EUPHEMISM IN TSHIVENḒA : A SOCIO-PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS

By

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DECLARATION

I declare that *EUPHEMISM IN TSHIVENḒA: A SOCIO-PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS* is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been acknowledged by means of complete references.

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MUDAU, M.L. **DATE**

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my wife, Azwinndini Winnie Mudau; our children, T̪hama, Pfano, Thendo and Phodzo; and my parents Ntsandeni Amon Mudau, Tshavhungwe Avhafarei Mudau.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ABSTRACT

This study examined Tshivenḓa euphemisms from a socio-pragmatic perspective within a framework of Politeness and Indirectness Communicative theories. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), Politeness Theory describes politeness as showing concern for people's 'face' needs where 'face' means one's public self-image. In terms of the Indirectness Communicative Theory, euphemism is a face saving mechanism which emphasizes mutual cooperation in a conversation.

Euphemisms are described as substitutions of agreeable or inoffensive expressions for ones that may offend or suggest something unpleasant. They are words with meanings or sounds that are thought, somehow, to be nicer, cleaner or more elevated and they are used as substitutes for words deemed unpleasant, crude or ugly in sound or sense.

The study adopted a descriptive and exploratory design within a qualitative research approach, based on the view that qualitative research aims at explaining complex phenomena by means of verbal description rather than testing hypotheses with numerical values. Furthermore, primary data were elicited from 25 participants of different ages, genders, educational levels, social status and occupations who are native speakers of the Tshivenḓa language by means of semi-structured interviews. Since this study involved working with humans, all ethical aspects were ensured.

The study, which investigated the use of Tshivenḓa euphemisms, was conducted in seven social domains in Venḓa in the Vhembe District: local courts, churches, homes, hospitals, girls in seclusion, schools and electronic media. The study's findings show evidence of the use of Tshivenḓa euphemisms in these various domains. However, the court domain seems not to use many euphemisms due to the fact that clear communication is required there; for two parties in a case to understand what is being said during the proceedings the use of roundabout indirect language is avoided – the courts believe in calling 'a spade, a spade.' Through the careful analysis of euphemisms, the study's findings revealed that euphemisms have both positive and negative effects on language, including Tshivenḓa. Some of the positive effects of euphemisms revealed by this study include the ability to avoid directly naming what is deemed unpleasant; they make the language sound more

literary; and they allow people to discuss touchy or taboo subjects with ease. However, the findings also suggested that euphemisms may be disrespectful; they could hinder clear communication; they are deceptive; and they may lead to miscommunication and general confusion.

Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that the use of euphemisms in Tshivenḓa language should be reinforced in all social domains in order to enhance politeness; preserve the public self-image of the participants in communicative exchanges; and facilitate harmonious interpersonal relationships. It is also recommended that further study be undertaken to identify other factors that may affect the use of euphemisms in Tshivenḓa from other perspectives.

Key concepts: Politeness; Euphemisms; Treadmill; Taboo; Face work.

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CHAPTER 1

GENERAL ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY

1.1   INTRODUCTION

In many societies most language users often avoid using words and expressions which are unpleasant, inappropriate or embarrassing for themselves or for the people to whom they are speaking (Wadid, 2011:2). Primarily, avoidance occurs unconsciously by using euphemistic expressions. This suggests that the use of euphemisms to maintain safe interpersonal interaction in all languages is undeniable. In this regard Bakhtiar (2012:7) claims that fear, shame, and disgust are three principal factors motivating the use of euphemism in most languages. It is in terms of the above statement that Fernandez (2006:2) refers to euphemisms as "linguistic fig leaves or means of sweet talking".

This study seeks to examine and appraise euphemism with special reference to Tshivenḓa as at present there seems to be a thin line between what is deemed appropriate and inappropriate language. It is for this reason that the socio-pragmatic perspective of euphemism in Tshivenḓa will be considered in this study. The term, socio-pragmatic, refers to the social language skills people use in their daily interaction with one another. It includes what people say; how they say it; their body language; and whether it is appropriate or not in a given context or situation (Mwanambuyu, 2011:4).

1.2   BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Mwanambuyu (2011:2) believes that euphemisms are a common phenomenon in everyday conversations in various domains and, as such, have been the subject of research over many years. Usually, euphemisms aim to provide a way of speaking the unspeakable (Mwanambuyu, 2011:4).   In Tshivenḓa, just as in English and other languages, euphemisms may be considered in terms of the use of metaphor; circumlocution; substitution of a word or phrase; referring to, or used as, a way of showing politeness; and as a way of avoiding taboo words.

According to Meihua (2013:155) euphemism is not only a common strategy in language usage, but also a kind of cultural phenomenon. It greatly affects people's daily communication as it can make a harsh topic softer and an embarrassing conversation agreeable when adhering to social communication conventions. In other words, it saves face on both sides and enables people to communicate successfully. Generally, euphemism is responsible for avoiding embarrassment and taboos, reflecting politeness and concealing feelings. Meihua (2013:157) agrees with Bakhtiar (2012:7) when he claims that people use euphemism because they fear something and tend to avoid talking about it.

Watt (2011:21) suggests that the way people decide which form of language to use in a particular context depends on certain factors, such as the distance between participants; their relative status; occupation; and the formality of context, while Allen and Corder (2011:86) notes that culturally some words or phrases are avoided because of superstition, taboo or a vulnerability attached to such phrases.

In most situations, interlocutors - when communicating - inevitably encounter unpleasant situations. This means that using direct and definite language to discuss distasteful and unpleasant matters will undoubtedly displease most persons who are participating in the conversation and possibly affect their relationship. Under such conditions the use of euphemism may be the best way to communicate - as observed by Enright (2005:13) when he says that "without euphemism, the rotation of the world would have stopped rubbing and would have been flooded with feud. The use of euphemism, in this regard, lubricates language thereby minimizing the possibility of conflict".

Bolinger (2010:23) sees language as an instrument of social communication that takes into account not only the internal patterns of language as a self-contained system but also the manner in which these patterns relate to the communicative process of language in use. This view is in line with that of Allen and Corder (2011:90) who believe that "what the learner of a language needs primarily to know, is not so much how to recognize and produce sentences as linguistic objects but how to make and understand utterances which express certain concepts, perform certain communicative acts, and in general enable the learner to participate in interactional processes of normal language use."

Allen and Corder (2011:90) develop this perspective by maintaining that

> Language is not simply a formal system of sounds, words and syntactical structures but language is also a way of communication by human people within their beliefs, attitudes, customs, behaviours, social habits, etc. and this is what is meant by culture. Each language, in society accumulates rules according to which concrete statements are interpreted abstractly and which are valid through common usage.

The above quotation suggests that euphemism should be accepted as a form of language use because it is used by people in society to communicate.

The discussion so far has shown that euphemism is a universal phenomenon used in almost all cultures where there are certain matters that are strongly forbidden by social custom (Kromann, 2011:2). Generally, people try to avoid mentioning taboos directly. When taboos (forbidden things) need to be referred to, it is likely that people will tend to substitute the unmentionable in the discussion with expressions that are inoffensive and sound better. Therefore, euphemisms are used in almost every language, including Tshivenḓa. Notions and norms upheld by different cultures are not, necessarily, the same and - as a result - the taboos in different cultures are not, necessarily, the same. What needs to be euphemised in one culture may not, necessarily, be euphemized in another (Kromann, 2011:3).

However, the universal existence of euphemisms in languages does not mean that euphemisms are identical in different languages. This is why a study of this nature is valid as it will examine euphemism as they occur in Tshivenḓa.

1.3   RESEARCH PROBLEM

Since the use of euphemism is an integral attribute of all - or almost all - societies, substantial research has been done on this phenomenon as it occurs in many languages and in many countries - particularly in terms of euphemism as a figure of speech (Mwanambuyu, 2011:13).

Separately, most of the studies have applied pragmatics, socio-linguistics and semantics - among other approaches (Meihua, 2013:156). From an examination of the relevant available literature, it appears that very little - if any - research on euphemism has been conducted using the socio-pragmatic approach in Tshivenḓa.

For instance, studies exploring euphemism have been conducted in languages, such as English, Chinese and Arabic - among others (Mwanambuyu, 2011:13).

Kromann (2011:3) is of the opinion that "what is necessary to be euphemized in one language or culture may not necessarily be euphemized in another." This means that what is euphemistic in another language may not, necessarily, be deemed to be euphemistic in Tshivenḓa. An important gap has, therefore, been identified to explore and this study will endeavour to establish concepts and expressions that qualify as euphemism in Tshivenḓa. In addition, euphemism seems to be a fluid concept as it often depends on context and the interlocutors themselves. It is, therefore, important to establish the types of euphemisms that prevail in Tshivenḓa in order to understand the culture and language of the Venḓa people.

The changing dynamism within languages - which also affects Tshivenḓa - is reflected in expressions which were once classified as euphemism but are not, necessarily, regarded as euphemism today (Maḓadzhe, 2010:188). Similarly, Williams (2009:198) maintains:

> The essential characteristic of euphemisms, whether aroused from superstition or from the other social morals, is that in the course of time they lose their euphemistic character and assume the full significance and connotations of the original word that they have displaced, become taboo, and lastly have to be replaced by other euphemisms.

Therefore, a study of euphemism will help determine archival as well as more recent euphemisms in Tshivenḓa.

A major problem experienced by most language users - even in Tshivenḓa – is that they do not always know where and when to use euphemism appropriately. It is for this reason that Maḓadzhe (2010:90) warns us to choose our words carefully lest the words we utter offend other people and ultimately lead to a breakdown in communication.

In instances where euphemism is used incorrectly, it tends to lead to miscommunication and misunderstanding. This statement is supported by Maḓadzhe (2010:180) and Mwanambuyu (2011:17) when they suggest that the use of words and expressions in the wrong context results in miscommunication, misinterpretation, misunderstanding and even conflict between people. A study of this kind is

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important as the findings will assist in an attempt to guide people in the appropriate use of euphemism in Tshivenḓa.

1.4   PRELIMINARY LITERATURE REVIEW

1.4.1   Definition of Euphemism

Webster's New Dictionary (2003) refers to euphemism as the substitution of agreeable or inoffensive expression for one that may offend or suggest something unpleasant. Similarly*,* the *Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (2011) defines euphemism as a word or phrase used to avoid mentioning an unpleasant or offensive one.

The word euphemism originates from Greek where the prefix "eu" means "well" or "sounding good"; the stem "pheme" means "speech" or "speak"; and the suffix "-ism" means "action" or "result" (Mwanambuyu, 2011:16). Slovenko (2005:1) agrees with Mwanambuyu's explanation of euphemism when he says that those who call a spade a spade are fit only to use one. A way to avoid calling a spade a spade is through euphemism. He alludes to the fact that "euphemism" comes from the Greek: "eu" meaning "good" and "pheme", "speech" or "saying" which means "to speak with good words or in a pleasant manner." Slovenko (2005:1) refers to euphemism as a "linguistic fig leaf" where, in euphemising, an inoffensive or pleasant term is used to replace a more explicit and offensive one - thereby veneering the reality.

Williams (2009:198) believes that euphemism is a kind of linguistic elevation or an expression specifically directed to finding socially accepted words for subjects that many people cannot easily speak about. It has also been noted that the essential characteristic of euphemism - whether arising from superstition or from the other social morals - is that in the course of time it loses its euphemistic character and assumes the full significance and connotations of the original word that it has replaced; it then becomes taboo and has to be replaced by another euphemism (Williams, 2009:198).

William's view is supported by that of Slovenko (2005:1) when he contends that euphemisms are in a constant state of flux. New ones are created almost daily. Some may last for generations, while others fade away or develop into unconscious ones - still used, but used reflexively. Nowadays, political correctness has prompted

the surge in euphemisms. For example, Slovenko (2005:2) cites the following: "Homosexuals, out of pride call themselves 'gay'." They used to be called *queer* and they were charged with "crimes against nature." Furthermore, before it was named *AIDS* (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome), the disease was referred to by the acronym *WOGS*, which stands for "Wrath of God Syndrome." It was also referred to by a number of other names which are euphemistic in nature, including "Gay Cancer", "Gay Plague" and *GRID* (Gay Related Immune-Deficiency). These names were abandoned because they linked the disease directly with the gay community and, thereby, upset heterosexual haemophiliacs and other AIDS-afflicted non-gays. The acronym AIDS was probably chosen because of its optimistic ring - as Black (1996:45) puts it: "A disease that wanted to help, not hurt. Just a plague whose intentions were good." This example suggests that the force of a euphemism does not last forever, but it is not clear as to what the circumstances are under which a word or an expression can lose its euphemistic status. A study of this nature is, therefore, relevant in terms of pursuing this point as well.

Many euphemisms reflect the poetic creativity of ordinary people and they reveal the popular culture of a nation. These values are recognised by Eglantina (2011:379) who suggests that euphemisms used in folk languages serve as bridges that connect language with folklore. As Shkurtaj (1999:245) puts it: "euphemism is a linguistic phenomenon closely related to culture, tradition, mentality and social community." This explanation of euphemism clearly indicates that euphemisms are not only part of undeveloped societies or provincial environments but that they represent a linguistic reality in developed Western societies as well.

1.4.2 Motives for Euphemism in Languages

Euphemisms are - amongst others - motivated by the taboos, norms and traditions of a society which are included in a kind of social contract that exists in societies regarding the prohibition of using the names of unmentionable objects or matters. Hence, many euphemisms are the product of superstition that is based on the idea that words have the power to attract evil. For example, the fear of death evokes the same emotions from words related to it. In English, instead of saying "died" many people use euphemistic expressions, such as 'passed away', 'went to his reward', 'departed' or 'went west'.

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1.4.3 What makes a Euphemism a Euphemism?

For a linguistic expression to function as a euphemism and to be communicatively efficient it should, necessarily, contain certain features. These structural traits determine the euphemistic force of a given expression. Bakhtiar (2012:8) gives the following three principles that qualify an expression to be euphemism.

1.4.3.1 Distance principle

Euphemism is an alternative for socially distasteful terms. In contrast to taboo words where the signifier and the referent are closely connected, in a euphemism this distance is much further. The very distance determines the mitigating capacity of a euphemistic expression and the amount of a given word's ambiguity in referring to a taboo area. Ambiguity is a defining feature of euphemisms as a linguistic phenomenon; a term acts as a euphemism because - in a given context - it is capable of generating an ambiguity which suggests that there may be a distasteful concept beneath and, thus, it mitigates the taboo (Bakhtiar**,** 2012:8). For example, "weapon" is a specific word meaning something designed or used for causing physical harm, but it can communicate a taboo body part name, like "penis", by functioning as a euphemism in a specific context. Metaphoric euphemisms can maintain their mitigating capacity in a given pragmatic context. The ambiguity which results from making new metaphoric euphemisms flouts the cooperation principle and gives rise to conversational implications (Bakhtiar**,** 2012:8). Nevertheless, it acts in accordance with the principle of politeness. Therefore, we can say that euphemism is the representation and the result of the politeness principle.

1.4.3.2 Correlation principle

According to Bakhitar (2012:9), correlation happens when a chosen euphemistic term is relevant to the concept of a taboo for which it has been substituted and the audience's interpretation in the immediate context is possible. If one considers euphemisms as basically metaphoric, there ought to be a similarity between source and target concepts. For example, in a statement such as" it's raining in his bed at night", the word "raining" is interpreted as "urinating" because of the similarity between aspects of these two different concepts. On the other hand, substituting the

same statement with another word, like "stoning" in place of "raining", will never have the same euphemistic effect mainly because the above mentioned aspects of similarity are not observed anymore.

1.4.3.3 Pleasantness principle

It is argued that each euphemism should have more positive connotations compared to its taboo counterpart - or at least less negative overtones. Various linguistic devices, such as remodelling, circumlocution, omission, figurative language, etc., are applied to avoid the most unpleasant connotations of a dysphemistic term and to fit it into the context and also avoid the stylistic discord that might occur as a result of using a coarse word with too negative a connotation (Bakhitar, 2012:9). To illustrate the pleasantness principle, Bakhitar (2012:9) gives the example where "ghooz fish" is a remodelled form of "goozpich" (literally, fart turned) which means "completely confused"; the distorted form has lost many of its unpleasant connotations and has turned into a more appropriate expression to be used in a polite and friendly conversation.

1.5 Negative and positive sides of euphemisms

Enright (2005:67) maintains that euphemisms are dishonest expressions. In his opinion the purpose of euphemism is to conceal the true essence of speech. A speaker refers to a subject using circuitous means and the real subject is hidden. There may be confusion on the part of members of the audience because there is a chance that they do not understand the meaning properly. Euphemisms are often used in reference to negatively perceived social actions which a speaker is ashamed to mention directly. Burridge (2004:43) claims that by referring euphemistically to topics, like war or killing, those topics might appear tolerable.

In this case euphemisms create an excuse for such social actions and allow people to perceive them with respect. Katamba (2005:27) uses the term, *doublespeak,* for this kind of euphemism. He is convinced that euphemistic substitutions for brutal and inhuman acts make them appear tolerable and civilised. Totalitarian regimes and militaristic regimes use *doublespeak* to conceal shocking realities. The word

"preventive" is used to refer to unprovoked military actions (preventive war) and the collocation, *preventive detention,* signifies the detention of political detractors.

Although euphemisms have their negative aspects, they can make life easier as well. Enright (2005:71) claims that euphemisms make truths less painful because people can avoid speaking them directly. They also encourage speakers to talk about things that they would be ashamed of mentioning directly. Interlocutors are saved from both losing face or embarrassing moments and hurting feelings. It is possible that an audience may learn something more about a speaker´s attitude towards a topic and help the speaker to persuade his listeners by pointing out different perspectives. According to Burridge (2004:48), euphemisms contribute to the development and enrichment of languages by coining new expressions. People use euphemisms to show politeness; to avoid being offensive; and to meet the psychological and beneficial needs of both speakers and listeners in communication. Accordingly, euphemisms serve three basic communicative functions: evading function; upgrading function; and disguising function.

1.6   Classification of Euphemisms

There are many types of euphemisms. For the purpose of this study only a few that impact directly on people's lives on a daily basis will receive attention.

1.6.1 Euphemisms for death

All languages contain numerous euphemisms related to dying, death, burial and the people and places which deal with death. The practice of using euphemisms for death is likely to have originated with the "magical" belief that to speak the word 'death' was to invite death; where to "draw Death's attention" is the ultimate bad-fortune. There is a common theory in most cultures that see death as a taboo subject.

According to Enright (2005:45), the word "death" is one of the oldest taboos. For centuries people have been determined not to use the term "death" directly and today we still search for substitutions. That is why so many euphemisms for death exist. He claims that consideration for the feelings of family members and fear of the unknown provides the motivation for euphemistic substitution. Allen and Corder (2011:96) agree that the theme of death is taboo because people have always been

scared of dying. In his opinion the fear is motivated by the concern of losing relatives or close friends and the fear of what follows after death. Similarly, Mwanambuyu (2011:82) and Allan and Burridge (1991:17) maintain that death is a "fear-based taboo" where different fears coexist, namely, fear of the loss of loved ones; fear of the corruption of the body; fear of evil spirits; and fear of what comes after death.

Holder (2008:33) provides examples of euphemistic expressions for death commonly used in most languages. He declares that words that are often used denote leaving for unknown places or sleeping and they include the following:

> To pass away, pass on the other side, pass over, pass into the next world, leave the land of the living, go to heaven, go to our rest, go to a better place, go to your long home, go west, go under, sleep away, return to ashes.

Holder (2008:34) continues by saying that all euphemisms for suicide are denoted by the word self: self-deliverance, self-execution or self-violence. The study will determine whether Tshivenḓa has similar words or contexts.

1.6.2 Euphemisms connected with religion

Euphemisms used in religion are motivated by human prejudices, respect for God and a fear of the devil and evil forces. According to Enright (2005; 47), the word *God* is a euphemism because it is a universal term, not a name. But people cautiously replace the word *God* with euphemisms. Euphemisms for *God* or *Jesus* often take the form of remodelling of the names *"Gosh", "Gee", "George".* The euphemistic substitutions for *God* or names of saints are often used to soften swearing. Enright (2005:47) points out that the expression "bloody" is a remodelling of the expression "by our lady" referring to God´s mother. Holder (2008:47) claims that people who are fearful of evil give flattering euphemistic names to malevolent spirits, such as "black gentleman" and "black prince" for the devil. English contains many euphemisms for the devil. Many of them can be recognized by the use of the words "black" or "old" in "black man", "black lad", "black Sam", "black spy", "black gentleman" and "old Nick". This study will determine whether Tshivenḓa has euphemisms that are connected to religion as in English and other languages.

1.6.3 Euphemisms connected with business

Business euphemisms are found in many areas, like employment, advertising, financing, banking and bankruptcy. Holder (2008:53) provides many examples of euphemisms in today's English which refer to jobs. The reason for the use of euphemism in business is to avoid offending people who work in lowly positions or people whose jobs are regarded as inferior. For example, the word *agent* is commonly used for elevating the title of a job *a press agent* which means *publicist* or the euphemistic expression *extermination engineer* which refers to a *rat catcher*. He claims that today's English is rich in terms suggesting loss of a job or unemployment, such as "reduction in force", "relieve", "redundant", "to reduce the headcount", "to be selected out" and "to seek fresh challenges."

