have been borrowed from Greek, Hebrew and English. Some of the borrowed lexical items from these three languages are characterised by the shift of meaning as will be noticed in the examples given in our discussion. The indigenous churches have also coined lexical items in order to express their practices and needs. However, there are lexical items which have been used by the Venda community in the past, and today they are part of varieties used in various churches. The following are various categories of lexical items which form the core part of each variety in the Venda community:

- (a) The adopted lexical items by the indigenous churches and western churches from Greek, Hebrew and English with shift of meaning or no shift of meaning:
 - (i) **Mubishopho** (overseer or superintendent) adopted from the noun **Bishop** meaning Christian clergyman of high rank who organises the church. This is the case in both indigenous

churches and western ones.

- (ii) **Sioni** or **Moria** (the headquarters of Z.C.C) is adopted from the Biblical word **Zion** meaning chosen city of God or the Biblical word **Moriah** which is the land where Abraham took his son Isaac for burnt offering. The church members are also referred to as **Masioni**. This noun is also formed from **Sioni** and it shows their belonging to the place known as **Sioni** or **Moria**. This place is situated on the eastern side of Pietersburg in the Northern Province, 40 km away from the city.
- (iii) **Bivhili** (sacred writings of the Jews and the Christian church) is coined from the noun **Bible** meaning sacred writings of the Jews and the Christian church.
- (iv) **Muporofita**✓ (formed from the **-porofita** meaning to foretell). To some indigenous churches, this noun refers to a leader of a church as a chosen prophet by God whereas to western churches, this refers to anyone who can foretell the wisdom of the church. This noun is coined from the noun **prophet** meaning a person who teaches religion and claims that his teaching comes directly from God.
- (v) **Sathane** (meaning the arch-enemy of the good). Both indigenous churches and western churches have adopted this noun from the Greek or Hebrew, **Satan**.
- (vi) **Sabatha** (meaning day of rest from secular weekly activities). Both indigenous churches and western churches have adopted this noun from the Hebrew **Sabbath**.
- (vii) **Amen** (meaning let everything be as requested). Both indigenous churches and western churches have adopted this noun from the Greek or Hebrew.

^{Jehova}
 (viii) **Yehova** (meaning self-existent/eternal). Both indigenous churches and western churches have adopted this noun from Hebrew **Jehovah**.

^{Manna}
 (ix) **Mana** (meaning food given miraculously to the Israelites while they were in the wilderness). Both indigenous churches and western churches have adopted this noun from Hebrew **Manna**.

(b) The usage of existing lexical items by members of the church:

(i) **Mulalo**: In some indigenous churches, whenever a member meets another, he or she is entitled to say: **Mulalo!** (Peace) and a response will be: **Kha u dale!** (Let peace reign!). The greetings amongst **Masioni** resemble the nature of the church itself. This church preaches peace and order among its members. In some indigenous churches, the noun **mulalo** is used to punctuate the preaching by the priest. The priest always says: **Mulalo tshivhidzoni!** Meaning let there be peace in the congregation. The priest does this when he or she tries to stimulate the interest of the congregation. In the western churches, the noun **mulalo** is used as it is commonly used by the Venda community.

(ii) **Tshivhidzo** (congregation). This noun has been used before by the Venda communities referring to people who are invited to attend the tribal court. Today, this noun commonly refers to the church congregation in some indigenous and all western churches.

(ii) **Khuthadzo** (comfort) in place of preaching. This was the case in the early stages of some indigenous churches because most priests could not read and write. So they used to tell the members of the church how to overcome the problems in life. These days, the normal preaching takes place where the Bible is read.

- (iii) **Mulilwa** (a needed person). Some leaders in the indigenous churches are regarded as **Mulilwa** because members of the church believe that they have been sent by God to work amongst the Black people.
- (iv) **Ndovhedzo** (baptism). This noun is derived from the verb stem **-lovhea** meaning to soak. When this noun **ndovhedzo** is used these days, it refers to baptism.

Some lexical items may have a set of different meanings and these meanings are related to one another, for example:

ipfi: this lexical item may refer to the voice of God that speaks to the Christians through the Holy Spirit; it may also refer to the Word of God which is found in the Bible, or Jesus Himself.

mapfura: this lexical item may refer to a lamp fuel which keeps the lamp burning, that is the parable of ten girls i.e. five wise ones and five foolish ones; it may also refer to food, e.g. "I have not cake, but a handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse" Stampley (1976:294); it may also refer to cosmetic fat such as the one used to smear Jesus' feet after washing them.

Some lexical items may express symbolism, for example:

u fhaṭa thembele: 'to build a temple' symbolises redemption through forgiveness of sins.

mbeu: 'seed' symbolises the Word of God which implants in the heart of man.

tshedza: 'light' symbolises the value of the truth.

Some lexical items may be regarded as metaphoric utterances, for example: **ṭhoho ya tshivhidzo:** 'Head of the church'. This is a

metaphoric expression used to indicate Jesus' leadership of the church. In western churches and some indigenous churches, it is the case whereas in some indigenous churches the leaders are regarded as the heads.

Some existing lexical items are used to explain the process of healing and security. Most of the indigenous churches practise these processes of healing and security whereas the western churches rely on prayer.

1. u phetha ndaela: This phrase is uttered to a member when he or she takes orders from the priest in order to have peace. A member is told to fulfil the orders after consulting the priest.
2. muhavhulo: referring to the water blessed by the priest.
3. maḁi a mahovhohovho: referring to the water from a waterfall and blessed by the priest.
4. maḁi a sa eli: referring to the water drawn from a spring and blessed by the priest.
5. maḁi a ṭhanganyoni dza mulambo: referring to the water drawn from the intersections of rivers and blessed by the priest.

muḁemo/khuṭane is a blessed string or strip of cloth worn around the waist or shoulder to save the members from evil.

muḁo (salt) in some indigenous churches is used to ward off evil spirits.

-phaladza (to vomit) to get rid of excessive bile. This verb stem appears to have been coined from -phalaza in Zulu or phalatša in Northern Sotho.

- (c) There are few lexical items in the indigenous churches and western churches which have been borrowed from Afrikaans:

Kereke (a collective body of people whose main purpose is to worship, that is a gathering of christians) is adopted from the Afrikaans word **kerk** meaning church in English.

- (d) There are lexical items coined or used specifically by the indigenous churches and some western churches. Most of these lexical items are also used by the Venda community:

- (i) **likhuḁa**: Some indigenous churches in the Venda community have adopted the noun **likhuḁa** from Lekgotla in Northern Sotho meaning church council. To some members, **likhuḁa** refers to congregation. The noun **likhuḁa** brings in the image of the tribal council where order, peace and law is maintained.

- (ii) **Khwairi ya maxarivhe** referring to the choir for females. The noun **maxarivhe** has been adopted from **makgaribe** in Northern Sotho.

- (iii) **Munikelo** (an offering): This noun is derived from **umnikelo** from Zulu or Xhosa. This is commonly used by indigenous churches. In the western churches the word **dzimpho** is used.

- (iv) **Vhazalwana** (meaning the born again): This noun is derived from **abazalwana** from Zulu or Xhosa. This is commonly used by the born again christians in western churches. In other western churches the word **vhaphuluswa** is used in place of **abazalwana**.

It is true that the lexical items coined in Northern Sotho, Zulu and Xhosa or borrowed from Greek, Hebrew and English, are in most instances transferred to Venda. This is in support of the

principle of borrowing suggested by Hudson (1980:65) whereby words are transferred from a foreign language to a pre-existing African language, for example *khuthadzo* in Venda has been coined from Northern Sotho word *kgothatšo* meaning *to comfort*. *Phaladza* is formed from the verb stem *-fhalala* (spill) and it appears as if it has been adopted from Northern Sotho verb stem *-phalatša* or Zulu verb stem *-phalaza* meaning *to get rid of excessive bile*. *Khuṭane* in Venda has been coined from Northern Sotho verb stem *-khuta* meaning *hidden*. *Khuṭane* is a blessed string or strip of cloth to be worn around the waist or shoulder to save the member of a church from witchcraft. Today, *Khuṭane* in some indigenous churches is used together with *muḑemo*. The noun *muḑemo* has been adopted from *motlemo* meaning *to tie a knot*. *Muḑemo* is also used for security reasons. As can be noticed in these paragraphs, the meanings of the mentioned lexical items which have been borrowed from Northern Sotho have been kept.

The lexical items which have been adopted from other languages, are adjusted to the Venda sound pattern, for example:

Bivhili from Bible

Kereke from Kerk

Muporofita from Prophet

The shift of meanings of those lexical items adopted from the Greek, Hebrew and English can be explained in terms of the nature of these two groups of churches. To the indigenous churches, everything revolves around the church leaders although God is seen as Supreme. To the members of these churches, leaders are seen as *Vhaphulusi* (*Bophološi*) (Messiahs) and not Jesus Christ because it is believed that God has given all powers to a church leader. The leader of the church is also regarded as the representative of God and to despise him is to despise God in person. On the other hand, the western churches believe in Jesus as the Messiah and not the leaders of the churches.

The varieties which are used in western churches have to do with

christian belief. Christian belief is associated with faith in God through Jesus Christ's teachings. With regard to this, Podile (1990:4) says:

This belief gives rise to shared experience within the church, for instance, the believers attend the church services regularly, one of the reasons being to promote fellowship amongst them".

Because of this, the members of western churches believe in Jesus Christ as Muphulusi, Mutshidzi.

On the other hand, varieties used in some indigenous churches have to do with christianity, healing and giving their members hope in whatever they are doing. The lexical items, such as *khuṭane* (protector from evil), *maḍi a mahovhohovho* (water blessed by priest but used for healing) *tie ya vhutshilo* (tea for life), play a big role in the healing process whereas during *khuthadzo* members are comforted to have hope in life and confront social problems positively.

4.3.3 The tsotsi variety

Tsotsitaal is a social variety spoken in all Venda communities. It is used by blacks in South African cities regardless of the geographical area, and also in the rural areas. It has been introduced to all rural communities by migrant labourers who used to frequent urban areas, especially the Reef. Today, the majority of Tsotsitaal speakers in most Venda communities are teenagers, young men and old men working in urban areas or old men who once worked in urban areas.

4.3.3.1 The origin of tsotsitaal and its use

Tsotsitaal is a contact medium which originated when various ethnic groups were 'thrown together' in South African cities,

especially on the Witwatersrand. Those who created it were motivated by participation in common activities, particularly crime. With regard to this, Bonne (1987) as quoted by Ntshangase (1991:3) says:

Unlike Tsotsitaal, the term Shalambombo is easy to explain. This is a compound word formed from two zulu ideophones, shala (i.e. of shunning) and bombo (i.e. of covering over or of turning upside-down). This is very apt in describing a secret language. Tsotsi is also known as flaaitaal.

According to one informant, Mr Thomas Magoro, a security officer, the community who speak Tsotsitaal comprise delinquent teenagers who lack proper upbringing and socialization. They may also be orphans and/or illegitimate children. When they flocked to the Reef, they were used as a black labour force and at the same time were not accorded social and political status. Because they lacked education and profession, these teenagers did not do well in the labour market. As a result of this, they resorted to stealing for survival and were also regarded as social misfits or outcasts.

This inspired the tsotsis to distance themselves from society and as a result they developed their own identity and their own variety to communicate with. Like the tsotsis on the Reef, the tsotsis in Venda communities do not always speak Tsotsitaal. With regard to this, Msimang (1987:84) says:

There are certain social situations where they would speak their mother tongue, for example in conversation with their parents and other elders in their native society, or they will speak one of the official languages, for example when speaking to authorities. However, among themselves, they always speak Tsotsitaal. There

is no doubt therefore that Tsotsitaal is used as a register. It is abandoned where the tsotsi wants to maintain the distance between himself and members of the out-group; and he will use it to maintain the identity and solidarity with members of the in-group. Distance is maintained in order to snub members of the out-group as well as to endorse his attitude towards them. People of the middle class are despised.

Even though the tsotsis enjoy the role they play in the community, they know that their parents do not approve of their activities. In certain instances one can find the elders addressing tsotsis in Tsotsitaal. By so doing they are trying to breach the gap between them and this can help them get some favours from tsotsis. This can also secure them from robbery or being molested. As a result, one finds elders saying Heitha! instead of nndaa! to tsotsis.

Tsotsitaal is a pidgin language and satisfies all the requirements of a pidgin. With regard to the definition of pidgins, Hudson (1980:61) says:

These are varieties created for very practical and immediate purposes of communication between people who otherwise would have no common language whatsoever, and learned by one person from another within the communities concerned as the accepted way of communicating with members of the other community.

But Msimang (1987:84) argues that Tsotsitaal is very much in the process of creolization because these days it is also spoken by decent young men and women from all areas. On this he says:

...one of my informants, J.M. Lenake, cited two families, one in Saulsville and another in

Mabopane (both these are Pretoria townships), where he maintains that family heads communicate with their spouses and children in Tsotsitaal. This means that there are already some people who use Tsotsitaal as their native language: The process of creolization has been completed.

It is true that Tsotsitaal borrows from English, Afrikaans and Zulu but there are no words which are transferred from a foreign language to a pre-existing African language. This statement is against the principle of borrowing suggested by Hudson (1980:65). The same statement shows that Tsotsitaal has no such a base as its language. Some people may argue that Afrikaans is the original basilect of Tsotsitaal but today Sotho and Zulu are used as basilect, depending on the ethnic background of tsotsis.

According to Hudson (1980:65), in borrowing, the meaning of items and concepts borrowed from a foreign language is usually kept. In Tsotsitaal, this is not the case, usually there is shift of meaning as will be noticed in the examples given in our discussion.

4.3.3.2 Types of influences

The impact of Tsotsitaal on Venda can be noticed largely in the three types of influences which can be distinguished.

Firstly, Zulu lexical items which are used in Venda as part of Tsotsitaal with some shift in meaning, for example:

- (a) -canda (eat) adopted from the Zulu verb stem -canda meaning to chop.
- (b) dladla adopted from the Zulu word idladla meaning temporary dwelling or storehouse.
- (c) ntwana (young boy) adopted from the Zulu word ntwana meaning a young boy.
- (d) -tshaela (tell) adopted from the Zulu word -shayela

meaning to drive.