The language of estate agents contains expressions that conceal the negative aspects of a property and support only the good points. Holder points out that the age of a house is commonly referred to without mentioning the actual year or period. For example, "Georgian house", "ante-bellum", "ideal of modernization" and "period property" are often used to evade the more specific information.

According to Holder (2008), another field where euphemisms are used is related to financial problems. In company records financial problems may be referred to as "financial difficulties", "cash flow problem" or "in the red". Situations when competition threatens the market shares of a company are often called "challenging".

Typical examples of euphemisms are found in the language of advertising which only emphasises the positive qualities of a product and conceals the negative aspects. According to Burridge (2004:45), the aim of language used in advertising is to influence potential customers. This study will determine whether Tshivenḓa has business words which are euphemistic in nature.

1.6.4 Euphemisms connected with human body and sex

Many euphemistic expressions are connected with sex and bodily effluvia. According to Enright (2005:54), words with sexual connotations are intrinsically dysphemistic and, therefore, new euphemisms are continually being coined. Taboo words concerning sex are often used in swearing or abuse because of their

dysphemistic nature. Euphemisms dealing with sex and bodily effluvia are the result of distaste and embarrassment.

Holder (2008:57) cites examples of euphemisms for sweat and bad breath. Both could be an embarrassment to a person in terms of a straight or dysphemistic allusion to the smell. The smell is referred to as an "odour' or "a smell" and the person is "odorously challenged". Euphemisms are used for expressions denoting socially unacceptable behaviour, like "belching", which is substituted by calling it "breaking wind".

Euphemisms are found in the attitude of society towards human bodily changes. Bedroll (2007:13) claims that during Queen Victoria's reign it was not conceivable that any bodily parts were mentioned in polite society. Dysphemistic associations were made - even in reference to the leg of a chicken. Holder (2008:56) argues that in today´s English there are a few expressions of bodily functions that cannot be referred to directly. Most euphemistic substitutions are used in reference to a sexual partner; for example, "mistress", "mate", "boy/girlfriend", "miss", "good friend.' With reference to a sexual act, expressions are used which include the word "get", such as, "get busy with", "get into bed with", "get your share", "get your green" and a host of other common evasive terms, like "contact with", "conversation", "the main thing", "to make happy", "to mate" and "conquer a bed".

1.6.5 Euphemisms connected with addictions

Present-day English also deals with socially unaccepted issues, like alcohol, drugs and gambling. Holder (2008:61) claims that people prefer evasive language, because the topic deals with personal destruction. Not only is physical and psychical health damaged, but the person might have to face debts, destroyed family and social shame. According to Holder (2008:61), addictions may be called "weaknesses". For example, "weakness for drink" meaning alcoholism or "weakness for the horses" which would be a gambling addiction.

Holder is of the opinion that euphemisms related to a gambling addiction are usually replaced by terms, like "to play" and "a game". The players are referred to as "bookmakers", "commission agents" or "turf accountants" and the gambling machines are called "fruit machines". Holder gives examples of many euphemisms connected with alcohol. Most common is the word, "drink", which might be used as a

verb or a noun in phrases, such as "have a drink", "drink a lot", "drink some" or "drink too much". Other expressions referring to alcohol include "bottle", "cocktail", "shot", "snort", "snifter", "sip", "tip", "spot and "transfusion". It would make a meaningful contribution to the relevant literature to conduct a study to find out whether Tshivenḓa has euphemisms connected with addictions.

1.7 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study will be based on two theoretical frameworks, i.e., Politeness and Indirectness communicative theories.

1.7.1 Politeness Theory

In this study Politeness Theory will be according to guidelines found in Brown and Levinson (1987:67) and Scollon and Scollon (2007:33). Their work on Politeness Theory is considered to be the most influential and comprehensive on pragmatic politeness. They describe politeness as a concern for people's 'saving face' needs where 'face' means a person's public self-image. The reason why people decide which form of politeness to use in a particular context depends on factors, such as: distance between participants; their relative status; and the formality of context. Therefore, a polite person ensures that he/she makes others feel comfortable in a conversation. Being linguistically polite involves speaking to people appropriately so that there is no conflict between or among the parties involved in the interlocution. Inappropriate linguistic choices may be considered rude. Making decisions about what is or is not considered polite in any community involves assessing social relationships in terms of the dimensions of social distance or solidarity and relative power or status. It is, therefore, necessary to understand the social values of a society in order to speak politely to interlocutors.

According to Brown and Levinson (1987:69), politeness should help people develop a model that concentrates on choices people who interact make in actual contexts and that allows for cross-cultural variability. Brown and Levinson's (1987:69) Theory of Politeness has the concept of *'face'* as central and they imply that, "our knowledge of the world and the place we occupy in that world is gained entirely through social interaction '*face work*'."

Brown and Levinson (1987:60) believe that the issue of *'face'* occurs in two ways: *'positive face'* and *'negative face'.* 'Positive face' is regarded as the desire for appreciation by, and approval of, others while 'negative face' is referred to as the desire not to be imposed upon by others. Therefore, when interacting, speakers need to balance a concern for other people's *'face'* with a desire to protect their own which means that when people are in a conversation they draw on politeness strategies as a way of paying attention to another person's "face" and avoid "face threatening acts." That is the reason why they resort to the use of euphemism to maintain 'face'.

Brown and Levinson (1987:60), claim that there are certain features to a person's 'face'. A person desires to be seen as worthy of respect and two basic rules of social interaction are: be considerate and be respectful - both of which exists for "saving face". They also observe that "face" is "emotionally invested and that it can either be lost, maintained, or enhanced and must be constantly attended to in interaction" (Brown & Levinson, 1987:60).

1.7.2 Indirectness Communicative Theory

The findings of the study will also be based upon an Indirectness Communicative Theory that is a communicative strategy by means of which speakers avoid being outspoken and attempt to keep a correlation between their talk and face considerations. According to the Indirectness Communicative Theory, euphemism is a face saving mechanism which emphasizes mutual cooperation in a conversation (Allan & Burridge, 1991:77). In other words, social interaction is, generally, oriented towards saving and maintaining face for language speakers according to implicit mutual agreement in an endeavour to preserve their face needs. Referring to an inappropriate topic is a threat to positive face and substituting a euphemism for a blunt term is a common strategy for reducing positive face threat.

It is against the backdrop of this information that the theories will be used to investigate and explain the application of euphemism in Tshivenḓa.

1.8   PURPOSE OF STUDY

1.8.1 Aim of the Study

The aim of this study is to examine the semantic and socio-pragmatic value of euphemism in Tshivenḓa.

1.8.2 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are the following:

- To identify the most commonly euphemized topics in Tshivenḓa
- To establish strategies used to create euphemisms in Tshivenḓa.
- To determine the motives behind using euphemisms in Tshivenḓa.
- To explore social domains where euphemisms are used in Tshivenḓa.

1.9   RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1.9.1 Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive and exploratory design within a qualitative research approach. The suitability of qualitative research for this study is based on the view that qualitative research aims at explaining complex phenomena by means of verbal description rather than testing hypotheses with numerical values (Patton, 2002:41). Euphemisms are complex phenomena that need verbal description in order to grasp relevant meaning and the message being conveyed. In this case, the qualitative approach is also appropriate because it helped the researcher identify the participants' beliefs and values (De Vos, 2005:79).   Additionally, Brynard and Hanekom (1997:29) maintain that an indispensable condition for qualitative methodology is a commitment to seeing the world from the point of view of the actors or participants.

1.9.2 Sampling

Participants for the study were selected by using purposive sampling. Babie (2010:45) defines purposive sampling as a type of non-probability sampling in which the units to be observed are selected on the basis of the researcher's judgement about which ones will be the most useful or the most representative. This statement is supported by Krathwohl (2004:229) who considers purposive sampling to be the

most fashionable technique in qualitative research because it involves selecting participants who are information rich and who provide special access to the topic being explored. In relation to this assertion, the researcher selected five traditional healers, five pastors, five chiefs and five elderly women and five men to participate in the study. It should be emphasized that these participants were selected on condition that they are regarded as the custodians of Tshivenḓa language and culture. Although an estimated number of twenty-five participants was envisaged, sampling continued until data saturation was reached, i.e., when additional analysis of data brings redundancy and no new information is revealed (Patton, 2002).

1.9.3 Data Collection

In this study, primary data and secondary data were collected. Semi-structured interviews were used to collect primary data. According to Creswell (2003:96), semi-structured interviews allow the participants to elaborate on their experiences in their own words whilst giving some structure to the interview. The selected participants were interviewed separately. All interviews were audio-taped and transcribed. All interviews were back-translated and verified for accuracy.

1.9.4 Data Analysis

Data analysis refers to the process whereby order, structure and meaning are imposed on the mass of data collected in a qualitative research study (McMillan and Schumacher, 2001: 201). The translated data were analysed using the thematic content analysis method. In order to practically execute the study, the researcher used the following guidelines for the analysis of data from qualitative research interviews - as suggested by Kvale (1983:34):

- The audio-taped interviews were transcribed.
- The researcher listened carefully to a tape recording while, simultaneously, reading the transcribed interview.
- The researcher carefully read and re-read the original transcriptions and identified patterns and themes which were relevant to the research context.

- The researcher analysed the themes identified for the group. A discussion of the analysis of the identified themes for the group was followed by a comparative analysis of links between themes - identified in this study and in the relevant literature.

- Conclusions were drawn from the coded data. This step involves making sense of the primary themes or the identified categories and their properties. It involves exploring the properties and dimensions of categories, identifying relationships between categories, uncovering patterns and testing categories against the full range of data.

- The final phase involved the reporting of findings. This phase is regarded as the primary one for reporting the results of the research. An interesting and readable report would provide sufficient description for readers to understand the basis used for interpretation and description. For the study to be replicable, the analytic procedures and processes were as truthful as possible (Patton, 2002:98). The data were presented in text, tabular and figure forms.

The researcher attempted to gain a continuously deeper understanding of the phenomenon under study and continually refine the interpretation of data. As pointed out by Creswell (2003:190), data analysis involves making sense of both texts and images. This means that the researcher is required to prepare the data for analysis, conduct different analyses and move deeper and deeper into understanding the data. Data analysis was done in two stages: during the process of gathering data and after completing the process. During the data collection stage the analysis of data involved checking for recurrent themes. Responses were recorded using the original wording.

1.9.5 Credibility and Bias

Holloway and Wheeler (1996:23) note that all research is rightly open to criticism and, therefore, there must be criteria by which qualitative research can be evaluated to determine whether the research findings are credible. The credibility standard requires a qualitative study to be believable to critical readers and to be approved by the persons who provided the information gathered during the study. Krafting (1991:56) maintains that a qualitative study is credible when it presents such

accurate descriptions or interpretations of human experiences that people who share that experience or perception immediately recognise the descriptions.

To ensure the credibility of this study the researcher followed the strategies to ensure credibility espoused by Lincoln and Guba (1989:304), namely, prolonged engagement, persistent observation and triangulation.

Prolonged engagement means being present on the site where the study is being done for long enough to build a trust with the participants; experience the breadth of variation; and overcome distortions due to the presence of the researcher on site (Lincoln & Guba, 1989:305). As this study is extensive, the researcher spent a great deal of time with the participants in the field collecting data and a pre-mature closing of the collection of data was avoided. The researcher sought to obtain wide and accurate primary data from the participants as well as relevant secondary data from various research articles and relevant publications.

Persistent observation is a technique which ensures a depth of experience and understanding as well as the broad scope encouraged by prolonged engagement. To be persistent the inquirer must explore details of the phenomena under study at a sufficiently deep level so that he/she can decide what is important and what is irrelevant and focus on the most relevant aspects (Lincoln & Guba, 1989:306). It is for that reason that the researcher sought in-depth data concerning all euphemistic expressions that prevail in Tshivenḓa - both the archived ones and the most recent ones. From the interviews with the participants, the researcher identified all Tshivenḓa euphemistic expressions that are relevant and discarded all irrelevant euphemistic concepts from this study.

Triangulation means the verification of findings through referring to multiple sources of information, including the literature, using multiple methods of data collection and recording observations from multiple inquirers. Using multiple methods can help facilitate a deeper understanding of the topic being researched (Denzin, 1978:59). In other words, if a conclusion is based on one person's report - given during one interview to only one interviewer - it is less credible than if several people confirmed the finding at different points in time, during interviews and through unstructured observations in response to queries from several independent researchers and in

the review of the literature (Lincoln & Guba, 1989:306). A single method can never adequately shed light on a phenomenon.

To ensure the credibility of this study the researcher conducted semi-structured interview with the participants. Participants were purposefully sampled on condition that they were regarded as the custodians of the Tshivenḓa language and culture. A literature study of research articles and publications was conducted to support data obtained from the interview.

1.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

1.10.1 Permission for the Study

Before embarking on this study, the researcher submitted the research proposal to the relevant university's research and ethics committees for approval. This was done, specifically, in order to obtain ethical approval from the university's Research and Ethics Committee.

1.10.2 Confidentiality and Anonymity

The information provided by the participants will not be shared with any person other than the supervisor. Research participants will have the right to remain anonymous. They will not be identified by name, surname or identity number. The study does not require any personal information that could be traced back to the participants. With regard to the audio-taped interviews only the researcher and the supervisor will have access to the tapes. The participants will be assured of confidentiality, privacy and anonymity which will be maintained throughout the study.

1.10.3 Informed Consent

Before interviews could be conducted, participants were informed about the nature of the study; the reasons for undertaking the study; and the aims and purpose of the study. They were assured that their participation was voluntary and that they might withdraw from participating in the study at any time should they wish to do so.

Participants were be given consent letters and consent forms that they had to sign before engaging in interviews with the researcher.

1.10.4   Aftercare of the Participants

Participants' rights were not infringed upon and they were not be harmed in any way - either physically or psychologically. Participants who show emotional distress as a result of their participation in this study will be referred to a psychologist or social worker for counselling.

1.11   SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study is significant in the sense that it is expected to yield valuable information about the use of euphemism in Tshivenḓa. Since Tshivenḓa is one of the official languages that is taught and examined at primary, secondary and tertiary levels of education in South Africa, the results of the study could be used by both teachers and writers of Tshivenḓa in terms of possible teaching material. Furthermore, there will be an academic benefit in the sense that the results of this study may be used as an additional reference by other researchers to conduct further research. A further significance is that Tshivenḓa language users will know when and where to use euphemism appropriately as an incorrect use of euphemism leads to miscommunication and misunderstanding.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1   INTRODUCTION

Whereas **Chapter One** introduced the topic of the study and outlined the research, **Chapter Two** examines the relevant available literature which is directly related to the study. The purpose of this chapter is to position the investigation within the context of similar research to enrich it and to justify it.

Euphemism is not only a common feature in people's language usage, but it is also a cultural phenomenon. It has an effect on people's daily communication; it can make a harsh topic softer and an embarrassing conversation agreeable by adhering to social communicative conventions. In other words, it saves face on both sides and enables people to communicate successfully. Through the use of euphemism which shows politeness and conceals feelings, embarrassment and taboos are avoided. People also use euphemism because they fear something and try to avoid talking about it. In modern society, euphemism has become an indispensable element in public communication and interaction.

People try to avoid using words and expressions that they find unpleasant, inappropriate or embarrassing or that the people to whom they are speaking may find objectionable. Such consciously avoided words and expressions can be considered to be taboos. Taboos were originally concerned with sacred matters that could not be discussed, but now they are usually related to things that people may be ashamed of. The existence of taboos throughout history has created a need for speakers to find words and expressions that enable them to talk about certain subjects without feeling uncomfortable or being afraid of hurting another person's feelings. Such words and expressions are referred to as euphemisms.

This chapter reviews the relevant literature to reach a clear definition of euphemism and its characteristics, Theoretical considerations on which to base the research findings will be explored; studies about euphemism conducted in European and African countries will be visited; and the discussion will attempt to establish a

relationship between language, culture and euphemism. A basis for the use of euphemism, its construction and its classification will conclude the chapter.

2.2   DEFINING EUPHEMISM

It is clear that language can be considered as an invaluable instrument that reveals much about the world in which human beings are the real masters. Indeed, man has played a key role in creating and developing language; through the centuries, people have ceaselessly enriched and diversified it with many new concepts, including euphemism which is found increasingly in the language of today.

In societies and in certain circumstances we see that people may sometimes use certain words rather than others which are considered taboo. The word 'taboo' originates from Tongan, a Polynesian language where, in that society, it refers to acts which are to be avoided (Bloomfield, 1993:3). When an act is taboo, reference to this act may also be taboo, i.e., first one is forbidden to do something and then one is forbidden to talk about it. Taboos are valuable as an index of the comfort or importance of a topic to a person or a culture; taboos are ones that are not to be used - or at least, not to be used in 'polite society' because they are considered to be rude, vulgar, or in some cases too direct or indecent (Bloomfield, 1993:4).

It is the existence of taboo words and/or taboo ideas that stimulates the creation of euphemisms. As part of English and other languages, euphemisms have been used widely and they appear to be popular. "A euphemism is a word or phrase which replaces a taboo word, or which is used in the attempt to avoid either a fearful or unpleasant topic" (Fromkin *et al.,* 1986:33) or "a word or expression intended by the speaker to be less offensive or objectionable than what it replaces" (Steward & Sylvia, 1986:89). For example, when a person has 'passed away' the 'grief therapist' receives the client and prepares the 'loved one'; makes 'arrangements'; and soon the 'dearly departed' is 'interred'. All this might sound a little circumspect or evasive, when what is really meant is that when someone has died the funeral director receives the corpse and sees to it that the dead body is soon buried (Steward & Sylvia, 1986:89).

Euphemism, as the widely and most frequently used type of figurative language (Spears 1985), needs a concise and definite criterion to judge its scope. Linguists, such as Allan (1991:45), Enright (2005:33), Fromkin*et al.*, (1986:33), Geoffrey (1981:23)*,* Kalanga (2013:2), Mwanambuyu (2011:16) and Slovenko (2005:1), suggest that the word 'euphemism' comes from Greek where 'eu' means 'good' and 'pheuse' means 'speech' or 'saying' and, therefore, it literally means 'to speak with a good word.' The word has acquired different definitions - as can be seen in the following examples:

1. Webster's Encyclopaedic Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language (1996) defines euphemism as the substitution of a mild, indirect, or vague expression for one thought substituted.
2. The Oxford Concise Dictionary of Linguistics (2001) views euphemism as words used in place of one regarded as offensive, indecent or alarming.
3. Enright (2005) maintains that euphemising is generally defined as substituting an inoffensive or pleasant term for a more explicit, offensive one, thereby veneering the truth by using kind words.
4. Slovenko (2005:1) refers to euphemism as a "linguistic fig leaf" where an inoffensive or pleasant term is used to replace a more explicit and offensive one - thereby veneering the reality.
5. Williams (2009:198) sees euphemism as is a kind of linguistic elevation or an expression specifically directed to finding socially accepted words for concepts that many people cannot easily speak about.

The above definitions share a common idea: euphemism occurs when speakers avoid using some words that they, or society, deem insulting, offensive or taboo and replace them with softer or milder expressions.

2.3   CHARACTERISTICS OF EUPHEMISMS

The four characteristics of euphemisms - as explained by Samoskaite (2011:9-10) – are given below.

2.3.1 Universality

Euphemisms generally exist in almost every nation all over the world - no matter how civilised/uncivilised it is. In all natural languages, both large families of languages and languages of minorities, using euphemism is a common phenomenon. Nearly all cultures seem to have certain notions or things that people try to avoid mentioning directly which means using euphemism in order to avoid painful, offensive or unpleasant words. Therefore, universality - which is something that is well-known and accepted by all the people - is one characteristic of euphemism.

2.3.2 Localisation

Another feature of euphemism is localisation. Various regions display differences in customs, culture and history which embody the localisation of language. There are two causes of regional differences: First is a regional cultural difference where in different regions the culture in each region will affect the development of euphemism. For example, for 'going to the W.C.', in Balliol College at Oxford University students refer to going to the toilet as 'visiting Lady Periam' because the toilets of that college were built on land donated by Lady Periam. The Americans, however, do not use this expression. Second is the difference of geographic position. For example, at the seaside death may be connected with the sea and tide and people there may use the expression 'go with the tide' to express death, while in the American west mountain areas the euphemism for having died is '(gone) over the range' or 'crossed the Great Divide.' These are the typical regional euphemisms.

2.3.3 Contemporaneity

The changes in language depend on the needs and changes of society. Language is constantly changing; new words appear continuously while old ones disappear. Euphemism is no exception and it undergoes a process of change too. It bears a mark of the times which means that contemporaneity is also a characteristic of euphemism. For example, the expression 'She is pregnant', according to Samoskaite (2011:9) has assumed many different euphemistic expressions in different eras:

(1) She has cancelled all her social engagements (1856).
(2) She is in an interesting condition (1880).

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(3) She is in a delicate condition (1895).

(4) She is knitting little bootees (1910).

(5) She is in a family way (1920).

(6) She is expecting (1935).

(7) She is pregnant (1956).

However, after the 1960s euphemisms for 'pregnant' develop slowly because today people tend to be more direct and pregnancy is now a seen as a joyful occurrence which people are not shy to mention.

2.3.4 Differences in gender or age, profession or identity and in style or context

Samoskaite (2011:10) thought that only the upper and middle classes use euphemisms but this idea is too much of a generalisation; it would be more accurate to analyse the use of euphemism in terms of differences in gender or age, profession or identity and style or context. In terms of gender, studies have shown that females use more euphemisms than males. There is a saying in English that 'horses sweat; men perspire; and young ladies glow' which shows that women manipulate words to express the bodily function of sweating in a more genteel fashion (Holder, 2002:45). Differences in gender and age usually influence the choice of the synonyms of euphemisms. Holder (2002:45) says that there is a variety of expressions for going to the toilet. Men use the expression 'shooting a lion' but, generally, adults may say 'going to the W.C.' and children say 'going to the pot.'

Euphemisms also change with profession and identity changes. For example, the word 'dead' can be used in many different ways: in the military the expression 'lose number of one's mess' is used which is derived from the mess system of UK navy and in the press the word 'thirty' is often used because they usually mark '30' at the end of a news article to indicate its completion. As far as the differences of style or context are concerned, it may be noted that stylistically, for instance, the word 'dead' has hundreds of euphemisms but in daily communication, people may use 'gone' or 'is no more.' Obituaries contain 'passed away' or 'departed' but 'having died' also

has some witty expressions, such as 'having popped off' or 'kicked the bucket' (www.chledu.com).

In brief, the general characteristics of euphemisms are universality, localisation, contemporaneity, differences in gender or age, profession or identity and style or context.

2.4 THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This section refers to the two theoretical stances adopted in this study, namely, Politeness Theory and Indirectness Communicative Theory.

2.4.1 Politeness Theory

The Politeness Theory used in this investigation is based on the concepts and discussion presented in Brown and Levinson's (1978) original face-saving model of politeness and their subsequently (1987) revised version. Brown and Levinson's Theory of Politeness first appeared in 1978 and it is most influential as it has witnessed innumerable reactions, applications, critiques, modifications and revision. The names, Brown and Levinson, have become almost synonymous with the word 'politeness' itself as it is almost impossible to talk about politeness without referring to them.

Brown and Levinson's Politeness Model is founded on the notions of 'face' suggested by Goffman and 'conversational logic' proposed by Grice. They also associate their theory with the Gricean framework in that politeness strategies are seen as 'rational deviations' of the Gricean Cooperative Principle (CP). However, politeness has a totally different status from the CP. The CP is a presumptive strategy; it is unmarked and socially neutral - the natural presupposition underlying all communication. Politeness needs to be communicated; it can never be simply presumed to be operative; and it must be signalled by the speaker. Politeness principles are principled reasons for deviating from the CP when communication is about to threaten face (Brown & Levinson, 1987:5).

They see politeness in terms of conflict avoidance. The central themes are rationality and face, which are claimed to be universal features, i.e., possessed by all speakers and hearers. Such features are personified in a universal Model Person (MP). A MP is one with the ability to rationalise from communicative goals to the optimal means of achieving those goals. In so doing, the MP has to assess the dangers of threatening other participants' face and choosing appropriate strategies to minimize any face threats that might be involved in carrying out the activity.

'Face' refers to an individual's feeling of self-worth or self-image, reputation or good name. It is described as the 'public self-image of a person' and it refers to the emotional and social sense of self that everyone has and expects everyone else to recognize (Yule, 1996:60). Such self-image may be damaged, maintained or enhanced through interaction with others (Brown & Levinson, 1987:66). According to Brown and Levinson (1987: 67), 'face' refers to two basic needs of every individual: (1) To be approved of by others (positive face) and (2) To have his/her actions and thoughts unimpeded by others (negative face). Positive face is reflected in the desire to be liked, approved of, respected and appreciated by others and negative face is reflected in the desire not to be impeded and to have the freedom to act as one chooses. Politeness, in interaction, can be used to show an awareness of another person's face. In this sense, politeness can be accomplished in a situation of social distance. Social distance represents respect or deference whereas social closeness is described in terms of friendliness, camaraderie, or solidarity (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Thomas, 1997:169).

Brown and Levinson (1987:65) constructed their theory of politeness on the premise that many speech acts are intrinsically threatening to face in that they do not support the face wants/needs of the speaker (S) and/or those of the addressee (A). Brown and Levinson (1987:65-67) define face-threatening acts (FTAs) in terms of two basic parameters: (1) Whose face is being threatened (the speaker's or the addressee's) and (2) Which type of face is being threatened (positive or negative face). Acts that threaten an addressee's positive face include those in which a speaker demonstrates that he/she does not approve of or support the addressee's positive face or self-image, such as complaints, criticisms, accusations, mention of taboo topics and interruptions.

When speakers find themselves in a situation where a face threatening act (FTA) may have to be performed, their calculations lead to a decision which results in choosing one of five possible communication strategies. The five strategies for performing FTA are as follows:

(1) **Say thing as it is (bald-on record)**. We address the other directly as a means of expressing our needs. It is usually used in emergency situations, regardless of who is being addressed, such as "Don't touch that! Get out of here!" This bald-on record form may be followed by expressions, like "please' and 'would you' which serve to soften the demand and are called mitigating devices.

(2) **Off record**. We utter no word but give hints. For example, when we need to borrow a pen, we just search rather obviously through our pocket and then rummage in our bag. Even if we need to say something we do not actually ask for anything. We might just simply say, "Uh, I forgot my pen."

(3) **On record Positive Politeness and Negative Politeness**. According to Park (2008:2202) this leads the speaker to appeal to a common goal and even friendship through expressions, such as, "How about letting me use your pen?" Such on record expression often represents a greater risk for the speaker of a refusal. However, in an English speaking context, a FTA is more commonly performed *via* a negative politeness strategy. The most typical form used is a question containing a modal verb, such as in "Could you lend me a pen?" Negative politeness is typically expressed *via* questions - even questions that seem to ask permission to ask a question, as in "May I ask you if you have an extra pen that I could borrow?" Positive politeness is indicated by shortening the distance while negative politeness is indicated by lengthening the distance. The figure given below shows how to get a pen from someone else using Brown and Levinson's guidelines:

How to get a pen from someone else

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                    How to get a pen from someone else
                                    |
            ┌───────────────────────┴───────────────────────┐
      Say something                              Say nothing (but search in the bag)
            |
     ┌──────┴──────────────────────┐
  On record                  Off record ("I forgot my pen)
     |
  ┌──┴───────────────────────────┐
Face saving act          Bald on record ("Give me a pen")
  |
┌─┴──────────────────────────────────────┐
Positive face                        Negative face
("How about letting me use your pen?")   ("Could you lend me a pen?")
```
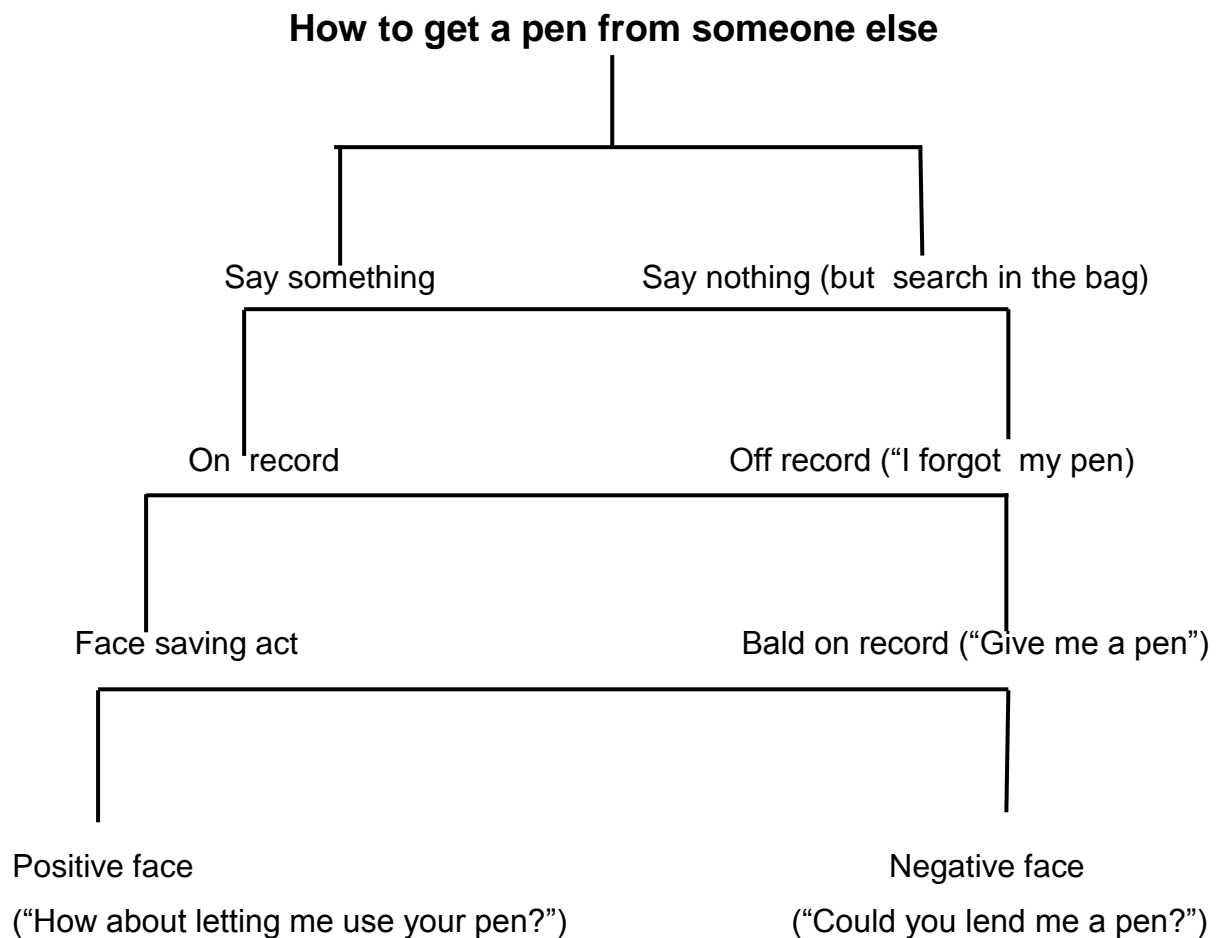
(***Brown and Levinson, 1987; Yule, 1999:66***).

Figure 2.1: Politeness Strategies

2.4.1.1 Politeness theory and euphemism

The aim of politeness is essentially to provide conditions for the smooth flow of communication between the sender and the receiver. Leech (1983:89) identifies five maxims that underlie the politeness principle:

- **Tact maxim**: the interlocutor minimises the cost to the other and maximises the benefit to the other.
- **Generosity maxim**: minimises benefit to self and maximises cost to self.
- **Approbation maxim**: minimises dispraise of the other while maximising praise of the other.
- **Modesty maxim**: the interlocutor minimises praise of self and disagreement between self and the other while maximising agreement between self and the other.

Sympathy maxim: the interlocutor minimises antipathy between self and the other and maximises sympathy between self and the other.

Euphemisms are good examples of language usage for politeness purposes. They are words used to soften the reality of the truth in what we want to communicate to a reader or listener. Euphemisms are a feature of language and acquire meaning within the geographical boundaries of cultures. They are used in traditional communities to refer to things considered to be terrifying. For instance, in the African context "gone to the land of the ancestors" is used instead of "having died". From an anthropological point of view, Neaman and Silver (1983:1-2) explain that "to speak a name was to evoke the divinity whose power then had to be confronted." Euphemisms are also used to express taboos, while keeping the speaker at safe distance from the taboo (Alkire 2002). Finally, euphemisms are used to elevate the status of something. For example, the use of 'attorney' for lawyer or 'educator' for teacher.

2.4.2 INDIRECTNESS COMMUNICATIVE THEORY

Indirectness is often used in daily communication as a major communicative skill to achieve harmonious interpersonal relationships as speakers are intent on forming and maintaining good relationships with others; avoiding embarrassment, misunderstanding or friction; and maintaining interpersonal and social harmony. So, proper words or behaviour in proper places at the proper time with the right person is the first rule of interpersonal communication. In terms of this concern, Muhammed (2013:4) says that speakers always draw on various communicative skills, of which indirectness is of great value.

In their daily communication, people do not always say out loud what they really think of others, especially unpleasant thoughts. Usually, they use some strategy to mitigate the force of unpleasant utterances in order to avoid embarrassment, conflict, and friction in order to allow the conversation to take place smoothly and also maintain a good, harmonious relationship (Zhang:2009:99).

2.4.2.1   Definition of Indirectness Communicative Theory

Communication is a means of transmitting ideas and the main way in which people communicate is through the use of words, both orally and in writing. There is, however, another form of communication which we all use most of the time - usually without being aware of it. It is sometimes called body language or non-verbal communication. Indirectness Communicative Theory is defined by various scholars. Searle (1975) defined indirectness as "those cases in which one illocutionary act is performed indirectly by ways of performing another." An indirect illocutionary act requires the speaker's and the listener's shared background and the ability on the listener's part to make inferences (Thomas, 1995:119). Indirectness is the means by which one meaning is conveyed indirectly through utterances or non-verbal behaviour in order to achieve a certain goal or the means by which one's intent is revealed in a roundabout way (Zhang, 2009:99). Brown and Levinson (1987) define indirectness as a set of politeness strategies which can be used to minimize imposition on the hearer and to establish solidarity between the speaker and the hearer. Kulka (1987:140) claims that there is a relationship between politeness and indirectness, in general - irrespective of language.

Thomas (1995:143) explains that as a communication style, indirectness is found in everyday interaction. In some speech situations it is employed as an effective means of communication. For instance, it can be used to perform different functions, such as giving hints, avoiding confrontation, joking, being ironic and expressing politeness by saving face for both speakers. In many cultures, especially in Asian cultures, indirectness is valued because saving face and harmony in social relationships are highly valued. Indirectness can occur between either of two parties, the speaker and the listener or between more than two participants through verbal or non-verbal means. What should be noted is that the speaker can either convey his intention indirectly to his addressee or convey it through his addressee to a third party. In the latter case, the speaker can express his meaning either directly or indirectly. It is also a strategy of indirectness to indicate one's ideas and to achieve specific goals (Lakoff, 1973).

2.4.2.2   Types of indirectness

In his Speech Act Theory Searle (1975) maintains that there are basically two types of indirectness: conventional indirectness and non-conventional indirectness. Conventional indirectness refers to those utterances which are standardised to perform only those acts conventionally designated for certain functional purposes which are not assigned to them in their grammatical forms (Searle, 1975). For example, in "Can you pass the salt?" both the means, i.e., the kind of ability that is used as an indirect utterance and the form, i.e., the exact wording "can you" as opposed to "are you able to" are conventionalised to signal the illocutionary force.

According to Muhammed (2013:6), the second type of indirectness, non-conventional indirectness, also referred to as 'hints'. It comprises those utterances which are ambiguous in either prepositional content or illocutionary force - or both. For example, by replying "I have to study for an exam" to an invitation to a movie, the literal meaning of the utterance and the intended meaning, i.e., refusal, do not match. There is no systematic relation between the utterance and the rejection of a proposal as there is between "can you pass the salt" and its directive illocution. Its meaning is very much context embedded. Non-conventional indirectness is pragmatically vague; heterogeneous in realisation; high in deniability potential; and infinite in number (Searle, 1975; Grice, 1975).

As a strategy in communication to achieve a certain goal, indirectness is not only widespread in oral communication but also in non-verbal communication. Indirectness is a broad term which can reflect a variety of facets and can underlie phenomena, such as irony, metaphor and understatement. In a sense, all interpretation in context is indirect and, consequently, "a full understanding of conversational organization will have to await an adequate account of indirect communication" (Brown & Levinson, 1987:217).

2.4.2.3   Cultural variation in indirectness

Indirectness is a cultural phenomenon that exists in every culture and it is highly valued in some languages while others do not pay it much attention. Specifically, high-context and low-context cultural patterns (Hall, 1977:23) are associated with

indirectness and directness in communication. High-context communication is indirect, ambiguous, understated with speakers being reserved and sensitive to listeners while low-context communication is direct, explicit, open, precise and consistent with one's feelings. Cultural differences clearly exist in how much and what type of indirectness is expected in particular settings and what has motivated the use of indirectness (Young, 1982:43).

According to Ting (1988:23), people in individualistic, low-context cultures, such as European Americans, prefer a direct style and talk explicitly about their true intentions and desires. People in collective, high-context cultures, such as African Americans, Japanese and Koreans, prefer the indirect style and use ambiguous statements to mask their true needs and thoughts.

Research has found that the Japanese differ from the Americans in that they organize their ideas, persuade others and structure their conversations differently (Okabe 1983:19). Okabe (1983:19) suggests that the Japanese favour synthetic thinking that focuses on the whole, resulting in high-context messages whereas the U.S. Americans favour analytic thinking that involves looking at parts. Okabe (1983:21) maintains that when talking or writing, Americans construct low-context messages which specify how the parts are related to each other and have and use explicit words which reflect the cultural values of precision. They also use categorical words, such as 'absolutely', 'certainly'and 'positively'.

Indirectness in conversation is mostly due to cultural differences in the importance people assign to values, such as rapport and harmony versus independence - as well as clarity and topics of conversation (Wierzbicka, 2003:33). The Greeks, for instance, are considered to be highly indirect; the Israelis are highly direct and the Anglo-Americans are in the middle (Wierzbicka, 2003:34). Japanese speakers limit themselves to implicit and even the ambiguous use of words; they avoid leaving an assertive impression; and they use qualifiers, such as 'maybe', 'perhaps', 'probably'and 'somewhat'. These differences are often manifested even when Japanese speak English and the Americans speak Japanese. Yamada's (1992, 1994) study of Americans and Japanese in intercultural meetings found that Americans are direct in their speech because it is used as a medium for

communicating sincere and cooperative intentions; for clarifying and disambiguating the ongoing conversation; for reaching mutual understanding; and for building rapport. The Japanese are indirect due to the Japanese ideal of implicit ellipsis, stretch-talk and exemplification. Subject ellipsis is a grammatical characteristic of Japanese which can serve the discourse function of obscuring talk ownership. Stretch-talk, i.e., drawing out the talk by pausing, hesitating and lengthening syllables, is another means of talk-distancing and exemplification is employing the talk (Cheng, 2003:12).

2.4.2.4   Motives of Indirectness

2.4.2.4.1 Indirectness for politeness

If speakers always said what they meant, then there would be few problems for the speech act theory of discourse analysis and, obviously, fewer misunderstandings. There are, however, various reasons which lead people who are interacting to express themselves indirectly, perhaps more so in some cultures than in others. The motives for a speaker to use indirectness in conversation have been examined and widely discussed ones include for politeness, regard for face and face management. Scholars, such as Leech (1985), Lakoff (1990) and Brown and Levinson (1987), have extensively researched and investigated the use of indirectness in people's interaction. Their approaches have moved the identification of indirectness for politeness into the centre of the discussion on the basis of their interpretation of Seale (1975) and Grice (1975). They relate indirectness to politeness by regarding it as a means to be polite. Leech is of the opinion that the relationship between indirectness and politeness could be very complicated. The social distance between the speaker and the listener, and the need to feel accepted by other people, can also have a significant effect on how the politeness of an utterance is interpret and, indeed, how we structure our own utterances. A number of people, Searle in particular, have repeatedly stated that politeness is the chief motive behind indirect language usage (Searle, 1975; Leech, 1983; Brown & Levinson, 1987).

Disagreement exists and is supported by these studies concerning non-conventional indirectness; some researchers suggest that it is not so much the issue of politeness, but rather a high degree of deniability potential that underlies the use of indirectness.

However, in most cases politeness is the most basic motive for indirectness but indirectness is also used as a means of self-protection in the language which is representative of a particular culture and as a means of conveying denial, advice, humour, etc. There are many other reasons why people decide to be indirect, including teasing and joking, irony, lack of confidence and even sarcasm and rudeness (Zhang: 2009:99). Indirect speech acts are located in too many different contexts to account for one main, motive force, such as politeness; it is necessary to examine some factors that require the use of indirectness.

2.4.2.4.2   Indirectness for self-protection

Goffman first raised the notion of 'face' in the late 50s by maintaining that 'face' is a sacred thing for every human being - an essential factor that communicators all have to pay attention to; and that face wants are reciprocal, i.e., if one wants her/his face cared for, s/he should care for other people's face (Goffman, 1959:78). It brings to mind a concise comprehensive rule in Scripture: "Do unto all men as you would they should do unto you." In fact, whether one can save face or not is in the control of others. If one does not want to lose face, the safest way to protect oneself is not to damage the face of others. Therefore, the ultimate goal of not offending others is for self-protection. Indirectness is a way to show politeness to others and it is used in many speech acts, such as requests, invitations, etc. in case possible rejection or conflict occurs. For example: *"Could you possibly lend me your bike this afternoon?"*

Muhammed (2013:8) says that if one wants to borrow something from others, the conventional indirectness of a question form is usually used. The speaker is technically asking permission to make a request. By being indirect, the speaker is making it less obvious that s/he expects the hearer to comply. On the surface, at least, this provides greater freedom for the hearer to refuse. Even if the hearer refuses, he will use polite language so as not to embarrass the requester, such as: "Sorry, I will be using it this afternoon." However, it is different case if the request is made in a direct and usually rude manner, such as: ''Lend me your bike this afternoon.''

By using the imperative form, the speaker actually issues an order. It sounds rather impolite, abrupt and even insolent. Furthermore, it may cause antipathy in the requestee towards the speaker. As a result, the requestee will not be friendly to the requester either by showing an indifferent face, or just saying: "No, I do not want to lend it to you." On hearing this, the requester will certainly be embarrassed and feel a loss of face. So, indirectness is very important for self-protection.

2.4.2.4.3   *Indirectness for humour*

A misunderstanding can occur when the hearer has miscalculated the intended illocution. The speaker sometimes deliberately flouts the Cooperative Principle to imply more than the literal meaning which often forms the basis of humour, such as in the following examples:

(1) **Customer**: Waiter! There is a fly in my soup.
(2) **Waiter**:   Don't worry; there's no extra charge (Muhammed, 2013:9).

In this rather awful joke, the customer's illocutionary meaning is really a complaint. But the waiter deliberately misunderstands the complaint and flouts the Maxim of Relevance in the Cooperative Principle. He takes it as praise in order to avoid mentioning the fact, turns away from the potential conflicts and, thus, creates a humorous situation. Humour is a kind of civilization cultivated by people when facing the common predicament in their lives. It enables people to express their sincerity, generosity and kindliness in a light way. The power of humour lies not only in making people laugh, but also in lubricating interpersonal relationships by showing friendliness and tolerance towards others; in eliminating miseries and troubles in order to be optimistic and open-minded; in promoting self-restraint; and in creating a meaningful life. The following dialogue in English is an example:

Customer	:	Is my dish ready?
Waiter	:	What did you order?
Customer	:	Fried snails.
Waiter	:	Oh, I will go to the kitchen and have a look. Would you please wait for a moment?
Customer	:	(*in anger*) I've already waited for half an hour.

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> **Waiter** : You know, Sir, snails are slow in movement... (The two laugh) (Zeng'an, 1998:71).

This frequently occurs in restaurants where customers get impatient because their ordered dishes take too long. If the waiter says indifferently: "Your dish isn't ready yet. So what can I do?" the customer might fly into fury or even start a quarrel. It may damage the reputation of the restaurant. In the above situation the waiter carefully makes use of the indirectness strategy in language; flouts the maxim of relevance; changes the topic delicately; and, thus, creates a humorous atmosphere where the language is separated from reality. Indirectness can result in humour which, in turn, can maintain harmonious interpersonal relationship and avoid potential conflict.

2.4.2.4.4   Indirectness for rejection or denial

Muhammed (2013:10) states that when you refuse other people's requests; disagree with their points of view; or just want to state your own opinions, you should be very careful about your expression and avoid using direct forms of rejection or openly showing disagreement. A common strategy of language is not to use any explicit expression of rejection or denial, but to show the reason for it. This is an indirect way to express meaning in order to save face on both sides and avoid embarrassment and because you do not directly refuse or reject, you need not apologise; however, if you do reject directly, you need to explain or apologise to avoid unnecessary trouble in conversational communication. Sometimes people just express a sense of negative meaning in an indirect way, revealing wit and humour. For example,

> (1)   A: Let us go to the park this afternoon.
>
>   B: I have classes this afternoon.
>
> (2)   A: I've found a model for you. What do you think of her?
>
>   B: She'd be perfect if she was a bit taller.

In (1), B's answer is just to state a fact, that is, an assertive. But in the specific context, its illocutionary meaning is in fact a rejection: Since I have classes this afternoon, I will have no time to go to the park. His words explain the reason for the rejection and are much more acceptable to the inviter than the direct rejection: "No, I won't", which sounds rude and is unsuitable. In (2), B does not state his negative

meaning directly, but gives hope; in fact, his illocutionary meaning is: "She is too short. I am not satisfied." B's means of expression allows room for A to infer his meaning and it also mitigates the force of denial (Muhammed, 2013:10).

Generally, people often express their negative meaning indirectly as it sounds wittier and more pleasant - and sometimes emphatic. See the following examples:

(3)   How could I do that? = It is impossible that I would do that.
(4)   Catch me doing that? = I would not do that.
(5)   Was ever such nonsense written? = there was never such nonsense written.

The implied negative meaning of the three sentences can only be inferred in specific contexts. In example 3 the speaker was blamed for something that he was not responsible for. He then uses a question to protest his innocence, which is, in fact, an assertive. Example 4 can be found in a context, such as: When the speaker was stealing some apples in an orchard, the owner caught him red-handed. In order to get out of trouble, he uses an imperative sentence with the illocutionary meaning of a promise. In this way, he indirectly admits his wrong doing and gives a promise not to do it again. Example 5 can occur in a context such as: The teacher was annoyed by the student's bad writing and then used the question form to express his dissatisfaction or blame indirectly. Indirectness, as an effective communicative skill, is widely used to achieve certain goals. When people speak or behave indirectly, they have various purposes or motives which require our attention to discern. Furthermore, there are still many more factors behind the use of indirectness which needs researching.

2.5   STUDIES ON EUPHEMISM IN SOME EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

In the recent past many scholars like Wang (2013) and Peter (2013) have investigated euphemism as a prominent form of language in various societies; in different languages; and in a variety of countries. However, many linguists and scholars like Enright (1985), Kasper (1997), Ziran (1997) and Hudson (2000) have studied this linguistic phenomenon from the perspective of semantics, pragmatics or socio-linguistics. From an examination of the relevant available literature, it appears

that very little - if any - research on euphemism in Tshivenḓa has been conducted using the socio-pragmatic approach. Studies have been conducted exploring euphemism in languages, such as English, Chinese and Arabic - among others (Mwanambuyu, 2011:13). The research and insights of other researchers concerning euphemism assists in identifying specific knowledge and support this study's contribution to the theory of knowledge.

An investigation by Qadi (2009) entitled: *A Sociolinguistic Comparison of Euphemisms in English and Arabic* highlights euphemisms in English and compares them socio-linguistically with those in Arabic. This was done because many speakers of Arabic have a need to learn English. According to Mwanambuyu (2011:36), Arabic is an international language which is required to be learned as a non-native language. Furthermore, it is one of the basic world languages which is a valid and necessary one for Muslims worldwide. Hence, the study examines the main euphemisms in both languages and their general linguistic and cultural resemblances and distractions.

In his introduction Mwanambuyu (2011:36) quotes Qadi (2009:13) and points out that:

> Language is not simply a formal system of sounds, words and syntactic structures but that it is also a way of communication by human people within their beliefs, attitudes, customs, behaviours, social habits, etc. and this is what is meant by culture.

Mwanambuyu (2011) refers to language as being subject to change and development which shows that language is the best record of the history of a people. The changes and developments are made for linguistic, social and psychological reasons and are influenced by other languages. According to Qadi (2009:13), euphemisms are, generally, divided into positive and negative types. He quotes Rawson (1998:492) who points out that, "euphemisms are employed positively in considering general social mores and expressing solidarity with the addressee or the referent." Mwanambuyu (2011:36) maintains that positive euphemisms are exemplified in English with fancy occupational titles, such as "environmental engineers" instead of "garbage men" and "dustmen" instead of "garbage collectors". Similarly, in Arabic there are positive euphemisms. Negative euphemisms are used

to prevent face loss by erasing from the language everything that people prefer not to deal with directly and straightforwardly.

He confirms that most euphemisms in both English and Arabic are used negatively. For example, "poverty" in English and 'fagr' in Arabic are euphemised by using "low-income" in English and "daxilmahdu:d" in Arabic. He suggests that euphemisms are either unconscious or conscious. He gives examples, such as when a government spokesperson says, "redeployment of troops", s/he means "withdrawal". Qadi (2009:14) qualifies the reason why politicians, generally, select words with care to ensure that lies are spoken in such a sweet way as to ensure that they are made truths and seem respectable. These individuals have a reputation for speaking in a very diplomatic way due to their use of euphemism.

According to Qadi (2009:16), euphemisms are an important aspect of every language and a language without euphemisms would be considered a defective instrument of communication. As such, they can be categorised as what the user of a language should avoid, i.e., what not to say or write. Euphemism in Qadi's study is seen as a linguistic politeness strategy which conveys a social attitude. Some of the most notable identified similarities in euphemisms in Arabic and English are:

- In both languages euphemism is used in three main figures of speech: metonymy, synecdoche and circumlocution.

- Generally, both languages contain similar euphemistic subjects, such as, death, urination, defecation, sex and elevating the titles of lowly occupations to more acceptable ones. It is worth noting that the study's comparison was mainly done on the basis of common subjects and occupations as opposed to specific items or phrases as certain items or phrases may be euphemised in one language but not, necessarily, in the other.

- Both languages use pronouns in speech and asterisks and dashes in writing as substitutes for taboos.

- Both languages reflect social attitudes, changes and pruderies in euphemisms - especially taboos. For example, in English there are synonyms for prostitute,

such as "callgirl," "fallen woman", "hostess," "lady of easy virtue," "model," "pick-up" and "street-walker" (Mwanambuyu, 2011:37). Similarly, in Arabic it is "ba:] i [at alhawa:" for "seller of love" and "bana: t allajl" for "night girls".

- In both languages euphemisms may be seen positively and negatively; negative euphemisms are far more prolific than the positive ones due to the fact that they reflect the main function of euphemism. In both languages - as is the case in all languages - euphemisms are formed unconsciously or consciously. However, in most cases conscious euphemisms are likely to develop into unconscious ones.

- Both languages have euphemistic synecdoche and circumlocutions.

Qadi (2009:16) also identifies differences in English and Arabic euphemisms which include the following:

- English has an ever-increasing number of euphemisms as compared to Arabic; this assertion is supported by the fact that English has a number of specific dictionaries for euphemisms but Arabic has none. This fact may be due to English being an international language and, hence, its abundance of reference books and research.

- The degree of politeness is more pronounced in Arabic than it is in English as English is overt while Arabic is covert. As such, English euphemisms tend to be more explicit, while Arabic ones are more restrained. For example, in English, when talking about sex nothing is unmentionable and decent but expressing sex in Arabic is cautiously done in a very decent and euphemistic manner. Furthermore, Arabic has a number of euphemistic formulas which is rare in English. Therefore, this is a clear testimony that Arab learners find it easy to learn English euphemisms but English learners find it difficult to learn Arabic ones.

- The Islamic rules and cultural impose a great sanction on the deliberate use of Arabic words and phrases related to different subjects of life whereas

English native speakers freely use and even adopt ideas from other languages and cultures.

Qadi's (2009) study has greatly assisted this research despite the fact that it was not a comparative study. For instance, the socio-linguistic theory used by Qadi is part and parcel of socio-pragmatics, a theory used in this study. The definition of euphemism as a means of communication could be applied to Tshivenḓa in terms of beliefs, attitudes, customs, behaviour and social habits which are all embraced in culture. The idea that language changes and development are influenced by other languages is precisely what Tshivenḓa experienced in the 20th century. The examples given of English euphemisms can also be found in Tshivenḓa, including euphemisms related to death, urination, defecation, sex and the elevation of titles of lowly occupations to more acceptable ones, among others. The current study sees euphemism as a language device used as a protective shield to safely avoid taboo words; alternatives are used to avoid hurting or scaring anyone as language is supposed to sooth the listener and euphemisms are also used for the purpose of politeness.

In another study by Benjamin *et al.* (2007) of English and Chinese euphemisms linguistic and cultural characteristics from pragmatic perspective areas of comparison included: formation and range of use which were then evaluated to determine the importance of euphemisms in the two languages. In this study it was shown that euphemisms have a communicative function - a way of showing politeness and avoiding taboo words. Benjamin *et al.* (2007:2) specifically point out:

> In every society there are certain things that are not supposed to be speakable or mentioned directly. A fair number of words are labelled as frivolous, vulgar, or at least inconsiderate. But in communication, for better maintenance of social relationship and exchanging ideas, people have to resort to a kind of language, which can make distasteful ideas seem acceptable or even desirable. This type of language is defined as "euphemism in linguistics and it comes in a variety of forms and is used for a variety of reasons.

With regard to formation, their study refers to comparisons in phonetic, lexical, grammatical and rhetorical device. They point out that phonetic distortion refers to the changing of a sound in a word for the purpose of euphemising which is

acceptable in English due to the fact that its writing is alphabetical. Phonetic distortions include abbreviations, reduplication and distortion of pronunciation, among others. For instance, in the initials which are used as euphemisms "TB" stands for tuberculosis, "JC" stands Jesus Christ, "SOB" for son-of-a-bitch and "BS" for bullshit - among others. It is further suggested that euphemisms play a vital role in our daily communication.

Benjamin *et al.* (2007) prove that euphemisms may be classified into many categories, depending on different criteria, rules and principles, such as dividing euphemisms according to period, such as the Middle Ages, the Victorian Age, the 20th century and the present time. Other classifications of euphemisms are: sex, occupation, unemployment and crime, among others.

Benjamin *et al.* (2007) refer to positive and negative euphemisms as stylistic or exaggerating euphemisms which include many fancy occupational titles that are meant to boost the egos of workers by elevating their job status, such as "exterminating engineers" for "rat catchers" and "beautician" for "hairdresser". However, negative euphemisms deflate and diminish; they are defensive in nature; they offset the power of tabooed terms; and, otherwise, eradicate from the language everything that people prefer not to deal with directly. Rawson (1981:1) points out that "negative euphemisms can be called traditional euphemisms or narrowing euphemisms. They are extremely ancient, and closely connected with the taboos." A euphemism and its corresponding taboo are, in fact, two faces of the same coin. They refer to the same thing though they have a different appearance as the euphemism has a much more pleasant face than the taboo. Mostly, in many cultures it is forbidden to pronounce the name of God, so euphemisms are used, such as "jeeze" or "Gee" for Jesus or Jesus Christ and "goodness" for God or my God. The names of the tabooed subjects have been exemplified as the "dead", "sex", "defecatry" and "excretory" - among others.

Conscious euphemisms are widely employed. For example, when people communicate they consciously say things tactfully and the listeners understand their implied meanings, such as when a lady at a dinner party says: "I want to make a phone call", the people present will understand that she means she is going to the

ladies room. Unconscious euphemisms are used unconsciously without any aim to deceive. For example, the term "cemetery" is a replacement for grave yard and "dieter" for the one who is moderate in eating and dining in order to lose weight (Mwanambuyu, 2011:16).

Language, culture, taboo and euphemism are society's basic *lingua franca* and, as such, they are outward and invisible signs of our inward anxieties, conflicts, fears and shames. By tracing their origins, it is possible to see what has been, and is, happening in our language, our minds and our culture. Rawson (1981:3) believes that language and euphemism are closely related and points out that "euphemisms are embedded so deeply in our language that few of us, even those who pride themselves on being plain-spoken, even get through a day without using them." Therefore, the relation between language and euphemism is so intrinsically close that it is impossible to study one without an analysis of the other. Other areas of euphemism in this comparison included antonym, rhetorical device, metaphor as a figure of speech and grammatical device.

The communicative function of euphemism is to show politeness in the sense that using direct and definite language to talk about unpleasantness may undoubtedly displease both sides of interlocutors and, possibly, their relationship; so, the use of euphemism may be the best alternative. Euphemism is believed to have been lubricating language and social communication since its invention.

According to Mwanambuyu (2011:41) and Benjamin *et al.* (2007:199) the communicative function of euphemism in English and Chinese is to avoid taboo; to show politeness; and to use pleasant, mild or indirect words to replace more accurate or direct ones. Social taboos in most English-speaking communities and Chinese-speaking communities stretch from those concerning body effluvia and reproductive process to those associated with body parts and death. Euphemism is used in order to avoid mentioning or talking about taboos that often result in anxiety, embarrassment and public shame. In showing politeness, there is what is referred to as "saving face" which must be taken into account in order to allow communication to continue. Since "everyone needs to keep face in communication, such 'mutual' self-interest requires that conversational participants maintain both their own face and their integrators' face. But many verbal interactions have potential threats to

face". Therefore, communicators manage to weaken face threatening situations by using a series of strategies which include euphemism.

This researcher is of the opinion that the present study may have benefited from the comparison of English and Chinese euphemisms if euphemism was investigated from that perspective. However, the current study has still benefitted greatly from the previous study in, for instance, the definition of euphemism as a way of communication and related it to Tshivenḓa in terms of belief, attitude, custom, behaviour and social habits which all contribute to culture. The communicative function of euphemism in the comparative study is to avoid taboo, show politeness, keeping face and use of pleasant, mild or indirect words to replace more accurate or direct ones which also applies to the current study. Politeness and 'face saving' are some of the theories which have been used in the previous study and have also been utilised in the current research of a socio-pragmatic analysis of Tshivenḓa euphemisms – as are some of the above categories of euphemisms.

2.6   STUDIES OF EUPHEMISM IN SOME AFRICAN COUNTRIES

A study, entitled: *A Semantic Analysis Of Sesotho Non-Referring Expressions*, was carried out by Liketso (2001) to explain how non-referring expressions acquire meaning. The research questions for this study were:

- *How can Sesotho non-referring expressions be categorized?*
- *In what ways do non-referring expressions get meaning?*
- *How do people communicate through the use of these expressions?*

According to Mwanambuyu (2011:47), this topic came about as a way of informing children about things which are believed to be taboo and which they may find incomprehensible. Liketso (2001) found that euphemisms are made up of referring expressions in Sesotho. She gives an example of the word ghost, "*sepoko*", as referring to someone who was known to be dead yet seen alive at night. She maintains that there is a relationship between the word and the object where the word is a referring expression and the object is the referent. Non-referring expressions acquire meaning by association with the objects or individuals that they

refer to - depending on interlocutors' experience, i.e., shared context. Speakers of Sesotho are able to communicate with non-referring expressions because they have a shared knowledge of these words. For example, the word "*Lihele*" for hell creates a schema or a picture in one's head. According to Liketso (2001), in semantic theory non-referring expressions are not wrong but they have a truth condition of being either true or false and failure would lead to the occurrence of misunderstandings. It may, therefore, be true that euphemisms have to do with a shared context and background knowledge of the speakers.

In her conclusion, Liketso (2001) observes that Sesotho non-referring expressions acquire meaning by association with the objects or individuals that they refer to - done on the basis of the interlocutors' shared experience. In addition, sentences that contain non-referring expressions are considered to have truth conditions; thus, they could be evaluated as true or false. She alludes to the fact that speakers of Sesotho are able to communicate using non referring expressions because they have a common knowledge of these words. However, in cases where the speaker and hearer does not have the same referent for an expression, they have to explain their perceptions of such terms to each other, otherwise communication is likely to fail.

These findings are applicable to this research on the socio-pragmatic analysis of Tshivenḓa euphemisms where references to certain words and phrases will have to be dictated in a shared context and background knowledge between or among speakers. The current study could have been investigated using the Semantic Theory but had a different dimension of interest for the researcher. Liketso (2001:44) examines taboo, in comprehension, interlocutors' experience and shared knowledge and this study investigated how applicable all these could be to the socio-pragmatic analysis of Tshivenḓa euphemisms.

Another study of euphemism referred to by Mwanambuyu (2011:47), *The Semantic Interpretation of Sesotho Idiomatic Expressions,* was carried out by Mohoanyane in 1995 to elicit the effects of these expressions on ordinary speech. A particular focus was placed on figures of speech, such as metaphors, hyperbole and euphemisms. For instance, in the expression 'Thabo runs fast' ('*Thabo kesefefane')* Thabo is an aeroplane which is an idiomatic expression.

In her research, Mohoanyani looks at idiomatic expressions using semantic theory; she points out that Idiomatic expressions have hidden meanings which, in communication, could lead to misunderstandings if the hearer interpreted these expressions literally (Mwanambuyu, 2011:47). Therefore, interlocutors need to have a common ground for communication to succeed. The use of idiomatic expressions could mean using ambiguous expressions where two images are reflected in the hearer's mind. This is a clear testimony as to why these expressions are used in certain domains where interlocutors are able to understand one another.

From Mohoanyane's findings, it is evident that the use of certain language is not meant for outsiders. The use of idiomatic expression may result in ambiguous expressions where two images are reflected in the hearer's mind. Therefore, these expressions may cause confusion and a misunderstanding which could lead to a breakdown in communication. It is advisable that where there may be problems brought about by the misinterpretation of expressions context should be provided or the speaker should use plain language which is easily understood by everyone participating in the conversation (Mwanambuyu, 2011:47).

Euphemisms may be regarded as idiomatic expressions because they have a hidden meaning which may lead to misunderstanding if the hearer misinterprets these expressions literally. Therefore, in situations where interlocutors do not have shared knowledge of the usage of euphemisms, no communication would take place, or miscommunication is likely to happen. Mohoanyane's (1995) study benefitted this study of a socio-pragmatic analysis of Tshivenḓa euphemisms in the sense that this study was strongly concerned with context and common ground as important factors to understanding what is said by interlocutors.

In 2000 Leboela wrote an article entitled, "*Sesotho Euphemisms*" which was published in the National University of Sesotho (NUL) Journal of Research, Vol 8. The purpose of the investigation was to show how euphemisms fit into the general theory of euphemism; how they offer some insight into the Basotho culture; and the range of euphemisms that exist in Sesotho. However, Laboela's arrangement was not in a dictionary format; the euphemisms were grouped or categorized under general headings such as "drunkenness", "flattery" and "madness". The Sesotho

euphemisms attached to the headword were literally translated and a brief explanation of the background to the euphemism was given with - at times - a suggestion as to what type of euphemism it was, such as one of "understatement" or of "abstraction".

Leboela (2000:45) quotes Rawson (1981) who points out that "all languages have euphemisms for they are used as society's basic lingua non-franca and without them normal everyday life would become impossible." Her article catalogues a selection of Sesotho euphemisms; it shows how they fit into the general theory of euphemism; and how they offer some insight into Basotho culture - most of which were suggested by students at the National University of Lesotho (NUL). Although Leboela accepts the basic definition of euphemism given by Watson and Hill (1985) that it is a "rendering of harsh, unpleasant, blunt terms in mild, inoffensive or quaint language", she extends this definition of euphemism as being a form of hyperbole to give people or events added status, such as when a young child "graduates" from nursery school - as author's eldest child did, complete with mortar–board, cap and gown!

She agrees that most euphemisms have to do with what Redfern (1994:56) refers to as the "prime subjects of anxiety and shame" which have been identified as "death", "the supernatural", "sexuality", "bodily functions" and "illness". However, although these subjects are regarded as prime ones, they may vary from society to society, She queries whether many other cultures have euphemisms for a "lazy woman" - as is the case among the Basotho. Leboela's (2000) research findings reveal that euphemisms are extended within a society in the sense that people of different social standing have their own prejudices as to what should and should not be euphemised. She suggests that the differences between euphemisms related to circumlocution, proverb, idiom and metaphor seem to be fuzzy and proves it, especially, to be true in Sesotho. She maintains that the Basotho have a deep appreciation of proverb and idiom as there is a substantial amount of published data pertaining to Sesotho proverbs and idioms. However, as far as she is aware, no comparable effort has been put into investigating Sesotho euphemisms as a concept due to the fact that euphemisms are not differentiated from proverbs and idioms.

According to one of Leboela's NUL participants, euphemisms are referred to as "*maelana*" in Sesotho, but "*maelana*" is translated into English as "idioms". General comments made by other participants about their understanding of euphemisms suggest that euphemisms - even though they are not widely used in Sesotho – are, indeed, found in written and spoken Sesotho. Furthermore, three participants independently proposed that euphemisms were mostly used by elderly women for gossiping so that children could not make out what wasbeing said, suggesting that the adults were trying to hide information by using circumlocution in their euphemisms - a practice used by most elders worldwide. For example, describing Ntate as "*hokhora*" so that children do not know that Nthate likes a drop of "*joala*" now and again. This means that Sesotho euphemisms are, largely, used for showing respect. However, one participant claimed that among the Basotho euphemisms were used mostly for both respect and mockery purposes. However, there were also euphemisms that could be referred to as inevitable - people cannot do without them. Moreover, there was the suggestion by one participant that the explicit appreciation of the concept of euphemism was fairly new among the Basotho as these have always been embedded in the language:

> It appears that they were very few, if any euphemisms in old Sesotho for there were old place names…such as *Libono* (buttocks) and *Maine*, which comes from *hoima* (to fall pregnant), subjects which are euphemised in contemporary Sesotho (Leboela, 2000:45).

According to Leboela (2000:47), in Sesotho positive euphemisms are a late development in the language and many of these are direct translations from English, used mostly by young people.

In the category of job titles, Leboela (2000:51) says that people who do manual labour are looked down upon by the rest of society; the very titles of their positions have been derogatory. Therefore, in more recent years an attempt has been made to uplift their status and the validity of the job they do by inventing new titles for these positions. The same has happened in the Basotho culture. For instance, "*Operaitaealemati*" refers to a "sliding door operator" and the Basotho refer to such a person as a "*kontae*" - one responsible for opening sliding doors of minibuses or taxis for people to get on and off. "*Kontae*" is a Sothoform for "conductor" which is

seen as inferior and people doing this work would rather be referred to as "sliding door operators" because they feel that this description has the hint of a skilled job.

Another recent euphemism as expounded by Leboela (2000:52) for "house-maids" is "*mo-engineer*" and "*oafatse"/lithaela*" literally translates as a "floor" or "tile engineer". Maids use the title of "*mo-engineer*" as it appears to uplift their status and sounds as though there is a skill attached to the work rather than just being a mere maid. "*M'e Mary*" is another title for maid which has been used longer and which most participants suggested was a common euphemism for a maid but it would only be used by the employer - not by other people. "*M'e Mary*" was used largely by expatriate employers because they found African names difficult to pronounce, so they made their lives easier by referring to their employees as "Mary". One of the NUL participants was particularly insightful about positive euphemisms often being a direct translation from English, such as that "*operaita*" for "engineer" and ("*li)thaele*" are words borrowed by Sesotho from English.

In Sotho culture husbands and wives may address one another rather formally by their actual names, John or Jane, or by the generic terms: "*monnaoaka*" (my husband) and "*mosalioaka*" (my wife). These various ways of addressing one's spouse are considered more intimate and/or polite and might be seen as euphemisms. In Sesotho a husband can also be referred to with reference to the names of his children, especially by female in-laws to avoid using his actual name. This means that a name used for a husband also depends on the sex of a newly-born child, such as "*Rangoanana*" (girl child) and "*Ramoshanyana*" (boy child). Finally, there is "*earathangpatsi*" which literally means "one who cuts wood" and mean the husband as this was considered a man's job among the Sotho. In this society, Leboela (2000:53) says that a secret lover of the wife may replace the husband in his absence and says he has "come to chop wood" ("*rathapantsi*").

Sesotho euphemisms appear to show - at least at the category level - that there is little difference between Sesotho and English euphemisms as both languages cover topics, such as drunkenness madness and gossiping. Leboela's recommendations for future studies suggest her particular interest in the remark made by Redfern (1994) that precise areas of taboo are culture and era specific but the urge to veto is

timeless and she would like to consider this remark in the light of the Sesotho euphemism. This recommendation has assisted this researcher with the present study in the sense that Tshivenḓa euphemisms could be regarded as used to evade taboo or as a politeness strategy. The present study has benefitted greatly from that of Leboela in the sense that it stimulated the thought of analysing Tshivenḓa euphemisms by identifying and categorising them in line with her study; equating them with those used in English; determining their social significance; and establishing whether or not the use of euphemism was related to social factors, such as age, gender, status, occupation and many other specifications cited in her dissertation. By and large, the reasons for using euphemism in Sesotho are more or less similar to those of the current study and, therefore, this research report was valid and useful for the this study.

Mukonde (2009) carried out a pragmatic analysis in which she applied a cooperative principle to investigate the pragmatic dimension of requests in Bemba. Mukonde believes that in pragmatics 'face' is the person's public image and she goes further to explain how people arrive at, or infer, meanings which are not expressly stated. She looks at the politeness principle which she defines as referring to the "proper social conduct and tactful consideration of others. What counts as polite in any given context was socio culturally and historically determined" (Mukonde, 2009: 7). In quoting Asher (1994), Mukonde goes on to say that in linguistic pragmatics, politeness has to do with the way in which linguistic action is expressed. She quotes Yule (1997:134) who points out that, pragmatic politeness is "showing awareness of another person's face."

In terms of her research questions, Mukonde (2009:13) wanted to explore the following:

- Various linguistic forms that are used to express requests in Bemba.
- Categories of request strategies that are used in Bemba,
- How often do these categories of request strategies occur in Bemba?
- How do request strategies in Bemba relate to social factors, such as age, gender, status, social distance, and authority?

- Whether request strategies in Bemba support Searle and Brown and Levinson's theoretical approaches?

After collecting data from a hundred and fifty participants who were selected from different social groups in terms of occupation, economic status, age and statusin two study areas, Kitwe and Chililabombwe, Mukonde (2009) research's findings suggest the following:

(i)   When a speaker is inferior to an addressee, s/he tends to be deferential and indirect in making a request.

(ii)   In some cases request-making is accompanied by non-linguistic features, such as gestures, if the speaker is inferior to the hearer.

(iii)   In terms of influence of status, the analysis of the distribution of the main request strategy types in the situation under survey revealed that conventional indirectness is clearly the preferred strategy type for the situation in which both interlocutors have equal social status and in a request situation when the speaker's social status is inferior to the hearer's.

(iv)   In the requests where the speaker is superior to the hearer, impositives dominate.

(v)   The data analysis reveals, in general, that Searle's Speech Act Theory and Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theories - even though they were developed and based on English - also apply to Bemba.

She recommends that further study be undertaken to identify other factors that may affect request-making in Bemba and that the information gleaned from this study be disseminate to researchers investigating other speech acts and politeness formulae. It was from her recommendations that the ideas of speech acts and politeness formulae integrated in this study as another aspect of investigation. The theories which Mukonde used, which included Searle's (1975) Indirectness Communicative Theory Speech Act and Brown and Levinson's (1987) Politeness Theory, to carry out the pragmatic analysis of requests in Bemba also proved beneficial to this study of a socio-pragmatic analysis of Tshivenḓa euphemisms.

2.7 LANGUAGE, CULTURE AND EUPHEMISM

Rawson (1981:2) posits that euphemisms are part of society's basic *lingua franca* and, as such, they are outward and visible signs of our inward anxieties, conflicts, fears and shame. It is important to show the relationship between culture and euphemism and language and euphemism.

2.7.1 Euphemism and culture

Euphemism, as an indispensable part of every language, is the mirror of morality, customs, politics, life style and background, etc. Euphemism cannot exist without social culture (Genevieve, 2012:31). In any modern society euphemism plays an important role as a universally effective means of communication. Euphemism, as a cultural phenomenon, attracts the interest of those at home and abroad. It may be said that - to some extent - euphemism is the mirror of culture. In other words, being part of a language, euphemisms bear the mark of culture (Alejandra, 2010:1). Therefore, it should be acknowledged that the content of euphemistic expressions will vary from culture to culture due to their different histories, values and customs. In cross-cultural communication, misinterpretation could occur as each culture attaches its own symbolic value to its words and expressions. Communicators, therefore, use pleasant-sounding euphemisms to avoid making a situation embarrassing or making the addressee feel uncomfortable. By using euphemisms they tend to express a hidden "negative meaning" in a more colourful, elegant way in order to create a relaxed and harmonious conversational atmosphere and to narrow the distance between people.

Culturally, euphemisms vary according to gender, age, identity, etc. (Alejandra, 2010:1). For instance, the word "toilet" in men's term is "to rear"; for women it is "powder my nose" and in children language it is "to go to the pot and make number one."

Differences in cultural background also have an impact on euphemisms. In China or Japan, the society respects the elderly as they believe that age is a symbol of wisdom and rich experience, whereas in Western cultures age is considered to be

useless and so the word "old" is replaced by phrases, such as "getting on years", "senior citizen", "second childhood" and "the sunset years."

In most cultures talking about disease and death raises a feeling of fear. Therefore, it is possible to hear words or phrases, such as "flu" instead of influenza and "to be in a bad way" meaning that a person is seriously ill.

In the realm of politics, third world countries are called developing countries or developing nations. If a spokesperson for international disputes voices his/her government's position saying "we cannot remain indifferent to", it means that the government will certainly become involved.

According to Harper (2010:2), euphemism is a double-edge sword which has existed since ancient times. It fulfils an essential role in society, reflecting social values, people's moral character and general trends. The relationship between euphemism and culture is obvious: euphemism, as a cultural linguistic product, displays its multiple mapping relations with culture; it changes along with the development of society; and the use of euphemism varies with the variation of the context. Euphemism is a reflection of culture and an understanding of the culture underlying a euphemism reveals the meaning conveyed.

Many scholars, such as Maltz and Borker (1982:34), use culture to interpret different speech patterns in different languages. Based on research in sociology and psychology, they propose that the differences between languages are caused by their respective communication sub-cultures. An example is Yuan's (2006:78) study which compares English euphemisms and Chinese euphemisms by analysing their linguistic and cultural characteristics. His study indicates that there are similarities as well as differences in the use of English and Chinese euphemisms. His findings reveal that both languages make use of metabolic features of euphemism where a word is given with varied euphemistic appellations. Some English and Chinese euphemisms are similar in meaning although they are different in terms of cultural background. Yuan (2006:78) concludes that through euphemism one can get to know and understand different religious cultures, values, historical backgrounds and way of thinking of the British and the Chinese.

2.7.2 Language and Euphemism

Wardhaugh (1986:229) believes that language is the vehicle of euphemism as "language is used to avoid saying certain things as well as to express them." It can, therefore, be said that where there is language, there is euphemism. Pointing out the close relationship between language and euphemism, Rawson (1981:3) suggests that euphemisms are embedded so deeply in our language that few of us, even those who pride themselves as being plain-spoken, ever get through a day without using them. He argues that the relation between language and euphemism is so intrinsically close that it is impossible to study one without an analysis of the other.

As euphemism is a form of language, one can identify euphemism in family talks, official meetings, literary words, scribbles on walls, telephone conversations, television programmes, letters, cards, advertisement, etc. Figures of speech, such as hyperbole, metaphor, understatement, circumlocution and many others, are commonly found in the use of euphemisms. As euphemism has grown and developed, it has not only expanded and enriched English vocabulary but it has also contributed to the appropriate and effective use of the English language and other languages. Furthermore, euphemistic effect enables smooth, successful communication. In the context of language teaching, Alkire (2002:34) presents a brief background of the use of euphemism in English along with a short glossary of common words and some of the current and most popular euphemisms. He then provides a lesson that introduces learners to euphemism and explores why, in Garner's (1988:56) words, euphemisms "thrive as much today as ever."