- (e) **nyuku** (money) is adopted from **inyuku** in Zulu. The noun **inyuku** is derived from the ideophone **nyuku!** in Zulu meaning tiring or moving. According to Msimang (1987:86), the verb stem **-nyukubala** means to swell or to rise. This also shows the attitude of **tsotsis** towards money. The **tsotsis** always think of 'stacks' and 'stacks' of money.
- (f) **gcwala** (like or love) is adopted from the verb stem **-gcwala** in Zulu meaning full.
- (g) **-lahla mulenze** (dance) is adopted from Zulu. This phrase suggests the manner in which **tsotsis** do things. There is no time for doing things gently.
- (h) **-gidla** (sleep). According to Msimang (1987:86), this verb stem is coined from the ideophone **gidli!** Meaning the falling of a rock or pile of objects. This indicates that **tsotsis** do not have time to sleep because they are always thinking of their activities.

These lexical items can also be illustrated in the following table:

Tsotsitaal	Meaning	Standard variety
-canda	eat	- <u>l</u> a
dladla	dwelling or storehouse	nn <u>ḍ</u>
ntwana	a young boy	mutukana
-tshaela	tell	-vhudza
-gidla	sleep	-lala or -e <u>ḍ</u> ela
nyuku	money	tshede
-gcwala	like or love	-funa
-lahla mulenze	dance	-tshina

Table 17.

Secondly, Afrikaans lexical items are used in Venda as part of

Tsotsitaal with some shift in meaning or no shift of meaning, for example:

- (a) **furou** (wife or steady girlfriend) is adopted from the Afrikaans word **vrou** meaning wife.
- (b) **grootman** (elder brother) is adopted from the Afrikaans word **grootman** meaning big man.
- (c) **vaya** (go) is adopted from the Afrikaans word **waai** meaning to blow.
- (d) **gister** (the previous day) is adopted from the Afrikaans word **gister** meaning yesterday.
- (e) **vaxa** (wait) adopted from the Afrikaans word **wag** meaning to wait.
- (f) **spana** (spana) is derived from the Afrikaans word **span** meaning team.
- (g) **trowa** (get married) is derived from the Afrikaans verb **trou** meaning to get married.
- (h) **xuruṭa** (greet) is derived from the Afrikaans verb **groet** meaning to greet.
- (i) **ou** (boyfriend) has been adopted from the Afrikaans adverb **ou** meaning old. This adverb shows that men and women are not equal. Men are regarded as superior to women by tsotsi community.
- (j) **hi** (here) has been derived from the Afrikaans adverb **hier** meaning here.
- (k) **ḁayi-ḁene** (that thing) has been derived from the Afrikaans **ḁaardie ḁing** meaning that thing.
- (l) **kasi** (residing place) has been derived from the Afrikaans adverb **lokasie** meaning residing place.
- (m) **gedagte** (ideas) is adopted from the Afrikaans noun **gedagte** meaning ideas.

These lexical items can also be illustrated in the following table:

Tsotsitaal	Meaning	Standard variety
frou	wife or steady girlfriend	mufumakadzi or mufarekano
grootman	big man	muthu wa tshinnani muhulwane
-vaxa	wait	-lindela
gister	the previous day	ḡuvha lo fhiraho
-spana	work	-shuma
-trowa	get married	-mala
-xuruṭa	greet	-lumelisa
ou	boyfriend	mufarekano
hi	here	hafha
ḡayi-deṅe	that thing	hetshiḷa tshithu
kasi	residing place	fhethu ha u ḡzula
gedagte	ideas	mihumbulo

Table 18.

Thirdly, English lexical items which are used in Venda as part of Tsotsitaal with some shift in meaning or no shift of meaning, for example:

- (a) **ḡzhadzha** (look or see) is adopted from the English word **judge** meaning give a decision.
- (b) **ankeḷi** (the brother of your mother) is adopted from the English word **uncle** meaning the brother of your father or the brother of your mother.
- (c) **bayisa** (make one to buy) is adopted from the English word **buy** meaning to get return for money.
- (d) **spina** (steal) is adopted from the English word **spin** meaning draw out and twist.
- (e) **sharp** (alright) is adopted from the English word **sharp** meaning alright or okay.
- (f) **smoko** (trouble, problem) has been derived from the English noun **smoke** meaning visible vapour with particles of

carbon, etc.

- (g) **six-nine** (toilet, urinate or urine) has been adopted from the names of numerical numbers in English.
- (h) **gaya** (give) has been derived from the verb **give** in English.
- (i) **half-tiger** (five rand) has been adopted from **half-tiger** in English meaning half of the size of a tiger.
- (j) **hola** (hello) has been derived from the word **hello** in English.

These lexical items can also be illustrated in the following table:

Tsotsitaal	Meaning	Standard variety
-dzhadzha	look or see	-sedza or -vhona
ankeḽi	mother's brother	malume
-bayisa	sell	-rengisa
-spina	steal	-tswa
sharp	alright	zwo luga
smoko	smoke	mutsi
six-nine	toilet or to urinate	-runda
gaya	give	-fha
half-tiger	five rand	R5-00
hola	hello	Nndaa!/Aa!

Table 19.

The Tsotsitaal spoken in all Venda communities is based on Zulu, Afrikaans and English. The lexical items adopted from these three languages are used as they are, or adjusted to the Venda sound pattern. This shows clearly that this variety has been imported from urban areas and owes its existence to the black labour force which was essential for economic growth in the past.

Like other ethnic groups, it is also important to notice how the attitude of the tsotsis is reflected in their choice of lexical items, for example: *bari* meaning stupid person; *Maradona* meaning a soccer star and others. Concepts and objects that appeal to them, for example: women and money are referred to by a great number of synonyms. Schuring (1979:61) concurs and indicates that synonyms in Tsotsitaal may occur, for example: *money is known as nyuku or smega or zak etc girlfriend is known as medi or tsheri or thekeni; to work is known as spana or thesha etc.* The Tsotsitaal is loaded with metaphors and symbols, for example: *De Klerk* for the new R2.00 coin which is seen as a symbol of peace; *Mandela* for an arbitrator who is seen as black resistance to apartheid and these show the poetic nature of this variety.

The attitude of tsotsis and the metaphors in Tsotsitaal can be illustrated by the discussion of two young men in the shebeen

Ace: Ndi mini? U khou warishwa nga mini wo rali?

Javas: Zwithu zwi khou moshakala?

Ace: Zwi khou moshwa nga mini?

Javas: Hei mtwana ha furusitani.

Ace: Smoko?

Javas: U khou ntshaela uri o vusa inwe impitshi ine a incanywa.

Ace: Wo vha wo fanela wo mumura.

Javas: Iwe u vhona zwo fanela uri ndi mu murele u sa ncanywa.

Ace: Ya! iwe u denka mini? A u cavi uri o u ita bari.

Javas: Hai outie yanga, ho u_la mtwana ha tsha gwala nga n_ñe.

ENGLISH

Ace: You look worried, what's the problem?

Javas: Things are messed up.

Ace: What's the matter?

Javas: My girlfriend has dumped me?

Ace: What's the reason?

Javas: She tells me she has found someone she loves.

Ace: You were supposed to have beaten her.

Javas: Do you think I should beat her for not loving me any more.

Ace: Sure! What do you think? Don't you see that she does not love you.

Javas: No buddy, that girl does not love me any more.

Both speakers switch from tsotsitaal to the Standard variety. This is because Ace wants to know more about the problem so he has to make the speaker Javass feel comfortable.

The following discourse illustrates codemixing:

Ace: Majita, ndi grand, ndi denka u vava, ndi do ni cava more. Eintlilndi fanela uri ndi gidle early because ndi fanela u vuwa nga matsheloni ndi tshi yo geleza then nga vho 12 ndi vaye na medi ri ye Jozi.