2.8 THE BASIS FOR THE USE OF EUPHEMISM

There two primary instigators, taboos and politeness, which it is agreed are the most important motivators for the use of euphemisms, but there are other motives for creating euphemisms as well. Neuman and Silver (1983:13-14) maintain that the motives for euphemising are as diverse and universal as the range of human emotions. However, until the 20th century, taboo and the superstitious belief in the consequences of breaking them, were the main reasons for employing euphemisms. Pesola (1999:19) agrees with Neuman and Silver (1983) when he says that it was

believed that if someone made the mistake of uttering a taboo word such as "bear" or "God", this would lead to personal suffering or even death. Nowadays, the overwhelming majority of euphemisms are motivated by politeness, as we do not want to embarrass other people by talking about unpleasant subjects in public.

We all use different types of euphemisms in discussing matters that we find akward to talk about. Usually, we do not even notice the euphemisms we use as, with frequent usage, many of them have become an indistinguishable part of our vocabulary. According to Allan and Burridge (1991:4-10), the strategies we employ in choosing the type and the tone of the euphemisms depend on the speaker's attitudes and preferences; the speaker's relationship with the listener/s; and their relationship with the issue being euphemised - which is often culture bound. In addition, the situation, the context and the place where the discussion happens can affect the choice of euphemism. In written texts - at least the text types - the type of audience and the purpose of the text have a strong influence on the variety of euphemisms that are used. However, euphemisms are still often about taboos and subjects that, for one reason or another, we do not want to discuss.

2.8.1 Euphemism and taboo

The source of euphemisms and the motivation for their use can vary. However, there is a general tendency that euphemisms are motivated by different taboos in society. Maḓadzhe (2010:181) defines taboo as "the avoidance among a particular group of people, of particular actions or words for religious or social reasons, a Tongan word meaning forbidden." He further explains that a taboo is a strong social prohibition or ban which relates to any area of human activity or social custom declared as sacred and forbidden. The breaking of a taboo is usually considered objectionable or abhorrent by society. Maḓadzhe (2010:181) states that in present-day discourse, taboo is synonymous with words, such as ban, disallowance, inhibition, interdiction and prohibition.

In essence, linguistic taboos are nothing but forbidden words and expressions - words and expressions that must not be used or spoken. In most instances these words are used to insult people, describe sex and body parts and their functions. It is

for this reason that euphemisms are a convenient way in which to express words that are forbidden or that must not be used or spoken.

Every culture has its own topics that are forbidden and should not be talked about directly. Maḓadzhe (2010), quoting Salami and Awolowo (2006:2), maintains that what may be taboo in one language may not be so in another language as taboos are defined by culture. Many words that are taboo in African languages are expressed in the normal everyday English. Educated African people will avoid using some words in their mother tongues and use English instead because the English words are acceptable. As an example Maḓadzhe (2010:181) explains that it is taboo to say "*murundo*" in Tshivenḓa while it is acceptable to use "urine" as its English equivalent.

Pesola (1999:21) acknowledges that topics which become taboo usually concentrate on a few specific areas in society. He emphasises that there is a lot of variation between different cultures according to how strongly they feel about, and react to, the topic in question. A complete list of typical tabooed subjects, based on the studies by Andersson (1986:79) and Mencken (1982: 355-367), are the following:

- Death
- Love, sex, prostitution and unconventional sexual behaviour, such as incest
- Human body and bodily functions: physical differences and mental handicaps
- Women, menstruation and pregnancy
- Ethnic, sexual and other minorities with lower prestige
- Animals - often mythical and dangerous animals, like bear and wolf
- Certain words relating to religion, such as "God"
- Names and kinship words
- Professions with lower prestige, including undertaker and janitor
- Aspects of war and prison
- Alcohol, drinking and drugs
- Toilets, doctors, hospitals and nursing homes for the elderly.

Many of the items listed above are there because they represent what people are simply afraid of. Ullman (1962:205) states that seminal works divide taboos into three categories "according to the psychological motivation behind them."

Fear has motivated different taboos concerning the speaking the names of certain supernatural beings; among others are God, the devil - and names of certain animals. Hott (2012:27) suggests that the taboo underlying euphemistic references to God emerge from both respect and fear. He uses examples, such as the Lord, the King of Kings and the All-Mighty to illustrate his argument. Maḓadzhe (2010:183) believes that linguistic taboos play an important role in promoting and preserving the status of chieftainship in African languages. In Tshivenḓa one is not allowed to call a chief by his/her first name as to do so would be tantamount to undermining his/her image and authority as a chief. Maḓadzhe (2010:183) argues that the chief is respected because s/he is the link between the tribe and its ancestors or gods. Calling the chief by his/her first name is an unbelievable insult for which the culprit could pay a fine in the form of money or cattle. A chief is to be called either by his/her praise name or totem. Examples of praises in Tshivenḓa - as outlined by Madadzhe (2010:183), include the following:

- *Tshidadamuhali*: You are a fearsome hero.
- *Mbilalume*: You are a male rock rabbit.
- *Vhaṋevhamavu*: Owner of the soil/land.
- *Tsha u fuka natsha u a dza*: You are everything.

Paradoxically, euphemistic references to the devil are friendly and humorous in an attempt to make the devil look more familiar and less frightening. Hughes (2000:44) lists a few examples, such as 'Old Nick' and 'Lord of Flies'. As for animals, examples include bear, lion and tiger that are often referred to by using euphemistic references. In Africa, for instance, the lion is referred to as 'the king of the jungle' and in various cultures names of animals are used as praises and totems, especially referring to chiefs. As examples to support his argument Maḓadzhe (2010:184) identifies these praises and totems in Northern Sotho:

- *Sebatasamariri:* The beast of prey with a mane.
- *Tau' a Tswako*': The lion of Tswako.
- *Kolobe:* Warthog.
- *Tau:* Lion.
- *Nare:* Buffalo.

Direct reference to unpleasant topics is avoided. Such delicate topics include death, disease, physical and mental defect and criminal action. The expression 'passed away' is generally used today in most political and social situations to refer to death. According to Hughes (2000:45), death is often referred to as a "metaphorical journey in comforting variants and traditional forms such as…passing on, going to one's Maker [and] joining the majority." Other less-dignified ways of referring to death include 'resigning one's being', 'moving into upper management' and 'no longer eligible for the census.'

Sex, certain body parts and their functions and swearing fall under the category of propriety. People make use of ingenuous ways to avoid making reference to going to the toilet even when they are with friends or other acquaintances. Furthermore, movies and television, for example, often present instances of women politeness when women often say in restaurants that they need to 'go and powder their noses' or that they 'need to freshen up' when the need to use the toilet arises. Hughes (2000:46) adds that there are also a number of different ways to refer to having sex, including 'sleep with', 'go to bed with' and 'make love' rather than direct reference, depending on culture. As far as swearing is concerned, people often use 'minced oaths'. These expressions are based on profanities, but the profanities have been changed to remove the inappropriate characteristics of the original utterance. Among the most common expressions are 'freaking' for fucking, 'gosh' for God, 'heck' for hell and 'darn' for damn. Maḓadzhe (2010:184) concurs with Hughes (2000) when saying that swearwords abound in English and have been taboos since times immemorial. The 'f-word' and 'b-word' are still taboo and for one to use them would mean that one lacks manners or upbringing. Swearing of this kind is also not encouraged in Tshivenḓa; as in English, the use of obscenity in Tshivenḓa leads people to think that one is uncivilized, immature, cruel, disrespectful and sometimes simply an imbecile. Veith (2003:1) suggests that swearing is 'an affront to anyone with dignity, self-respect and intelligence.

2.8.2 Politeness and euphemism

Politeness is now given as the most important motivator for the use of euphemism. As explained in detail in the previous section, we usually understand politeness as behaviour that enforces good manners and, more importantly, consideration for others. A strong desire to avoid offending others with words can be explained with reference to the concept of 'face' which involves the process of maintaining 'face'. The expression "to save face' or 'to lose face' are generally known in many cultures and face-saving is a typical act which euphemism are able to facilitate. Generally speaking, face work can be said to represent the social skills of an individual as a member of a social circle. Goffman (1967:14) contends that social interaction is generally oriented towards maintaining face and that all members of a social circle are expected to have some knowledge of face-maintaining acts and their use.

Face is something that can be lost or maintained and in interaction it has to be constantly considered. Face is the "positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact" (Goffman, 1967:5). Brown and Levinson (1987:61) based their definition of face on Goffman's work and maintain that it is the public self-image that everyone lays claim to and which consists of two related aspects:

(a) **Negative face**: the basic claim for freedom of action and freedom from imposition.
(b) **Positive face**: positive self-image and the desire that this self-image should be appreciated and approved of by those who interact.

These definitions suggest that all adult members of a society have the capacity to reason; that they have 'face'; and that they know others have it as well. Like face, politeness can be similarly divided into positive politeness and negative politeness. Positive politeness is oriented towards the positive face of the hearers, i.e., the positive self-image they claims for themselves. This is usually realised by the speaker showing that at least in some ways s/he shares the hearers' opinions and needs and appreciates them. Negative face, on the other hand, is oriented toward satisfying the hearers' negative face, i.e., the basic need to maintain claims of self-territory and self-determination. This means that the speaker will not interfere with

the hearers' freedom of action and shows appreciation of the hearers' negative face (Brown & Levinson, 1987:70).

To sum up, face deals mostly with such feelings as embarrassment, humiliation and appreciation and how these feelings can be ameliorated or enhanced, and the choosing of a strategy to be employed in doing so. Allan and Burridge (1991:4) are of the opinion that euphemisms are developed and defined in reference to concerns about face, which are of great importance in all language interchange. An individual's face is something that is always seen in relation to other people's behaviour and it is evaluated according to the expected and socially desirable behaviour of a particular group and/or situation (Brown & Levinson, 1987:61). Whenever we say something, we must consider whether what we are going to say will damage, maintain or enhance our own face and, equally, we must consider what the utterance's effect will be on others.

According to Goffman (1967:18), if a person feels her/his face threatened or wants to maintain someone else's face, s/he is likely to resort to different avoidance processes. It is possible to avoid situations and contacts where face threats are likely to occur by using defensive actions to keep off topics and activities that might be inconsistent with the face of the other person/s. Any protective manoeuvres include politeness and respect to others by being discrete; certain facts will be omitted; euphemism and doubletalk will be the order of the day; and replies and phrases will be formulated with careful ambiguity so that the speakers' and the hearers' face will be preserved.

2.9 CONSTRUCTION OF EUPHEMISMS

According to Warren (1992:132), there are four main ways in which euphemisms may be constructed.

2.9.1 Word formation devices of the language in question

These devices include the following.

2.9.1.1 Compounding

Compounding is the combining of two individually innocuous words to form a euphemism for an otherwise unacceptable term such as 'hand job' (masturbation) and 'comfort *station*' (toilet).

2.9.1.2 Derivation

Derivation is the modification of a word to form a printable modern English word (Rawson, 1981) such as 'fellatio' (oral sex) - a modification of a Latin term *'fellare'*, to suck.

2.9.1.3 Acronyms

Acronyms are formed by combining the initials of a group of words. For example, SAPFU, a military blunder, for *Surpassing All Previous Fuck Ups* and SNAFU - *Situation Normal All Fucked Up*, a military euphemism for a possible catastrophic event.

2.9.1.4 Blends

A blend is a word formed from parts of two words or more other words. For example:

      Smoke + *fog= 'smog'*

      Moto*r* + *hotel= 'motel'*

      Spoon + *fork= 'spork'.*

2.9.1.5 Onomatopoeia

This is a word that phonetically imitates, resembles or suggests the source of the sound that it describes, like 'bonk' (sexual intercourse), here the sound of 'things' hitting together during the sexual act is employed to refer to the act itself.

2.9.2 Loan words

Common loan words that are used to construct euphemisms include the following.

French: '*mot*' (cunt), '*affair(e)*' (extramarital engagement) and '*lingerie*' (underwear).

Latin: '*faeces*' (excrement) and '*anus*' (ass-hole).

Spanish: '*cojones*' (testicles).

2.9.3 Phonemic modification

The form of an offensive word can be modified and altered according to certain rules of phonemic modification. Common examples of phonemic replacement are 'divil', 'divel', for devil. 'Gad', 'gosh' and 'golly' for God; 'fug' for fuck. Phonemic modification also makes use of back slang, rhyming slang, phonemic replacement and abbreviation (shortening). In back slang words are spelled from right to left as in 'epar' for rape and 'enob' for bone or erect penis. Words are reversed to avoid explicit mention. An example of rhyming slang is 'Bristols' for breasts - a shortened and euphemised version of 'Bristol cities' (titties) which becomes a 'semi-concealing device'. Phonemic replacement occurs in 'shoot' (shit), i.e., one vowel of the offensive term is replaced with double 'o'. Abbreviation (shortening): 'eff' as in 'eff off!' (fuck (off).

Allan and Burridge (1991:15) use the term remodelling to describe different phonemic alterations. According Pesola (1999:5), the first three constructions of euphemisms are said to be derived from formal innovation. This means that with the exception of loan words, they can be formed according to certain rules - usually phonemic or lexical - and, more importantly, that they do not involve any sense changes to the already established meanings of words or expressions.

2.9.4 Semantic innovation

This is an established sense of a word or a combination of words. Euphemisms help people cope with troublesome situations and many of them can act as a source of amusement. If a euphemism is funny, it is likely to be remembered and gain popularity among language users; this happens especially if the euphemism is adopted by the mass media and is, therefore, available to a larger audience. Semantic innovations are formed by devices causing changes to the established meanings of words and expressions. The following framework - based on that of Warren (1992) and Allan and Burridge (1991) - shows that euphemisms derived from semantic innovation can be classified according to relatively clear rules. For the purpose of this study only six types of euphemisms - based on semantic innovation - will be discussed briefly, namely, particularisation, implication, figurative expression, reversal, understatement and overstatement.

2.9.4.1 Particularisation

Particularisation is a frequently used device for creating euphemisms. Pesola (1999:7) defines particularisation as the use of a general term which, in the context where it is used, has to be particularised to make sense, In other words, particularisation is the selection of a specific sense for an expression. For example, the sentence, *She is still innocent,* can be understood to mean "she is not quality" or it could be particularised to mean "she is sexually inexperienced." The sentence, *Her satisfaction pleases me,* could be understood to mean 'her happiness' but it could be particularised to mean "her orgasm pleases me." The meaning of the words 'innocent' and 'satisfaction' are, thus, context dependent. In particularisation the interpreter or the receiver of the message will have to use his general knowledge of the world, the situation and the context at hand in search of the missing information. The interpreter is guided by the insistence that the "end result must be a referent or some referents which fit the context" (Warren, 1992:140).

2.9.4.2 Implication

According to Pesola (1992:8) quoting Warren (1992:131,143-146), implication is a phenomenon caused by a clear causal connection between the contextual and the conventional referents. For example, the phrase, *he went home in a box,* used to mean that he died shows a clear antecedent-consequent relationship: **if** one goes home in a coffin (established sense), **then** one must be dead (new euphemistic sense). However, the relationship does not always have to be that of antecedent-consequent; the roles can be reversed. In a few cases the conventional sense can present the consequent and the novel sense the antecedent. For example, the phrase, *to bend an elbow,* used to mean to drink: **then** one bends one's arm (established sense), **if** one drinks (new euphemistic sense). Fairly often the conventional sense and the novel sense can equally be either consequent or antecedent. For example the phrase *do one's bit*, if/then one does one's duty (established sense), then/if one dies in service (new euphemistic sense).

Implication is extremely vague because the intended sense has to be concluded by the interpreter from the context and the situation where it is used. Implication differs from particularisation in the sense that, for example, in anutterance *inner city* can

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mean both inner parts of the city and ghetto or slum. However, in particularising, *sand-box* cannot be used in an utterance to mean any sand-box and the sand box used as a cat's toilet. In other words, particularisations cannot have secondary senses whereas implications can. The second difference between particularisation and implication is that with implications a novel set of referents does not need to be properly included in the conventional set of referents. A *slum,* for example, is not necessarily a city centre, but *dope* has to be drug (Pesola, 1999:9).

2.9.4.3   Figurative expressions

In this study metaphor and metonymy, along with idioms, will be discussed under the heading "Figurative expressions" - as suggested by Allan and Burridge (1991). However, some of the main differences between the three will be presented as they can be used to explain why a word or expressions is, or is not, a euphemism.

Ingo (1990:245) broadly defines idioms as fixed expressions which have meanings that cannot be concluded from their individual words but are often formed with metaphoric elements. As a type of euphemism, metaphor can be frequently found in almost all types of texts. Allan and Burridge (1991) choose simply to call metaphors "figurative expressions". Warren (1992:131-132,146-147) narrows this definition by using the Aristotelian view of metaphor, resulting in metaphors being formed in a process which is similar to that of forming particularisations. Again, we are dealing with the conventional and the contextual referents and the arguments we associate with an expression. This means that the metaphor obtains its figurative qualities because of some common property between the conventional and the contextual referent. Levinson (1983:161) maintains that the interpretation of a metaphor must rely on our general ability to reason analogically. For example, in the phrase: *He is a mole,* the association between the word 'mole' and its metaphoric meaning, 'secret agent', can be concluded from the common property that both the contextual and the conventional referent share, i.e., both the animal and the secret agent work under cover*.* Similarly, the word *headlights* can be used as a metaphor for breasts, as they have a similar shape, degree for noticeability and positioning. According to Levinson (1983:163) and Kerry (1997:34) the interpretation process is referred to as the "mapping" of some features from one lexical item to another.

The most important feature of metaphors in this study is their ability to stand as names for the things that are otherwise inexpressible. However, all metaphors are by no means euphemisms. For example, in the expression: *She is a sunny girl,* the word sunny is figurative but there is nothing euphemistic about it. Metaphors are a very flexible means of creating euphemisms as the only limit to the number of metaphors is the human imagination.

Metonymy is another figurative expression that can be used to construct euphemisms. Allan and Burridge (1991:14) define metonymy in terms of substituting words with other words, including one-for-one, general for specific and part-for-whole substitutions. Warren's (1992:149) more complicated definition of metonym is that it is a word that is applied to referents that are not included in the conventional set of referents in some other way. The relation may be causal substitution (*heartburn* used for jealousy), whole parts (*nether regions* for genitals), locative (*bathroom* for WC) or equative (killer-*weed* for PCP-drug). Samoskaite (2011:16) explains metonym as that otherwise called 'general-for-specific'; this category includes the maximally general 'it' (sex) and the contextually dependent 'thing' (male/female sexual organs, etc.).

Implications and metonyms are often mistaken as the same thing even though there are some differences between the two. According to Pesola (1999:12), implications start off with literal, secondary senses whereas the metonymic senses are non-literal senses which do not exist together with the senses from which they are derived. Implications may take the form of a verb, noun or an adjective while metonyms are almost always nouns. The following example illustrates the relationship between implication and metonym. In the sentence: "*What our business needs is some muscle*", 'muscle' is a metonym. The interpretation of 'muscle'can be paraphrased as that which muscle produces. i.e., power. In the sentence: "*We need muscular doormen for this restaurant.*", the word 'muscular' is an implication since it simply implies strong.

According to Warren (1992:152), the difference between a metaphor and a metonymy is "that the connector in the case of metaphors is a resemblance type of relation, which may involve more than one property, whereas in the case of metonyms there is only one connector." She continues by saying that in creating

metaphors and metonyms at least one of the defining features of the established meaning is violated. It follows from this that the interpreter will think of the new referent as an unorthodox one and the new meaning as transferred or figurative.

2.9.4.4   Reversal (irony)

Pesola (1999:13) believes that reversal can most often be found in cases where a person expresses "something bad" by referring to it with its opposite. Usually, this means that a conventional meaning of a word fits our favoured contextual referent provided we reverse it, i.e., *huge* means (contextually) unusually small or *early* means late. Other examples include *blessed* (damned) and *enviable disease* (syphilis), both of which enable reference to something bad by using opposites. Reversals are euphemisms which are usually carefully planned and, like many euphemisms, they are extremely context dependant. The tone of reversals is often ironic as they place the emphasis on the opposite concept.

2.9.4.5   Understatement (litotes)

Based on Warren's (1992:152-153) definition, understatements are instances where the conventional meaning of a word fits the favoured contextual referent - provided that the degree to which some feature of meaning applies is made stronger. For example, (drug) *habit* used for drug addiction. Examples like *sleep* (die), *deed* (act of murder/rape) and *not very bright* (thick/stupid) fall into this category.

2.9.4.6   Overstatement (hyperbole)

Overstatements are instances of euphemism where the conventional meaning of a word fits the favoured contextual referent - provided that the degree to which some feature of the meaning applies is weakened, i.e., a desirable feature is upgraded. For example, *flight to glory* used for death. Other examples include those that fall under the basic rule of bureaucracies: the longer the title, the lower the rank, such as *visual engineer* (window cleaner) and *Personal Assistant to the Secretary (Special Activities* (cook).

The following diagram illustrates how euphemisms can be constructed - according to Warren (1992:134):
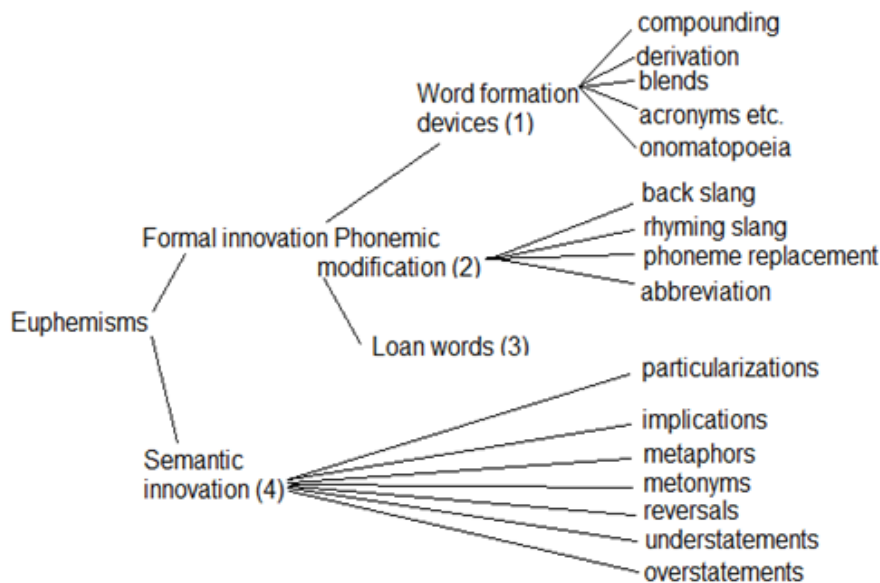
Figure 2.2. Schematic representation of construction of euphemisms (Warren,1992:134).

2.10   CLASSIFICATION OF EUPHEMISMS

The use of euphemism, according to Mbangwana (2002:26), is a way of trying to speak softly and to be less effensive, less distasteful, less precise and less direct. Its aim is to avoid shocking, in order to be elegant, pleasant and dignifying or refined. He adds that it is an exercise in verbal upgrading through a roundabout diction. It is an old and a universal aspect of language use.

Euphemism can be classified in many categories according to different criteria, rules and principles. In order to better grasp the term, euphemism can be divided into periods, including Middle Ages, Victorian, twentieth century and contemporary euphemism (Yuan, 2002:45).   According to Hott (2012:26), euphemism is the product of a specific historical setting.   Therefore, it should be mentioned that there is no uniform classification standard, but the motives of the different classifications are to discover and understand the characteristics of euphemism from different angles.

2.10.1 Positive euphemism and negative euphemism

Euphemisms have been classified in several ways, depending on the philosophical stance from which one interprets the use of language in particular situations. One of the earliest classifications distinguishes between 'good' and 'bad' euphemism. Rawson (1981:1) divides euphemisms into two general types: positive and negative. Positive euphemisms can also be called stylistic euphemisms or exaggerating euphemisms. According to Rawson (1981:1), "the positive ones inflate and magnify, making the euphemized items seem altogether grander and more important than they really are." In order to avoid thrill, to be polite or to achieve cooperation, British and American people - especially contemporary Americans - prefer to use the technique of exaggeration to euphemise something unpleasant and embarrassing. In the modern times many new euphemisms have been coined regarding people's ideologies and values and their ways of showing respect for others. Quite a number of positive euphemisms are doublespeak and use cosmetic words which normally appear in political, military and commercial vocabularies.

Negative euphemisms rather deflate and diminish; they are defensive in nature, offsetting the power of tabooed terms and, otherwise, eradicating from language everything that people prefer not to deal with directly (Rawson, 1981). They are extremely ancient and closely connected to taboos, i.e., negative euphemisms may be referred to as traditional euphemisms or narrowing euphemisms.

2.10.2 Conscious euphemism and unconscious euphemism