Sputla: Sharp, Ace. Viye, viye na n_ñe ndi do vava. I do faka four ya u fhedza.

Ace: Hha! A ni canywa u gidla ne. Hu worse arali Zola Mahobe e hone, a hu gidlwa hafho; ni mbomba u swikela hu tshi

valwa.

Sputla: Sharp, Ace. Ndo no ɔ̄i u tshaela uri ndi ɔ̄o vaya. U tshaele Biza uri a ngaye De Klerk more, viye viye a dzhadzhe nqcosi yawe.

Ace: Sharp. U vaye grand.

English

Ace: Guys, I am drunk now, I am thinking of leaving. I will see you tomorrow. In fact, I would like to sleep early because I want to wake up in the morning and read, and then by 12 o'clock I will be going to town with my girlfriend.

Sputla: Ok, Ace. I will also be leaving soon. Buy the last four (beers) for us.

Ace: Oh! You don't want to sleep. It's even worse when Zola Mahobe is around, you don't sleep. You drink until the shebeen closes.

Sputla: Ok, Ace. I have already told you that I will be leaving soon. Tell Biza to give me R2,00 tomorrow and he must also look after his child.

Ace: Ok, Ace. Go well.

4.3.4 Gender variety

Like most societies in the world, there are some differences between the language used by men and women. The men's and women's languages will be referred to as varieties in this section. The differences between these varieties (i.e. that spoken by men and that by women) are brought about by the social differentiation between men and women. With regard to this, Maltz and Borker (1983:199) say:

...women produce the speech they do, not just because it is how they should speak but because it fits with the personalities they develop as a consequence of sex role requirements.

In addition, Fromkin and Rodman (1978:277) say:

But there is pretty much a unanimous opinion that the language we use is affected by the views and values of society. This is very apparent when we look at how the sexism in society is reflected in our language.

In line with these definitions, there are certain expressions and lexical items associated with women or men among the Venda people. For example, the expression Aa! Meaning *hallo* is always associated with women. Whenever a woman meets a woman or a man, she is supposed to greet her or him by saying Aa! Culturally this expression is not meant for greeting only and it is also coupled with respect. The expression atshi! is always uttered by women when they are surprised by something which has just happened. One would hardly hear a man say atshi! Only women are assigned the incorporate prefix nya- meaning *the mother of* after graduating from *thondo* or after being blessed by the newly first born baby. The expression u vhona *nwedzi* meaning *to menstruate* is always associated with the ovulation of women. This occurs at the end of the month or beginning of the month hence the expression u vhona *nwedzi* (to menstruate) which implies that the girl is matured. The rite of u imbelwa meaning *to graduate* from *vhusha*, the initiation school for females, is performed as a result of menstruating. If a woman reaches this stage, it is believed that she is physically mature. Culturally, she must be told how to handle a man or satisfy him.

On the other hand, the expression Ndaa! is associated with men. When a man meets a woman or another man older than him, he should

greet him by saying *Ndaa!* This is always coupled with respect. In the case of marriage, according to Venda customs, it is a man who pays *lobola* not a woman, hence the use of an infinitive noun *u mala* meaning *to marry*. This is said because the man is responsible for paying *lumalo* meaning *bride price*. That is why this expression is always associated with men. The family is also associated with men because culturally it is believed that the man is the head of the family. That is why each family is known by the man's name, for example: *Muṭa wa Muṭandani* (the family of *Muṭandani*), *Muṭa wa Lukau* (the family of *Lukau*) etc.

Only men are assigned the title *Ne-* or *Ra-* meaning *the owner of* because culturally men are believed to own land and properties. The expression *u luma luṭanga* meaning *to experience some wet dreams* always refers to a boy. If a boy reaches this stage, he is taken to *thondo* or *vhutuka* in order to be taught how to handle a woman or to satisfy her.

Some garments are associated with men, such as *tsindi* (loin dress of men and boys) whereas others are associated with women, such as *sheḁo* (narrow strip of cloth between legs, hanging over giridle in front and behind.)

4.3.5 Linguistic restriction variety

This variety plays an important role in controlling social behaviour in society and cannot be regarded solely as a taboo variety because it does not reflect general customs or values and beliefs. Certain lexical items are avoided because they are undesirable in society. Their avoidance also promotes respect among youngsters and adults.

Although the recognition of the restriction of linguistic terms as a variety may be debatable, Sekhukhune (1988:88) says,

...avoidance language, as a distinct language

variety relating to behaviour control and restriction could be termed 'the adult language' for the simple reason that it is only used and observed by older people.

This can be illustrated by the following:

(a) Avoiding vulgar words

- (i) **Matshimba** meaning *faeces*. The youth are taught not to mention **matshimba** in the presence of adults. Any child who mentions this in the presence of adults or any gathering may be regarded as being disrespectful and may be punished.
- (ii) **Nyovha** meaning *to have sexual intercourse*. Any child mentioning this in the presence of adults can be punished severely. The adult can also not mention this noun in the presence of children because sex is considered an activity performed by adults.
- (iii) **Nnyo** meaning *female genitals*. This noun is avoided by both young and old. A young girl can say it among her peer group but not in the presence of an adult or a stranger.
- (iv) **Tshitungulo** meaning *penis*. This noun is avoided by both young and old. A young boy can say it among his peer group but not in the presence of an adult or a stranger.
- (v) **Matshende** meaning *testicles*. This word cannot be uttered in public because it is regarded as an insult but any persons of equal age and who are related, or friends can talk about testicles.

(b) Using euphemism in place of undesirable words

- (i) **U nya** meaning *relieve oneself*. This infinitive noun is always avoided. Instead of mentioning **u nya** the youngster or the adult will say **u khou dithusa** meaning *to relieve oneself* (literally meaning to defecate).
- (ii) **U shuluwa** meaning *running stomach*. This infinitive noun is avoided when an adult is troubled by a running stomach. Instead of mentioning **u shulula**, the youngster or the adult will say **u na dangani** meaning *running stomach* (literally meaning diarrhoea).
- (iii) **U a zwifha** meaning *to lie*. Socially it is unacceptable to say that an adult person is lying. An adult person jokes, which becomes **u swaswa** in Venda. Only youngsters lie.
- (iv) **U shavha** meaning *run away*. It is unacceptable for a child to say that the mother has run away. For this child to show respect, he/she should say that **who nenga** meaning *to dodge* (literally meaning to run away).
- (v) **U kambiwa** meaning *to be drunk*. Socially it is unacceptable to say that a mother or the father or any other adult is drunk. An adult person does not get drunk but he or she becomes happy-**who dítakalela**.

4.3.6 The courtroom variety

The courtroom variety revolves around the spoken language used by the magistrate, court interpreters, lawyers, the defendants and witnesses in a legal court. This variety is characterised by certain expressions and lexical items, which form the core part of the legal procedure. The use of this variety in a legal court aims at gathering information in order to reveal the truth of

what actually happened at the crime scene. With regard to this, Stubbs (1983:28) says it:

...involves knowing how to say the right thing in an appropriate style at the right time and place. It involves complex knowledge of how to say what, to whom, when and where.

According to Mellinhof (1963:3-4), the language of the law referring to court variety includes distinctive words, meanings, phrases and modes of expression. The distinctive words include Latin terminology which is still used as part of the legal vocabulary in Venda, for example:

avidavithi or *lianelwa* adopted or coined from *affidavit*
pro rata adopted from *pro rata*

There are also English lexical items which are coined into Venda as part of the legal vocabulary, for example:

Mutshutshisi coined from *prosecutor*
 dokete adopted from *docket*
 beila adopted from *bail*
 pota adopted from *report*

Some existing lexical items in Venda are used as part of legal vocabulary, for example:

-vhiga meaning to *report*
 vhuṭanzi meaning *evidence*
 haṭulwa meaning *sentenced*
 mupomokiwa meaning *defendant*
 ramilayo meaning *lawyer*
 Murena meaning *Lord*
 mulandu meaning *court case*

Expressions such as these are also used as part of legal variety, for example:

- u haṭulelwa thambo meaning *death sentence*
- Mudzimu nthuse, ndi ambe ngoho fhedzi meaning *so help me God*
- u ḍivhonadza khothe meaning *to appear in court*
- u vhonwa mulandu meaning *to be found guilty*
- u fhiriselwa phanḍa meaning *to be reminded*
- u thivhela u sa ita vhukhakhi vhu no nga honoho *to be suspended*

To indicate the problem encountered when this variety is used in a courtroom one can look into this quotation from Moeketsi (1997:36), when she says:

The prosecutor presents the charge in a jargon that employs unknown Latin expressions, strange technical terms, a complicated syntactic structure, and a complex numbering of sections and sub-sections, that are invariably incomprehensible to the very witness for whom it is intended.

4.3.7 The politicians variety

This variety, which is used by politicians, has a persuasive function. The political relevance of this type of variety is used by politicians for the promotion of their aims and ambitions. For the politicians to do this, they use the existing lexical items and expressions with semantic shift of meaning to create a sense of trust among their listeners. With regard to this, Dallmayr (1984:3) says:

When backed up by political power and broad ideological precepts, language functions not as a means for particular aims, but rather as a cast or grid for an entire way of life, that is for

preferred manners of thinking, speaking and acting.

In the case of Venda, this type of variety was commonly used during the homelands era, for example the Venda homeland was the base of two parties, namely the Venda National party and the Venda Independence Party. The lexical items such as *Mabofu* meaning *blind people* refer to the leaders of the Venda National Party. They were referred to as blind people because they were not educated. This term *Mabofu* (blind people) was not so much liked by literate people as they believe that they were not wanted since the National Party was for illiterate people. The slogan for the Venda Independence Party was known as *Tshedza* meaning *light*. The term was associated with the Venda Independence Party because its leaders were literate. To the supporters of this party *Tshedza* was the symbol of progress and prosperity.

On the other hand, the National Party's slogan was known as *Vhuthihi ha Venda* meaning *Unity of the Republic of Venda*. To the supporters of this party, this slogan created the feeling of unity and strength. This party was also known as *Buto* meaning *the bundle of clothes* by the supporters of the Venda Independence Party and its leaders because of the suits given to chiefs at Manyeleti Game Reserve after the 1978 election, so that chiefs should join the National Party. The term *buto* suggests bribery and corruption. To most people, the Venda National Party was associated with corruption. The leaders of the Venda Independence Party were called *vhasiwana* meaning *commoners* by leaders of the Venda National Party and this had instilled the sense of insecurity to the people because most of them started to question the ability to rule the country if they do not own land.

In the Venda Parliament, these politicians used the special coined lexical items as well as the adopted lexical items from English. It was in the late 1960's until the early 1990's before

the release of Mr Nelson Mandela from prison when these lexical items were commonly used in the then Republic of Venda. In the so-called 'parliament of the Republic of Venda' lexical items such as these were used:

Vhukhethelo for *constituency*

Tshiṭitshi tsha khetho for *polling station*

nkhetheni for *a candidate for a party*

mukhethi for *voter*

-khetha for *vote*

bogisi la khetho for *ballot box*

vhusimamilayo for *legislative assembly*

dzulo for *parliament in session*

tshipikara tsha phalamennde for *speaker of the legislative assembly*

Ḳihoro for *political party*

Ḳihoro Ḳikangi for *opposition party*

Muhulisei tshimebi for *chief whip*

u imiswa lwa tshifhinganyana for *adjourn*

mulayo mbisi for *bill*

u fhiriswa ha mulayo mbisi for *to pass the bill*

mulayo for *act*

u rula mushumo for *resign*

-pandelwa for *dismissed*

muraḁo wa phalamennde for *member of the parliament*

nwaha wa muvhalelano for *financial year*

ndayotewa for *constitution*

mbuelo dza khetho for *election result*

khabinete for *cabinet*

khorotshitumbe for *executive*

u ta for *nominate*

u ṭahiswa for *suggesting*

u hanedza for *oppose*

These lexical items are still used by Radio Phalaphala and to a lesser extent by the public.

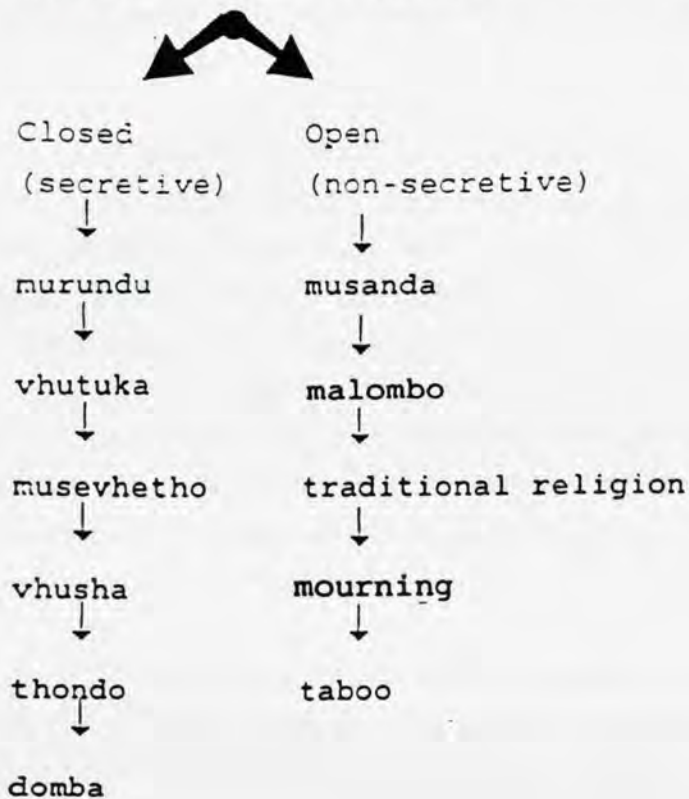
In the early nineties, words such as *Maanḁa*, translated from *Amandla* in Zulu or Xhosa meaning strength, were introduced into the political arena. This term depicts unity, brotherhood and strength. The word *fhasi* depicts corruption or mismanagement. The word *Viva* depicts the feeling of appreciation of a person whom the people like or any likeable concept. The term '*MK*' is seen as a symbol of freedom. The word *apartheid* is a symbol of oppression. The noun *muzavhalazo* which is popular these days expresses the feeling of dissatisfaction. *Muzavhalazo* has been used in the late eighties and early nineties to reject the *apartheid* government.