Euphemisms, whether positive or negative, can be divided into conscious or unconscious ones. The criterion is whether the euphemistic meaning correlates with the original meaning or not. Unconscious euphemisms were developed long ago and are used unconsciously, i.e., without any intention to deceive or evade. For example, a new standard term, cemetery has been a replacement for the more deathly one, graveyard, since the fourteenth century (Hu, 1991:7) and 'indisposition' has been a substitute for disease. From the above, it can be concluded that unconscious euphemisms were developed so long ago that few can remember their original motivations.

Unlike unconscious euphemisms, conscious euphemisms are widely used and involve more complex categories. When two people communicate, speakers are conscious of saying things tactfully and listeners of understanding their implied meaning. For example, when a lady stands up and says she wants to 'powder her nose' or 'make a phone call' at a dinner party, the people present realize the euphemism means something else, i.e., she is going to the ladies room.

2.10.3 Metaphorical euphemism

Metaphor is a figure of speech as well as a common way of human thinking that exists in many languages. For instance, euphemisms for death include metaphors in English, such as: *'going to his last home', 'to sleep the long/eternal', 'never ending sleep', 'to rest in peace', 'to beat rest',* and *'has gone to heaven/paradise'*. It is a belief of the state of the dead which is reflected even in the Old Testament; '*sleep'* for dead is a euphemism as '*sleep*' avoids the use of the more frightening word, dead*.* Similarly, in Genesis, Chapter 3:19 b there is a reference where God utters a curse on Adam: "Until you go back to the soil from which you were formed"; '*Going back to the soil'* was used as a euphemism for "dying". In the New Testament there is also an example of this kind of euphemism: in the book of John (11:11) where Jesus had the following to say about his friend Lazarus whom everyone in Bethany regarded as dead and had even been buried for four days: "Our friend Lazarus has *fallen asleep*, but I will go and awake him up." In the real sense Jesus meant that Lazarus had died, yet the disciples thought that he meant natural sleep. In this example we experience Jesus' use of the euphemism *'sleep'* in place of a taboo or frightening word, dead. Another example is found in Matthew (9:24) where Jesus commands the people at the funeral of the official's daughter as follows: "Get out, everybody! The little girl is not '*dead' -* she is only 'sleeping." In this story Jesus uses the word, *'sleep'* as a euphemism for the word, dead.

2.10.4 Other classifications of euphemisms

Besides the classifications mentioned above, Samoskaite (2011) states that euphemisms can be divided into the following six semantic categories.

2.10.4.1   Profession euphemisms

In Western countries, mental work is considered to be a higher order job whereas physical labour is seen as humble work and there is a great difference in the remuneration of the two; the result is that people in different occupations are attributed with different status in society. Some lowly paid or 'indecent' jobs are often euphemised in English to save face and express politeness and fewer occupations are called jobs; many have become professions. Some names, like 'engineer', are popular in terms of English euphemisms using them for fancy occupational titles, which elevate the status of jobs. Many previously unwelcome professions have now acquired more appealing names. For example, in profession euphemisms, road sweeper or dustman is now a *cleaning operative*, garbage collector is a *sanitation engineer* and butcher is a *meat technologist* (Samoskaite, 2011:14).

2.10.4.2   Disease euphemisms

Samoskaite (2011:14) states that in the disease euphemisms, *long illness* is a replacement for cancer, *social disease* replaces syphilisand AIDS and *lung trouble* is used instead of tuberculosis. If someone has a mental illness psychosis is not mentioned directly, but s/he is said to be a little confused; *hard of hearing* is used for being deaf.

2.10.4.3   Death euphemisms

In many societies, because death is feared people tend to avoid mentioning death directly and talk about it in a euphemistic way. They try to employ pleasant terms to express the idea of death; there are hundreds of soft, decent, and better-sounding names, such as: *breathe one's last*, *fall asleep*, *go west*, *join the majority*, *lay down one's life*, *pass away*, *pay the debt of nature*, *reach a better world*, *to be at peace*, *to return to the dust* and *he worked until he breathed his last* (Samoskaite, 2011:14).

2.10.4.4   Sex euphemisms

Euphemisms concerning sex include: *the great divide*, *willing woman*, *gay boy*, *lost girl*, *loose woman*, *male homosexual* and *prostitute*.

2.10.4.5 Crime euphemisms

Examples of euphemisms related to crime are: *five-fingers*, *gentleman of the road*, *hero of the underground*, *the candy man* are often used to substitute for pickpocket, robber, heroin, and drug pusher.

2.10.4.6 Political euphemisms

Since the function of euphemism is to reduce the unpleasantness of a term or notion, it is natural that announcements by government will often use them to understate the facts, for example *student unrest* can be used to replace student strike; *police action*, *search and clear*, *war games* are substituted for aggression, massacre and war exercise (Samoskaite, 2011:15).

From the above discussion on the classifications of euphemisms, it is clear that they may be sub-categorised differently, for instance: sex - negative - and also bodily functions, body parts. Others could relate to death, excretion, occupation or disease. Euphemisms are interesting in the sense that there are situations when euphemisms are created, depending on the input of a certain occasion, and are never repeated while others are coined and reused later and ratified by many people and have lasted generations - even centuries.

2.11 CONCLUSION

As has been clarified by the above review of the work of other researchers, there has been a great deal of investigation into euphemism, using various linguistic approaches but not much has been done in terms of the socio-pragmatic perspective of analysing Tshivenḓa euphemisms and, hence, the importance of this study. From a review of the relevant literature presented above, it has been established that euphemisms constitute a universal phenomenon in language usage. The present study was premised on the view that, like any other language, Tshivenḓa uses euphemism to facilitate the performance of specific speech acts. The intention of this study was to identify specific euphemisms; their specific speech domains; and their socio-pragmatic significance.

The following are some of the major characteristics of euphemisms:

(i) When a phrase is used as a euphemism, it often becomes a metaphor whose literal meaning is dropped.

(ii) Euphemisms may be used to hide unpleasant or disturbing ideas, even when the literal term for them is not necessarily offensive.

(iii) The type of euphemism used in public relations and politics is sometimes called doublespeak.

(iv) Sometimes, using euphemisms is equated with politeness.

(v) There are euphemisms related to superstitions, based (consciously or subconsciously) on the idea that words have the power to bring bad fortune, for example, not saying the word, devil.

(vi) There are religious euphemisms, based on the idea that some words are holy, and that some words are spiritually imperilling (taboo).

This chapter has presented a review of the available literature relevant to the present study in order to place the research within the context of similar studies and thereby enrich it and provide a justification for it. The next chapter, Chapter 3, details the methodology used to collect and analyse the data to provide answers to the research questions raised in Chapter 1 of the study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter reviewed the relevant available literature and related it to euphemism in Tshivenḓa in terms of a possible socio-pragmatic analysis. This chapter outlines the research design and methodology used in conducting the study and the research procedures and techniques adopted in an attempt to find answers to the research questions raised in the first chapter. An introduction to the methodology was also given in Chapter 1 and this chapter builds on that introduction by providing details of the research approach and research design of the study; the study area and sample size; the data collection instruments and procedures; and the data analysis process. It refers to the criteria used to determine each research method and clearly explains the whole research process. Included in this chapter are the ethical issues that were taken into consideration while the limitations of the study conclude the chapter.

This study was undertaken in terms of a qualitative research paradigm because the researcher wished to examine the semantic and socio-pragmatic value of euphemism in Tshivenḓa.

3.2 RESEARCH AIM

The aim of the study was to examine the semantic and socio-pragmatic value of euphemism in Tshivenḓa.

3.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the study was to identify the most commonly euphemised topics in Tshivenḓa; to establish strategies that are used to create euphemisms in Tshivenḓa; to determine the motives behind the use of euphemism in Tshivenḓa; and to explore social domains where euphemisms are used in Tshivenḓa.

3.4   RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The research design is the framework and parameters of a research exercise which includes the reasons for the choice of suitable research methods used in the investigation of a given phenomenon. Bogdan and Biklen (1998:49) maintain that the research design is a reflection of the intentions of a researcher in proceeding with the proposed research while Macmillan and Schumacher (2001:31) are of the opinion that "the purpose of a research design is to provide, within an appropriate mode of enquiry the most valid accurate answers possible to research questions."

There are several approaches to research design that may be used for a study. According to Patton (1990:10-11), modern developments in research "have led to an increase in the use of multiple methods." This confirms that a researcher should not rely only on the most suitable method for his/her study but should also bear in mind which combination of methods will produce better results. The use of multiple techniques in research is referred to as triangulation. Triangulation is the combination of two or more theories, data sources, methods or investigators in the study of a given problem. Several methods may be used to obtain valid data on what is being investigated.

For this study a descriptive and exploratory design within a qualitative research approach was adopted, which is in line with what Creswell (1994:1-2) defines as an inquiry process of understanding a social or human problem - based on the building of a complex, holistic picture formed with words and reporting the detailed views of participants in a natural setting. The suitability of qualitative research for this study was determined by the view that qualitative research aims at explaining complex phenomena by means of verbal description rather than testing hypotheses with numerical values (Patton, 2002:41). Euphemism is a complex phenomenon that needs verbal description in order to grasp its relevant meaning and the message it conveys. In this case, the qualitative approach is appropriate because it will help the researcher identify the participants' ideas, beliefs and values (De Vos, 2005:79).

Creswell (1994:162) suggests that the data emerging from qualitative research is descriptive in nature while Niewenhuis, in Maree *et al.* (2007:50), believes that people often describe qualitative research as research that attempts to collect rich

descriptive data related to a particular phenomenon or context with the intention of developing an understanding of what is being observed or studied. Furthermore, they are of the opinion that qualitative research is concerned with understanding the processes and the social and cultural contexts which underlie various behavioural patterns and, mostly, explore the "why" questions of research. Typically, It looks at "people or systems by interacting with and observing the participants in their natural environment (*in situ*) focusing on their meanings and interpretations" (Maree *et al.*, 2007:51 quoting Holloway & Wheeler, 1996). Qualitative researchers enter the natural environment of the participants and have direct contact with them during the interviews.

The study was based on a qualitative rather than a quantitative paradigm because it is narrative in nature rather than statistical; the data collected takes the form of words rather than figures. Qualitative research focuses on describing and understanding phenomena in their natural occurring context with the intention of developing an understanding of the meaning/s imparted by the respondents (Maree *et al.,* 2007:51). Therefore, a phenomenon can be best described in terms of its meaning for the participants.

Participants were interviewed, keeping in mind that the data obtained comprises the beliefs and values of people about euphemism in the form of a verbal description (Creswell, 1994:162). Qualitative methodology focuses on the real-life experiences of people and allows the researcher to personally learn about the participants' beliefs and values. In this research data was collected from the participants in their natural setting, namely, their respective places of residence.

3.5   PARTICIPANTS AND SAMPLING

Sampling refers to the "process used to select a portion of the population for the study" (Maree *et al.,* 2007:79). By means of this process a sample of, or a few people from, the larger population is selected to become the basis for estimating or predicting a true situation or result with regard to the larger group in which the investigator is interested. By observing the characteristics of the sample, certain inferences may be made about the characteristics of the population from which it

was drawn. Samples are not selected haphazardly; they are chosen in a systematically random way so that chance or the operation of probability is utilized. However, where random selection is not possible, other systematic means are implemented. The major objective of any sampling design is to cut the limited cost of the gap between the values obtained from the sample and those that exist in the population. Sampling is paramount to research as it enables the representation of the population from a few participants in the study; to study the whole population would be expensive and time-consuming.

Qualitative researchers often make use of purposive sampling procedures instead of probability sampling which leans more towards quantitative research approaches (Maree *et al.,* 2007:79). Babie (2010: 45) defines purposive sampling as a type of non-probability sampling in which the units to be observed are selected on the basis of the researcher's judgement about which ones will be most useful or most representative. Krathwohl (2004: 229) considers purposive sampling to be the most fashionable technique in qualitative research because it involves selecting participants who are information rich and who provide special access to the topic being explored. This study employs purposive sampling procedures as the participants were "selected because of defining characteristics that make them holders of the data needed for this study" (Maree *et al.,* 2007:79).

The sampling technique employed in this study was a progressive method of identifying adult participants who were regarded to be proficient in the language under investigation. In terms of this scenario, the researcher was interested in having participants who were very conversant with Tshivenḓa euphemisms in the various domains of the language and, therefore, it was deemed appropriate to use a snowballing technique. Patton (1990:64) describes snowballing as a process in which initial contact with one suitable participant leads to further contacts. He is of the opinion that snowballing increases as more information-rich cases are accumulated.

3.6   SAMPLE SIZE

This investigation targeted specific groups of people, namely, the Tshivenḓa, who are able to communicate in the specified language and in various domains. However, there is a controversy pertaining to the determination of an adequate sample size; in fact, researchers agree that if resources are available, the larger the representation, the better. Nevertheless, mostly, researchers are faced by financial constraints and inadequate time and manpower to enable them to collect large samples and it has been proved by many researchers that qualitative research has no specific rules to determine a sample size. Robnson (1993:23) points out that "sample size in qualitative research is small. The purpose of selecting the case or cases is to develop deeper understanding of the phenomena being studied."

In terms of the above, the sample for this study was limited to twenty-five participants who were drawn from different backgrounds and various spheres of life in the Vhembe District of Venḓa Limpopo Province, South Africa. The researcher selected five traditional healers, five pastors, five chiefs and ten elderly women and men – five of each - to participate in the study. The participants were selected on condition that they were considered to be custodians of the Tshivenḓa language and culture. Although an estimated number of twenty-five participants were envisaged, sampling continued through snowballing until data saturation was reached, i.e., when additional analysis of data brought redundancy and no new information was revealed (Patton, 2002). The table below presents a description of the participants according to the gender, location, age and number.

Table 3.1: Description of Participants according to Gender, Location, Age and Number

Participants	Gender		Location	Age	Total number
	Male	Female			
Traditional healers	3	2	Hatshivhasa, Vhumbedzi	65+	5
Chiefs	3	2	Mutale, Nzhelele	65+	5
Pastors	3	2	Vhuronga, Tshiṱale	60+	5
Elderly men	5		Ṋiani, Hatshivhasa	60+	5
Elderly women		5	Hatshivhasa, Nzhelele	60+	5
Total participants					**25**

3.7   CODING THE PARTICIPANTS

McMillan and Schumacher (2001:421) recommend that "participants should not be identifiable in print." For the purpose of concealing the identities of the participants taking part in this study, the following codes were used to ensure anonymity:

- Traditional Healers were coded as Traditional Healer A, B, C, D and E, respectively.
- Chiefs were referred to as Chief A, B, C, D and E respectively.
- Pastors were referred to as Pastor A, B, C, D and E respectively.
- Elderly Man A, B, C, D and E were the codes given to elderly men.
- Elderly Women were coded as Elderly Woman A, B, C, D and E, respectively.

3.8 DATA COLLECTION

McMillan and Schumacher (2001:408) suggest that "most interactive researchers employ several data collection techniques in a study, but usually select one as the central method." Furthermore, they are of the opinion that these multi-method strategies permit the triangulation of data across inquiry techniques; that they may yield different insights about the topic of interest; and that they increase the credibility of the findings (McMillan &Schumacher, 2001:408).

In this study interviews and a literature study, which included research articles and publications, were used for data collection. Apart from the interviews and the literature study the researcher constantly compiled field notes. Data appearing in print only is not, necessarily, trustworthy and this belief informed the interviews and the literature study of research articles and publications. The two forms were used to establish the following:

- How well the selected participants identified – in the interviews - the most commonly euphemised topics in Tshivenḓa; what strategies are, generally, used to create euphemisms; and the motives behind the use of euphemisms.
- Whether the data elicited in the interviews corresponded with the information from various literature and other publications.

3.8.1 Interviews

Merriam (1998:71) is of the opinion that interviews are used in situations where the researcher tries to ascertain what is in the mind of another person. According to Maree *et al.* (2007:87), the aim of the qualitative interview is to "see the world through the eyes of the participant" and to extract rich descriptive data that will assist in understanding the participant's construction of knowledge. Similarly, Marshall and Rossman (1999: 109) define an interview as "a conversation with a purpose; it is a useful way of getting large amounts of data quickly." In this study a description of the semantic and socio-pragmatic value of euphemism in Tshivenḓa needed to be ascertained.

Interviews are seen as a means to generate knowledge between humans, often by means of conversation (Kvale, 1996:11 - as suggested by Cohen, Manion& Morrison, 2005:267). Furthermore, Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2005:267) argue that "interviews enable participants – be they the interviewers or interviewees - to discuss their interpretations of the world in which they live, and to express how they regard situations from their own point of view." An interview allows the interviewer to explore more deeply by following the response of an interviewee with a probing question. The posing of open-ended questions during the interview allows the researcher to gather data that could lead to textual and structural descriptions of experiences to, ultimately, provide an understanding of the common experiences of the participants (Creswell, 2007:61). It is for that same reason that Rubin and Rubin (1995:53) believe that, through qualitative interviews, the researcher finds out what other people feel and think about their world and the interviewer is able to understand their experiences and reconstruct events and problems in which s/he has not participated. In this study, the researcher was able to understand how participants value the use of euphemisms in their language, Tshivenḓa.

The researcher chose to collect data from the participants in this study by using semi-structured interviews because they provide an opportunity to ask individual participants questions and record their answers (Creswell, 2002:215); they also allow the interviewer to use follow-up questions to the responses of the participants. A set of predetermined open-ended questions on an interview schedule was developed for use during the interviews and these questions guided the participants when sharing their thoughts about the semantic and socio-pragmatic value of euphemism in Tshivenḓa a with the researcher. Open-ended questions were selected because of their inherent characteristic of permitting a free response from the participants, who used them as a frame of reference (Ary *et al.,* 1990:418). The interviews were less controlled by the interviewer which gave the participants a space to voice their opinions. Open-ended questions allow respondents to answer the same questions and, therefore, promote an increasing comparability of the responses (Cohen, Manion& Morrison, 2005:271). All the participants were asked the same questions (see Annexure 3a). The participants were asked the questions in the same order because, according to McMillan and Schumacher (1993:426), this reduces

interviewer bias. In this study the researcher used probing in cases where the implementation of this technique was considered to be necessary.

Appointments were arranged with the participants and preparations for the interviews were made prior to the actual meetings. Each interview with a participant was scheduled for 30 minutes. Not all the interviews lasted the allocated time as some of the participants talked more extensively on certain points than was initially expected.

Data related to disease euphemisms, love and unconventional sexual behaviour and women and pregnancy was elicited from the group of the traditional healers; data related to euphemisms that promoted and preserved the status of chieftainship in African languages was gathered from the group of chiefs; and the group of pastors provided the researcher with data related to words related to religion and superstition. The elderly women and men were a source of data related to euphemisms of death, sexual intercourse, professions and common euphemistic words.

The interviews were audio-taped with the researcher's handwritten notes to support the recordings. The purpose of the audio recordings was to serve as a backup of the responses of the interviewees and for the accurate transcription of the verbal interaction that took place. The use of the audio recorder was discussed with the participants prior to its being used.

At the end of each interview the researcher summarised the session and gave the interviewee an opportunity to comment on it; they were thanked for their participation and were promised an electronic copy of the final results of the study.

3.8.2   Research Articles, Journals and Dissertations

Other sources of data, such as a literature study of relevant available research articles, journals and publications, related to the research problem and the phenomenon that is being investigated could provide the study with further invaluable information. Henning *et al.* (2004:99) argue that even though the collection of documents and other artefacts is often neglected in qualitative research, they are a valuable secondary source of information - if available.

Any secondary source - both old and new - whether in printed form, handwritten or electronic that relates to the research question may be of value (Henning *et al.,* 2004:99). The analysis of these secondary sources may provide information that fills the gaps that are left after the interviews (Henning *et al.,* 2004:100). In this study the secondary sources that were consulted included library books, research articles, unpublished dissertations and archived material that contained euphemisms.

3.8.3 Field Notes

Field notes were compiled during the interviews which also recorded the behavioural patterns of the participants. Hittleman and Simon (2002:148) highlight the importance of taking field notes by the researcher during the periods of gathering data and the researcher made field notes while observing the participants during the interviews. According to Ary *et al.*, (2002:431), the notes should include information pertaining to the behaviour of people, interpersonal relationships, places, activities, conversations as well as the feelings or impressions of the researcher. These notes supplement the information that is acquired from the interviews and the document analysis (Hittleman and Simon, 2002:148). In this study the field notes were edited immediately after the interviews and comments were marked as Researcher's Comments (RC).

3.9   DATA ANALYSIS

3.9.1 Explanation of qualitative data analysis

McMillan and Schumacher (2001:466) describe a qualitative data analysis primarily as an inductive process of organising data into categories and identifying patterns/relationships which involves the reduction and interpretation of data (Cohen & Manion, 1995:116). According to White (2003:115), qualitative data analysis refers to a systematic process of selecting, categorising, comparing, synthesising and interpreting in order to provide explanations for a single phenomenon of interest. As suggested above, qualitative data analysis is about making sense of data from the perspective of the participants while taking into consideration the situation, patterns, themes, categories and regularities (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007:461).

3.9.2 Method of data analysis chosen for this study

The data collected for this study was analysed using the Thematic Content Analysis method (TCA) which identifies, analyses and reports patterns (themes) contained in the accumulated data; it organises and describes the data set in rich detail. However, it often goes further and interprets various aspects of the research topic (Braun & Clarke, 2006:79). The data being analysed might take any number of forms including interview transcripts, field notes, policy documents, photographs and video footage.

The Thematic Content Analysis method illustrates the data in great detail and deals with diverse subjects *via* interpretation (Boyatzis, 1998:34). It is considered most appropriate for any study that seeks to discover using interpretation and it provides a systematic element to data analysis. It allows the researcher to associate an analysis of the frequency of a theme with the whole content which confers accuracy and intricacy and enhances the research's whole meaning. Qualitative research requires understanding and collecting diverse aspects of data. The Thematic Content Analysis method offers researchers an opportunity to understand the potential of any issue more widely (Marks and Yardley, 2004). Namey *et al.* (2008:138) are of the opinion that

> Thematic Content Analysis moves beyond counting explicit words or phrases and focuses on identifying and describing both implicit and explicit ideas. Codes developed for ideas or themes are then applied or linked to raw data as summary markers for later analysis, which may include comparing the relative frequencies of themes or topics within a data set, looking for code co-occurrence, or graphically displaying code relationships.

It allows the researcher to precisely determine relationships between concepts and compare them with the replicated data. By using Thematic Content Analysis there is the possibility to link the various concepts and opinions of the participants and compare these with the data that has been gathered in different situations at different times during the project. All possibilities for interpretation are possible.