The following expressions were also used in the early 1990s to make people undermine the *apartheid* structures: *fhasi na tshandḁa nguvhoni fhasi* meaning *down with corruption*; *fhasi na muvhuso wa apartheid fhasi* meaning *down with the apartheid government*; *fhasi na bantu education fhasi* meaning *down with bantu education*; *phandḁa na muvhuso wa vhathu phandḁa* meaning *forward with people's government*; *phandḁa na muzavhalazo phandḁa* meaning *forward with struggle etc.*

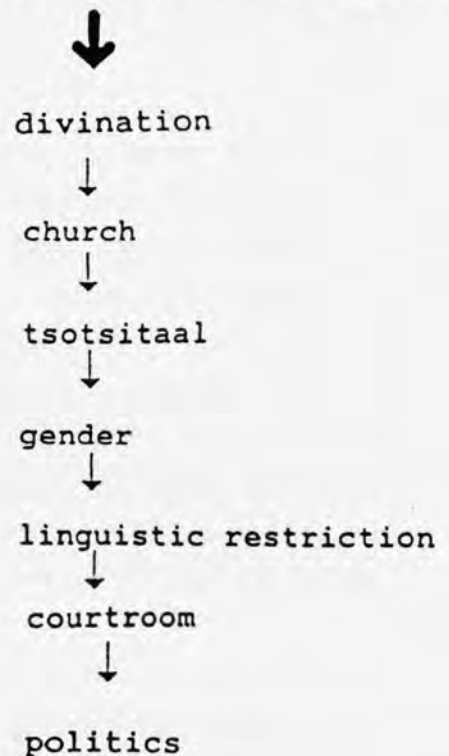
4.4 RECAPITULATION

In this chapter, I have considered various varieties that are used by the Venda speakers across all geographical boundaries. The contents of this chapter can be captured in the following illustration where the distinction is clearly shown between the various language varieties used by the Venda speakers. This can be illustrated by the following diagram:

RURAL SOCIAL VARIETIES



URBAN AND RURAL VARIETIES



With regard to the social rural varieties, these are language varieties which are restricted to the rural areas of Venda. I have distinguished two main varieties under this sub-heading mainly the 'closed' (secretive varieties) and the 'open' (non secretive).

The 'closed' varieties are those found in certain initiation institutions which are secretive in nature. The linguistic items and expressions of these varieties are not generally known to the public. Venda individuals who have attended the said institutions are well acquainted with the specialised use of these varieties. These varieties include the murundu, musevhetho, vhutuka, vhusha, thondo and domba.

With regard to the 'open' (non secretive) we find linguistic terms and expressions which are not secretive in nature in that they are known to the general Venda public. These include the

musanda language, malombo, traditional religion, mourning and taboo varieties.

Under the urban and rural social varieties, I have discussed those varieties which permeate both urban and rural areas. In other words, they are not restricted to the rural community alone. These are varieties which are found in specific environments, in some cases by a specific class of people. The environments specified and identified in this chapter include those of divination, the church, tsotsitaal, gender, the variety used in the courtroom as well as that used by politicians. Furthermore, I have also referred to the variety which avoids the use of certain linguistic terms (linguistic restriction variety).

(It should be noted that with regard to the 'closed' varieties, the events which take place at initiation schools have been well-documented in works such as Stayt (1931) and Van Warmelo (1932). Even though the goings-on in these schools are supposed to be secretive, it appears that they have become known to the immediate community. In my research in recent years, I have also come across numerous people who have not attended these institutions but who are aware of the happenings which take place there and of the terms and expressions which are used. In the research for this study, which is considered to be scientific in nature, I have concentrated mainly on the linguistic terms and expressions which are used in such institutions.)

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This thesis has demonstrated that the term 'dialect' as used in the traditional framework of analysis falls far short of accounting for the various linguistic differences which occur in a specific language. This term has been generally used in the literature to refer to speech forms which are spoken within regional boundaries and even to refer to a rustic form of a language, or a speech form generally associated with uneducated people. As noted by Petyt (1980:12) 'dialects are different forms of the same language'. However, it has never been categorically stated as to how different two forms should be before they can be regarded as different languages and not dialects. From the examples in section 1.4, one can conclude that this criterion is often an arbitrary one.

Traditional dialectologists have also used the criterion of mutual intelligibility to determine whether different speech forms can be regarded as dialects. In addition, they have referred to non-linguistic criteria, such as common cultural beliefs, political allegiances and also the very consciousness of the speakers to determine whether a spoken form is a dialect or a language. As indicated in section 1.4., these criteria have further blurred the distinction between dialect and language.

5.2 THE USE OF THE TERM 'VARIETY'

Due to the shortcomings of the term 'dialect' and its application in the real world, I have in this thesis advocated the use of

a new umbrella term in order to address some of the problem areas already identified in the study of dialectology. In this regard, I have followed the argumentation of Chambers and Trudgill (1980:5) who say:

The term 'language', then, is from a linguistic point of view a relatively nontechnical term. If therefore we wish to be more rigorous in our use of descriptive labels we have to employ other terminology. One term we shall be using in this book is VARIETY. We shall use 'variety' as a neutral term for any particular kind of language which we wish, for some purpose, to consider a single entity. The term will be used in an ad hoc manner in order to be specific as we wish for a particular purpose.

In view of this approach, the term 'variety' can be interpreted in a wider sense to refer to various speech varieties, whether it be the variety of the illiterate, women, men, juveniles, the educated, religious groups, members of a community located at a particular area etc. Each variety is determined in terms of specific factors which could have a bearing on geographical areas as well as social groups or classes.

Thus the term 'variety' differs markedly from the traditional term 'dialect' in that the latter considered geographical boundaries as the main reason or criterion for recognising different speech forms. It was thus very restricted in its application. In this study, I have demonstrated that dialects only function as one of many possible speech varieties.

The above observations and viewpoints were put forward and discussed in chapter 1, which also advocates the application of the general modern approach in dialect studies to the Venda situation. This was followed in chapter 2 by relevant historical issues which have culminated in the present Venda geographical

distribution.

5.3 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Chapter 2 presented a historical overview of the migrations of the Venda people which led to their settling in what is today commonly referred to as Venda. The need for such a historical perspective is significant for a study of the kind presented here, because it throws light on the nature of the dialectal differences which occur in Venda. Obviously, migrations as well as the final settling of groups of people in specific regions are all subjected to influences from those who were conquered, as well as neighbouring groups, who speak dialects of other languages. These influences resulted in the speech/linguistic differences that have often been referred to as dialectal differences in the Venda language. An overview of the so-called dialects was then presented in chapter 3.

5.4 THE DIALECTS OF VENDA

Traditional researchers often referred to the Venda language as being homogeneous in nature. This was mainly because the linguistic differences among the speakers were not considered to be significant enough, although the researchers themselves never quantified the degree of these differences.

Nevertheless, where linguistic differences were noted and where they pertained to a particular geographical group, that group was identified by a particular name. So, for example, past studies recognised Venda dialects such as Tshiilafuri, Tshironga, Tshimbedzi, Tshilembethu and Tshimaanda. In chapter 3, I discussed these in detail with specific reference to the way in which each so-called dialect differs from the standard Tshiphani form.

Then there are the debatable dialects, such as Tshiṭavhatsindi

and Tshiṅia, which manifest very few grammatical and lexical differences from the Standard form. Whatever differences occur are also found in Tshimbedzi and Tshilembethu. However, speakers of Tshiṅavhatsindi and Tshiṅia are adamant that their spoken forms are, in fact, dialects and these have been recorded as such in the literature by Mathivha (1966:4), Stayt (1931:192), Van Warmelo (1989:3) and other linguists.

However, apart from the dialects which have been researched in this thesis, I have, as mentioned before, also advocated the recognition of other spoken forms which can be considered as language varieties of Venda. These are the varieties determined by factors other than geographical or regional boundaries. Their characteristic features were presented in chapter 4.

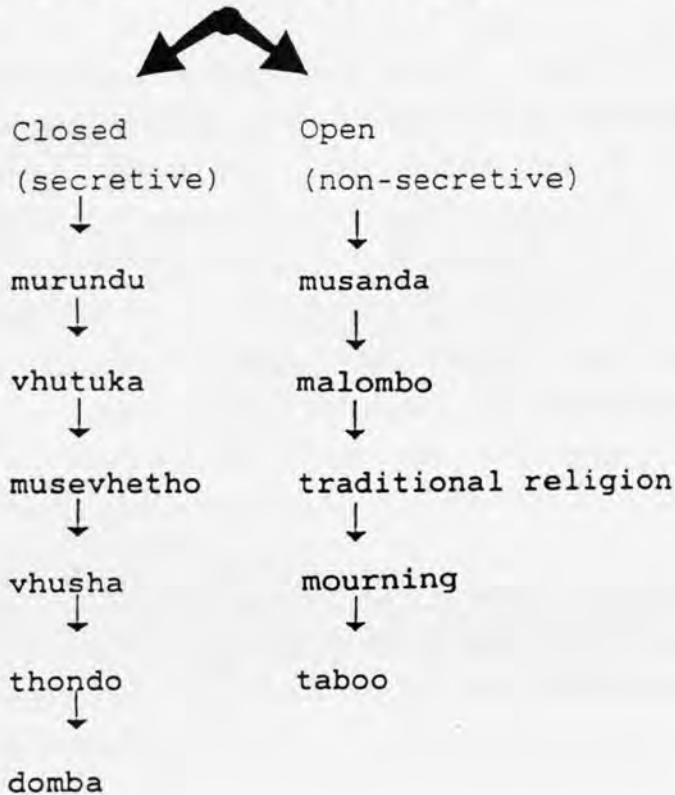
5.5 OTHER LANGUAGE VARIETIES FOUND IN VENDA

As noted in the introduction, the term 'dialect' is far too restricted in its application to account for the various spoken forms which characterise the Venda language. Hence the term 'language variety' has been introduced in this study to address the shortcomings of the traditional approach to language differences. As also mentioned, the term 'variety' can be interpreted in a wider sense to refer to various speech varieties, be they of the illiterate, women, men, juveniles, the educated, religious groups and others, and at the same time it also includes members of a community located in a particular area, i.e. as covered by the traditional term 'dialect'. In other words the term 'variety' is an umbrella term which includes amongst others, dialects as well. Chapter 4 presented an overview of the 'language varieties' other than dialects. These varieties occur in both the rural as well as the urban communities.

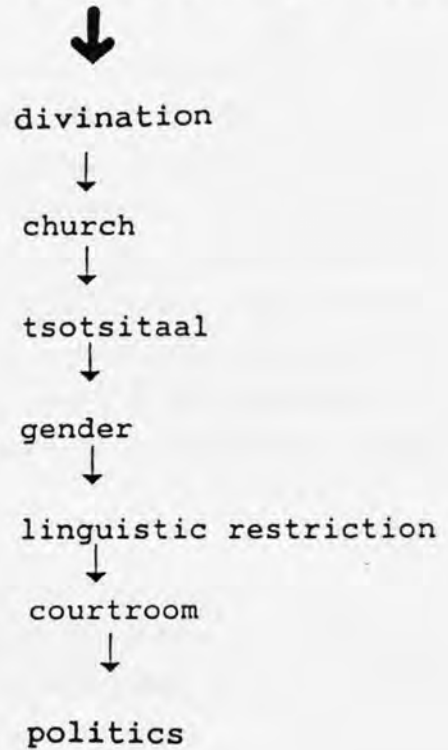
For the purposes of convenience, two major categories were recognised among these varieties, the one restricted to rural areas only, and the other found amongst both urban and rural

communities. This overview is captured in the following diagram:

RURAL SOCIAL VARIETIES



URBAN AND RURAL VARIETIES



With regard to the rural varieties, these are language varieties restricted to the rural areas of Venda. I have distinguished two main varieties under this sub-heading namely 'closed' (secretive varieties) and the 'open' (non secretive).

The 'closed' varieties are found in certain initiation institutions which are secretive in nature. The linguistic items and expressions of these varieties are not generally known to the public. Venda individuals who have attended the said institutions are well-acquainted with the specialised use of these varieties. These varieties include the murundu, musevhetho, vhutuka, vhusha, thondo and domba.

With regard to the 'open' (non-secretive) varieties, we find

linguistic terms and expressions which are not secretive in nature, in that they are known to the general Venda public. These include the musanda language, malombo, traditional religion, mourning and taboo varieties.

Under the urban and rural varieties, those varieties which permeate both urban and rural areas were discussed. In other words, they are not restricted to the rural community alone. These are varieties found in specific environments in some cases by specific classes of people. The environments specified and identified in chapter 4 included those of divination, the church, tsotsitaal, gender, the variety used in the courtroom as well as that used by politicians. Furthermore, I have also referred to the variety which avoids the use of certain linguistic terms (linguistic restriction variety).

The recognition of all these varieties is in line with the viewpoint expressed by Bolinger as quoted by Hudson (1980:28) which was referred to at the beginning of chapter 4. His views are repeated here for the purpose of convenience:

There is no limit to the ways in which human beings league themselves together for self-identification, security, a gain, amusement, worship or any of the purposes that are held in common; consequently there is no limit to the number and variety of speech communities that are to be found in a society.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Anderson, W.F. & N.L. Stagerberg. 1962. *Introductory Readings on Language*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Bloomfield, L. 1970. *Language*. (4th print). London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd.
- Brook, G.L. 1979. *English dialects*. (2nd. ed.). London: Andre Deutsch.
- Chambers, J.K. & P. Trudgill. 1980. *Dialectology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Coplan, D. 1985. *In township tonight*. Johannesburg: Ravens Press.
- Dallmayr, F.R. 1984. *Language and politics*. Nortre Dame, Indiana: University of Nortre Dame Press.
- Doke, C.M. 1954. *The Southern Bantu languages*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Ferguson, C.A. 1959. 'Diglossia' in Hudson R.A. 1980. *Sociolinguistics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ferguson, C.A. & J.J. Gumperz. 1960. "Linguistic diversity in South Asia: studies in regional, social and functional variation". *International Journal of American linguistics*, Vol. 26. Number 3. Indiana: Indiana University.
- Francis, W.N. 1983. *Dialectology: An introduction*. London:

Longman.

- Fromkin, V. & R. Rodman. 1978. *An introduction to language*. (2nd. edition). New York: Holt Rinehart and Winston.
- Gottschling, K. 1950. *The Bawenda: A sketch of their history and customs*, in J. Roy. Antrop. Inst., 35. pp. 365-386.
- Halliday, M.A.K., McIntosh, A. & P. Stevens. 1964. *The Linguistic Science and Language Teaching*. London: Longmans, Green & Co.
- Hanisch, E.O.M. 1994. "Legends, oral traditions and archaeology: A Look at Early Venda History". *Luvhona*, Vol.3, No.1. p.68.
- Haugen, E. 1966. *Dialect, Language, Nation*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.
- Herbert, R.K. 1992. *Language and Society: The Theory and Practice of Sociolinguistics*. Wits: Witwatersrand University Press.
- Hudson, R.A. 1980. *Sociolinguistics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Khuba, A.E. 1986. "The significance of the Musanda language". Unpublished paper, University of Venda Thohoyandou.
- Khuba, A.E. 1993. "The significance of the Musanda language". Unpublished D. Litt et Phil. thesis, University of South Africa, Pretoria.
- Kotzé, A.E. 1995. "'n Fonologiese en morfologiese beskrywing van Lobedu". Ongepubliseerde D. Litt et Phil. proefskrif,

Universteit van Suid Afrika, Pretoria.

Kunene, D.P. 1971. *Heroic Poetry of the Basotho*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Lestrade, G.P. 1927. "Some notes on the Ethnic history of the Bavenda and their Rhodesia affinities". *South African Journal of Science*, vol xxiv, p.487.

Lombard, D.P., Van Wyk, E.B. & P.C. Mokgokong. 1985. *Introduction to the grammar of Northern Sotho*. Pretoria: J.L. Van Schaik Limited.

Louwrens, L.J. 1995. *Dialectology*. Guide for structured MA course, University of Pretoria, Pretoria.

Lukhaimane, E.K. 1980. "The Zion Christian Church of (Engenas) Lekganyane, 1924 to 1948: an African experiment with Christianity". Unpublished M A dissertation, University of the North, Sovenga.

Maltz, D.N. & R.A. Borker. 1983. 'A cultural approach to male -female miscommunication' in Gumprez J.J. (ed.) *Language and Social Identity*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Mathivha, M.E.R. 1966. "The toneme patterns of the Venda noun". Unpublished M A dissertation, University of South Africa, Pretoria.

Mathumba, I. 1993. "A comparative study of selected phonetic, phonological and lexical aspects of some major dialects of Tsonga in the Republic of South Africa, and their impact on the Standard language". Unpublished D.Litt et Phil,thesis, University of South Africa, Pretoria.

- Mellinhoff, D. 1963. *The language of the law*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company.
- Milubi, N.A. 1988. "Aspects of Venda poetry (A reflection on the development of poetry from the traditional to the modern forms)". Unpublished D. Litt et Phil, thesis, University of the North, Sovenga.
- Moeketsi, R.H. 1997. "Of African languages and Linguistics: The South African multilingual and multicultural criminal courtroom". Unpublished D.Litt et Phil. thesis, University of South Africa, Pretoria.
- Msimang, C.T. 1987. "Impact of Tsotsitaal". *South African Journal of African Languages*, Vol.7 pp.82-86.
- Mulaudzi, P.A. 1996. "A descriptive analysis of the morphology of the Tshiguvhu dialect of Venda". Unpublished MA dissertation, University of South Africa, Pretoria.
- Mulaudzi, P.A. 1999. "The speech variety of diviners in Venda". *South African Journal of African Languages*, Vol.19, No. 1. pp.39-45.
- Murwamphida, S.C. 1993. "A preliminary study of Venda praise - poems". Unpublished M A dissertation, University of South Africa, Pretoria.
- Ṁeluvhalani, M.C. 1984. *Ngonā ya Luvenḁa ya vhadededzi vḁagudiswa*. Pretoria: Via Afrika Limited.
- Ntshangase, K.D. 1991. "The sociolinguistics of Isicamtho Samajitha". Unpublished Honours Article, University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

- Olatunji, O.O. 1984. *Features of Yoruba Oral Poetry*. Ibadan: Ibadan University Press.
- Peck, J. & M. Coyle. 1984. *How to study Literature, Literary Terms and Criticism*. London: MacMillan Education Ltd.
- Petyt, K.M. 1980. *The study of dialect: An introduction to dialectology*. London: Andre Deutsh Limited.
- Podile, K. 1990. "A case study of the Xhosa Christian language variety". Unpublished Honours Article, University of South Africa, Pretoria.
- Poulos, G. 1990. *A linguistic analysis of Venda*. Pretoria: Via Afrika Limited.
- Pringle, I. 1986. 'The concept of dialect and the study of Canadian English.' In Allen, H.B. and Linn, D. (1986), pp.217-236.
- Ralushai, V.N.M.N. 1977. "Conflicting accounts of Venda History with particular reference to the social role of mitupo in social organisation". Unpublished Ph. D. thesis, Queen's University, Belfast.
- Saville-Troike, M. 1982. *The ethnography of communication: An introduction*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Schuring, G.K. 1979. "Leksikologiese kenmerke van Tsotsitaal", in Taalfasette, 26 Deel 2. 'n Publikasie van die Linguistevereniging van Suid Afrika.
- Sekhukhune, P.D. 1988. "Discourse Analysis and Speech varieties in Northern Sotho: A Sociolinguistic study". Unpublished M A dissertation, University of the North,

Sovenga.

- Stampley, C.D. 1976. *The Holy Bible-Authorised King James Version*. London: C.D. Stampley Enterprises, Inc.
- Stayt, H.A. 1931. *The Bavenda*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Stubbs, M. 1983. *Discourse analysis: the Sociolinguistic analysis of natural language*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell Publishers Ltd.
- Trudgill, P. 1974. *Sociolinguistics: an introduction to language and Society*. England: Penguin books.
- Van Rooy, G.J. 1971. "Language and culture in the communication of the Christian message as illustrated by the Venda Bible". Unpublished Th. D. thesis, Potchefstroom Universiteit, Potchefstroom.
- Van Warmelo, N.J. 1932. *Contributions towards Venda History, Religion and Tribal Ritual*. Pretoria: Ethnological publications, Vol. III.
- Van Warmelo, N.J. 1935. *A preliminary survey of the Bantu Tribes of South Africa*. Pretoria: Ethnological Publications, Vol. V.
- Van Warmelo, N.J. 1940. *The copper Miners of Musina and the early History of the Zoutpansberg*. Pretoria: Government Printer.
- Van Warmelo, N.J. 1989. *Venda Dictionary*. Pretoria: J L van Schaik.
- Von Sicard, H. 1951. "The origin of some of the tribes in the Belingwe Reserve (cont from NADA, 1950)". NADA, No.

28, pp.5-25.

- Von Sicard, H. 1952. "Ngoma Lungundu. Eine afrikanische Bundeslade". Uppsala, Sweden: *Studia Ethnographica Upsaliensia*, V.
- Wakelin, M.F. 1972. *English Dialects: An Introduction*. London: The Athlone Press of the University of London.
- Wardhaugh, R. 1992. *An introduction to Sociolinguistics*. (2nd. ed.). Cambridge: Massachusetts.
- Wentzel, P.J. 1983. *The relationship between Venda and Western Shona*. Pretoria: University of South Africa.
- Wilson, M. & L. Thompson. 1969. "The Oxford History of South Africa", Vol. 1, *South Africa to 1870*, Oxford, O.U.P.
- Ziervogel, D., Wentzel, P.J. & T.N. Makuya. 1972. *A handbook of the Venda language*. Pretoria: University of South Africa.
- Zungu, P.J. 1986. "Some Aspects of Hlonipha in Zulu Society". (Unpublished paper delivered at CENSAL symposium) *Oral Traditions in Southern Africa*, University of Natal, Durban.