In order to present content when Thematic Analysis is used, the theme must "describe the bulk of the data" (Joffe & Yardley, 2004:67-77). In other words, a large amount of content, i.e. data, is required because while one single statement is significant it does not, necessarily, reflect the full story which is especially true when the research's objectives aim to obtain insights into, and discover relationships between, the diverse data that originated from the different groups of learners. Thus, the researcher needs to provide and describe a large amount of data.

Thematic Content Analysis provides rich, detailed and complex data which is compatible with Braun and Clarke's (2006) vision. In addition, Blacker (2009:83) argues that a rich thematic description of the entire data assists him and/or the readers to get a sense of "the predominant and important themes" from the data.

A thematic analysis process analyses the data without engaging pre-existing themes; it can be adapted to any research that relies only on participant clarification. In other words, each statement or idea contributes towards understanding the issues which leads to an appreciation of the whole picture. Every statement is valid in understanding a single concept or ones shared with other statements. Concepts are, therefore, constructed to give a full picture of the participants' views and actions. Furthermore, presenting similarities and differences between the participants' perspectives assists readers to obtain a global view (Joffe & Yardley, 2004:83).

3.9.3 Applicable phases when analysing data using Thematic Content Analysis method

This researcher used the phases described below as part of his Thematic Content Analysis method.

3.9.3.1 Phase 1: Becoming familiarising with the data

Clarke and Kitzinger (2004) maintain that when researchers engage in analysis they may have collected the data themselves or it may have been given to them. If they collected it through interactive means, they will approach its analysis with some prior knowledge of the data and, possibly, some initial analytic interests or thoughts. However, it is vital that they immerse themselves in the data to the extent that they are familiar with the depth and breadth of the content. In this study all verbal data,

such as that obtained during interviews, was transcribed into a written form - even though the researcher knew it was time consuming, frustrating and, at times, boring. The researcher repeatedly read the collected data in an active way - searching for meaning and patterns. He read through the entire data set at least once before he started his coding to enable him to shape ideas and identify patterns.

3.9.3.2 Phase 2: Generating initial codes

Phase 2 begins when researchers have read and familiarised themselves with the data and have generated an initial list of ideas of what is in the data and what is interesting about it. This phase involves the production of initial codes from the data. Codes identify a semantic content or latent feature of the data that appears interesting to the analyst and refers to "the most basic segment or element of the raw data or information that can be assessed in a meaningful way regarding the phenomenon" (Boyatzis, 1998:63). During this phase the researcher ensured that all actual data extracts were coded and collated within each code. Data that were identified by the same code were put together.

3.9.3.3 Phase 3: Searching for themes

This phase focuses on the broader level of themes and involves sorting the different codes into potential themes and collating all the relevant coded data extracts within the identified themes. In this study, some codes formed main or sub-themes and other codes were discarded.

3.9.3.4 Phase 4: Reviewing themes

This phase involves two levels of reviewing and refining researchers' themes. Level 1 involves reviewing at the level of the coded data where researchers re-read all the data extracts that fit into each theme to ensure that it forms a coherent pattern. Level 2 involves reviewing at the level of the themes where researchers consider each theme in relation to the data *corpus*. A thematic map to help researchers visualize the relationship between themes is used.

3.9.3.5 Phase 5: Defining and naming themes

This step captures the essence of what each theme is about and what aspect of the data it captures. By "define and refine" the "essence" of each theme is identified as well as the overall themes and it determines what aspect of the data each theme captures (Boyatzis, 1998:67). In this study themes were given concise names that immediately provided the reader with a sense of what the theme was about.

3.9.3.6 Phase 6: Producing the report

This phase involves the final analysis and writing-up of the report taking into consideration the audience. The researcher gives a succinct, coherent, logical, non-repetitive and fascinating account of the story that the data reveal.

3.10   THE ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER

In this project the researcher suppressed what he knew about the topic and he allowed the interviewees to respond to questions as openly and freely as possible. Continuous ethical qualities were applied by the researcher being a good communicator who listened to the responses provided by the participants which was in line with Merriam's (1998:23) recommendation that the qualitative researcher should be a good communicator who empathises with respondents; establishes a rapport; asks good questions; and listens intently. The researcher's functional role was to transcribe and analyse the data in terms of the established categories. However, beforehand he compiled and designed the open-ended questions and arranged for all participants' to participate in the study. In addition letters were written requesting permission to conduct the study; Creswell (1994:147) maintains that it is important to gain access to research or archival sites by seeking the approval of "gatekeepers". Application for ethical clearance was submitted to the University of Limpopo Ethical Clearance Committee before this study commenced. As the researcher was involved in a rigorous experience with the participants, it was necessary to continually recognise participant bias, values and personal interests with regard to the research topic and the process (Maree *et al.,* 2007:296 citing Creswell, 2003).

3.11 CREDIBILITY AND BIAS

To ensure the credibility of the study, the researcher implemented certain strategies - as espoused by Lincoln and Guba (1989:304), namely, prolonged engagement, persistent observation and triangulation.

- **Prolonged engagement**means being present on site where the study is being conducted for long enough to build a trust with the participants; to experience the breadth of variation; and to overcome distortions due to the presence of the researcher on site (Lincoln &Guba, 1989:305). As this study was an extensive one, the researcher spent a great deal of time with the participants in the field collecting data. A premature closing of the collection of data was avoided; the researcher sought to obtain wide and accurate primary data from the participants as well as relevant secondary data from various research articles and relevant publications.

- **Persistent observation**is a technique which ensures a depth of experience and understanding as well as the broad scope encouraged by prolonged engagement. To be persistent the inquirer must explore details of the phenomena under study at a sufficiently deep level so that he/she can decide what is important and what is irrelevant in order to focus on the most relevant aspects (Lincoln & Guba,1989:30). Persistent observation is the most powerful instrument or tool for gaining an insight into situations and it is a suitable method for a variety of research purposes. The main virtue of observation is its directness; it is able to study situations as they occur. Observation is used to collect supplementary data that may interpret or qualify findings obtained by other methods. Observation enables the researcher to gather information on the physical setting, human setting, interactional setting and programme setting. Cohen et,al (2005:396) observes that the distinctive feature of observation - as a research process - is that it offers an investigator the opportunity to gather 'live' data from naturally occurring social situations. In this way, the researcher can look directly at what is taking place in a situation rather than relying on second-hand accounts. Therefore, observation provides a reality check; it also enables a researcher to look afresh at everyday behaviour of the observed.

This method proved most beneficial for this study as the researcher used persistent observation as a way of collecting data related to churches through the pastors; chieftainship from the chiefs; and traditional healing and from elderly women and men. Persistent observation was most appropriate in the sense that the researcher was there to observe and experience the actual use of euphemism in the specified domains. Since the researcher is a native speaker of Tshivenḓa, he was able to identify the presence or absence of these euphemisms in the various interlocutions without any problem. Through observation, it was possible to generate first-hand data that was uncontaminated by factors standing between the investigator and the object of research.

- **Triangulation** is a process of comparing data from various sources, such as interviews, literature studies, research journals, dissertations and field notes which was also used in this study to enhance its credibility (Guba& Lincoln, 1999:147; Ary *et al.,* 2002:452).

The different procedures were carried out in conjunction with the various data sources (Ary *et al.,* 2002:452). Maree *et al.* (2007:41) cite the practice of making use of multiple methods of data collection and analysis to facilitate the trustworthiness of a study. In this study member checks were also used where the data and findings were verified by participants other than the ones who were originally involved in the study (Merriam, 1998 - as quoted in Maree, 2007:38; Guba & Lincoln, 1999:147; Ary *et al.,* 2002:452). Member checks or participant feedback give participants an opportunity to critique and review the transcripts for accuracy and meaning in order to eliminate miscommunication; to identify inaccuracies; and to help obtain useful data (Ary *et al.,* 2002:453).

3.12 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

McMillan and Schumacher (2001:412) are of the opinion that most ethical situations require researchers to determine situational priorities that frequently involves discussions with participants. This encompasses promoting what is good, respectful and fair. Ethical guidelines include - but are not limited to - informed consent, deception, confidentiality, anonymity, harm to subjects and privacy (McMillan &

Schumacher, 2001:420). In conducting this study, clearance was obtained from the ethics committee because the study involved human participants. Throughout the study the researcher was guided by ethical guidelines and he believes that researchers should strike a balance between the demands placed on them as professional scientists in pursuit of the truth and their subjects' rights and values which are potentially threatened by the research (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2005:49). Since this research involved working with humans, the following ethical aspects were adhered to.

3.12.1   Permission for the study

Before embarking on the study, the researcher submitted the research proposal to the relevant university research and ethics committees for approval. This was done with the help of his supervisor to obtain ethical approval from the Research and Ethics Committee.

3.12.2   Informed consent and voluntary participation

Informed consent entails informing the research participants about the overall purpose of the investigation and the main features of the research design - as well as any possible risks or benefits that participation in the research may involve (Kvale, 1996:112; McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:421). Farnham and Pilmlott (1995:47) define informed consent as the "knowing consent of individuals to participate as an exercise of choice, free from any element of fraud, deceit or similar unfair inducement or manipulation." Trochim (2001:24) believes that informed consent means that the participants are fully informed about the procedures and risks involved in the research and that it is essential that they give their consent to participate. The researcher wrote invitation letters to all the prospective participants who outlined the nature of the study and its main purpose - to examine the semantic and socio-pragmatic value of euphemism in Tshivenḓa. They were assured that the information required would be used only for the purpose of the study and they were also guaranteed the freedom to withdraw from the study at any time without prejudice (see Annexure 1.a). All the participants showed an interest and willingness to participate in the study and signed the consent forms. The permission of the

participants was also obtained to use the tape-recorder to record the interviews (see Annexure 2.a).

Trochim (2001:24) suggests that the principle of voluntary participation involves individuals not being forced to participate in the research. The participants participated voluntarily in this study without pressure or manipulation; they agreed to participate after the researcher explained the purpose of this study to them.

3.12.3 Confidentiality and anonymity

Trochim (2001:24) maintains that confidentiality and anonymity are two standards that help to protect the privacy of the research participants. According to Kvale (1996:114), "confidentiality in research implies that private data identifying participants will not be reported." In this study the participants were each allocated a pseudonym (code name) to protect their anonymity - in line with what McMillan and Schumacher (2001:421) believe when they say that "participants should not be identifiable in print." Participants were also assured that all the information or data collected would be treated confidentially. Essentially, the researcher is responsible for the "protection of the participants' confidences from other persons in the setting whose private information might enable them to identify them and protection of the informants from the general reading public" (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:421). The data collected from the participants was saved in a password-protected file and stored on the personal computers of both the researcher and the supervisor. This was in line with what Denzin and Lincoln (2000:139) believe when they state that "all personal data captured during the research ought to be secured and made public only behind a shield of anonymity."

3.12.4 Aftercare of the participants, deception, privacy and empowerment

Participants were promised that there would be no deception and that their real names would not be used in this study. The participants were informed that at the conclusion of the study they would receive a copy of the findings in electronic form. All reasonable measures were taken to honour the commitments made to the participants and none of them showed emotional distress as a result of their participation in this study; no participant was referred to a psychologist or social worker for counselling.

3.13 LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS

The study was conducted in Venḓa in the Vhembe District. Not all traditional healers, chiefs, pastors, elderly men and women were interviewed which proved to be a limitation. Furthermore, this study used a qualitative research paradigm with a strong reliance on interviewing a selected number of participants for primary data and secondary as data collection vehicles; more participants could have been reached by means of questionnaires in a quantitative paradigm. Due to the nature of the study, some participants could not give the researcher certain information because they were shy or they thought it was taboo to mention certain topic, such as sex, excretion and body parts - among others. However, sufficient information was collected for the researcher to successfully complete this thesis.

3.14 CONCLUSION

This chapter has outlined the methodology which was used to inform the collection of data from the participants from the selected, sample schools and the research design, data collection methods and data analysis were discussed in detail. The chapter closed with details of the research ethics which were taken into consideration as well as the credibility of, and bias in, the study. The next chapter, **Chapter Four**, focuses on the presentation and analysis of the data.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

4.1   INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter, Chapter 3, dealt with the methodology used for the study to provide satisfactory answers to the questions raised in **Chapter One**. It discussed the type of research paradigm and design employed in the study and why these were selected. It also presented specific details relating to the study area, the sample size, the data collection instruments and the data analysis process. The chapter also examined the criteria used in selecting each of the research methods.

Chapter Four is concerned with the presentation, interpretation and analysis of data related to euphemisms which were identified and collected in terms of both the theoretical framework and a review of the relevant available literature. The presentation is arranged according to the research objectives and questions - given in Chapter 1 of the study. Answers to the following questions were sought:

- What are the most commonly euphemized topics in Tshivenḓa?
- What strategies are used to create euphemisms in Tshivenḓa?
- What are the motives behind using euphemisms in Tshivenḓa?
- In which social domains are Tshivenḓa euphemisms used?

The above research questions were investigated introspectively in the study using 25 participants of different ages, genders, educational levels, social status and occupations who were selected from various areas to obtain the required and appropriate information. The researcher initially generated and listed some euphemisms in Tshivenḓa; the rest were collected from the twenty-five participants. All the interviews were audio-taped, transcribed, analysed and interpreted. Most of the participants were comfortable with the use of English during interviews, but the chiefs and the elderly men and women preferred to use their mother tongue, i.e., Tshivenḓa. There were some participants who code-switched between English and their mother tongue, but as the researcher was conversant in the languages used, it

was not a problem. During the transcription process the researcher ensured that every reasonable precaution was taken to faithfully record what had been said, including member-checking, in order to convey the participants' original meanings - especially in the translations from Tshivenḓa into English. The euphemisms were then categorized.

The study used a socio-pragmatic perspective to establish what euphemisms are; what strategies are used to generate them; and what motives are behind using euphemisms in the social domains where Tshivenḓa euphemisms are used.

4.2   CHARACTERISTICS OF PARTICIPANTS

The characteristics of participants determine their overall outlook on life and, as Michael (2004:75) asserts, the personal attributes of individuals influence their behaviour and the roles that they play in any situation. The personal attributes of participants are important in understanding why they behaved as they did and why they gave certain responses to the interview questions.

4.2.1 Traditional Healers

Table 4.1, below, contains the relevant background information of the five sampled traditional healers.

Table 4.1: Biographical Details of the Traditional Healers

Traditional Healer	A	B	C	D	E
Age	65	70	65	72	66
Gender	Female	Male	Male	Female	Male
Marital Status	Widow	Married	Married	Widow	Married
Home Language	Tshivenḓa	Tshivenḓa	Tshivenḓa	Tshivenḓa	Tshivenḓa
Highest Standard	Grade 8	Grade 11	Grade 9	Grade 8	Grade 7
Years in practice	40	45	35	48	39

All traditional healers were a mix of male and female adults aged between 65 and 72 years; two of them were widows. They all possessed an extensive knowledge of the Tshivenḓa language as it is their home language. None of them had passed Grade 12. The data presented in Table 4.1 shows that they were all information rich participants and custodians of the Tshivenḓa language. Their extensive knowledge of Tshivenḓa, coupled with their vast experience that ranged from 39 to 48 years in the practice of traditional healing suggested that they had a thorough knowledge of the most commonly used euphemisms in Tshivenḓa.

4.2.2 The Chiefs

Table 4.2, below, presents the relevant background information of the five sampled chiefs.

Table 4.2: Biographical Details of the Chiefs

Chief	A	B	C	D	E
Age	65	67	66	69	70
Gender	Female	Male	Female	Male	Male
Marital Status	Married	Married	Married	Married	Married
Home Language	Tshivenḓa	Tshivenḓa	Tshivenḓa	Tshivenḓa	Tshivenḓa
Highest Standard	Grade 12	Grade 12	Grade 9	Grade 12	Grade 12
Years as chiefs	36	33	30	35	39

All the chiefs were married male adults aged between 65 and 70 years with an extensive knowledge of Tshivenḓa as it is their home language. Five of them had Grade 12 as the highest standard passed. The data presented in Table 4.2 supports the fact that they were all information-rich participants and custodians of the Tshivenḓa language. Their extensive knowledge of Tshivenḓa coupled with Grade 12 as the highest standard passed suggested that they had a thorough knowledge of euphemisms.

4.2.3 The Pastors

Table 4.3, below, contains relevant background information on the five sampled pastors.

Table 4.3: Biographical Details of the Pastors

Pastor	A	B	C	D	E
Age	70	63	60	63	62
Gender	Male	Female	Male	Male	Female
Marital Status	Married	Married	Married	Married	Married
Home Language	Tshivenḓa	Tshivenḓa	Tshivenḓa	Tshivenḓa	Tshivenḓa
Highest Standard	Degree (Theology)	BA degree	Grade 12	STD (teaching)	BA degree
Years as pastors	43	23	15	18	26

Of the twenty-five participants, three male and two female married pastors were interviewed. Their ages ranged from 60 to 70 years with 18 to 43 years' experience as pastors. Three of them have a Bachelor of Arts degree and one has a degree in Theology. The above data suggested that these pastors had an extensive knowledge of Tshivenḓa and its usage, especially of suitable words that can save face. Their highest standard passed suggested that they were all taught about euphemisms as figures of speech during their school years and were, therefore, aware of the importance of euphemisms in Tshivenḓa.

4.2.4 The Elderly Men (educators)

Table 4.4, below, shows the relevant background information of the five sampled elderly men.

Table 4.4: Biographical Details of the Elderly Men

Elderly men	A	B	C	D	E
Age	65	72	70	72	63
Gender	Male	Male	Male	Male	Male
Marital Status	Married	Widower	Married	Widower	Married
Home Language	Tshivenḓa	Tshivenḓa	Tshivenḓa	Tshivenḓa	Tshivenḓa
Highest Standard	Grade 8	Grade 11	Grade 9	Grade 8	Grade 7

4.2.5 The Elderly Women (educators)

Table 4.5, below, contains the relevant background information of the five sampled elderly women.

Table 4.5: Biographical Details of the Elderly Women

Elderly women	A	B	C	D	E
Age	69	67	72	70	70
Gender	Female	Female	Female	Female	Female
Marital Status	Married	Widow	Widow	Widow	Widow
Home Language	Tshivenḓa	Tshivenḓa	Tshivenḓa	Tshivenḓa	Tshivenḓa
Highest Standard	Grade 8	Grade 7	Grade 6	Grade 6	Grade 7

Of the twenty-five participants interviewed, five elderly men and five elderly women were interviewed. Their ages ranged from 60 to 70 years. Most of these participants were widowers and widows. The data presented in the above two tables suggested that these participants had an extensive knowledge of Tshivenḓa and its figures of speech; their ages suggested that they were information-rich in terms of Tshivenḓa euphemisms.

4.3 THEMES

In order to obtain relevant answers to the research questions regarding the semantic and pragmatic values of euphemisms in Tshivenḓa, the 25 interviewed participants were requested to give appropriate and inappropriate times for using euphemisms; to suggest categories of Tshivenḓa euphemisms; to indicate the negatives and positives in using euphemisms; to provide evidence of the use of Tshivenḓa

euphemisms in various domains, such as the court, church, girls in seclusion, home, hospital and on local radio stations; and to give evidence of whether euphemisms are related to socio-pragmatic factors, such as age, gender, status and occupation as well as their different uses in relation to age, gender, status and occupation.

As 25 participants were interviewed, for a qualitative study, this sample was deemed to be sufficient. According to Strydom and Delport (2005:334), "qualitative researchers seek out individuals, group and settings where the specific process being studied is not likely to occur. A process of constant comparison between the individuals and group being studied is essential since the researcher is in pursuit of understanding all aspects of his research topic."

4.3.1 Appropriate and inappropriate times for using euphemisms in Tshivenḓa

Participants were asked to give appropriate and inappropriate times for using euphemisms in Tshivenḓa.

4.3.1.1 Appropriate times for using euphemisms in Tshivenḓa

The Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2008:63) describes the word 'appropriate' as suitable or right for a particular situation or occasion. In order to elicit meaningful information concerning the appropriate times to use euphemisms in Tshivenḓa, the researcher interviewed 25 participants. They were asked to explain, in detail, instances where they thought euphemisms could be used during conversations. The participants' views on appropriate times to use euphemism were when talking about something related to the topics summarised in the table below:

Table 4.6: Participants' Views of Appropriate Times to use Euphemisms in Tshivenḓa

Participants	Number	Meanings
Traditional healers	5	• Menstruation blood • Urination • Sex/sexual organs • Disgusting substances • Ejaculation • Death • Madness • Menopause • Virginty • Diseases • Defecation • Deceiving / hiding reality • Embarrassing topics
Chiefs	5	• Menstruation • Urination • Death • Flatulation • Sex • Deceiving/ hiding reality, • Diseases • Conceal unpleasantness • Embarrassing topics
Pastors	5	• Sex • Sexual organs • Menstruation • Urination • Pregnancy • Death, dying • Sperm/ejaculation

		• Diseases • Defecation • Embarrassment words
Elderly men (educators)	5	• Sperm/ejaculation • Defecation • Flatulation • Embarrassing topics • Menstruation • Diseases • Deceiving/ hiding reality, • Death • Give factual statement • Sex/sexual organs • Money • Addiction • Lower professions
Elderly women (educators)	5	• Menstruation • Hiding of disturbing ideas • Death • Sex/ Sexual organs • Money • Give factual statement • Flatulation • Urination • Deceiving /hiding reality, • Lower professions • Drunkenness/Addiction

For most participants the appropriate time to use euphemisms was when talking about something related to the following: menstruation/blood cycles, urination, defecation, ejaculation, flatulation and vomiting which are referred to as disgusting and embarrassing topics. According to the participants, these topics should not be discussed openly without using euphemisms. Topics, such as death, disease, lies, sex and sexual organs, virginity, pregnancy and age, are other sensitive ones where euphemisms should be used.

From the evidence given in Table 4.6, above, it can be seen that many participants agreed that there are suitable times to use euphemisms in Tshivenḓa and that it differs in terms of place and time. According to the traditional healers, menstruation, urination, sex/sexual organs, disgusting substances, sperm, ejaculation, death, disease, virginity, faeces, hiding reality and other embarrassing topics are the most important themes that need to be euphemised in social communication. The important themes that were identified as appropriate for using euphemisms are listed in Table 4.7, below; their frequency and percentage mentioned by the various participants are also given.

Table 4.7: Participants' Responses Concerning the Appropriate Times for using Euphemisms

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Menstruation	5	100%
Sex /sexual organs	5	100%
Embarrassing topics	5	100%
Death	5	100%
Hiding reality/deceiving	4	80%
Disease	3	60%
Flatulation	3	60%
Defecation	3	60%
Urination	3	60%
Sperm /ejaculation	3	60%
Factual statements	2	40%
Professions of lesser prestige	2	40%
Addiction	2	40%
Disgusting substances	1	20%
Money	1	20%

From the above table it is evident that the participants were of the opinion that the most important times for euphemisms to be used are: during menstruation (100%); issues related to sex and sexual organs (100%); death (100%); embarrassing topics (100%); and hiding reality and deceiving (80%). Disease, flatulation, defecation, urination and ejaculation are topics mostly discussed using euphemisms (60%). The least important topics associated with appropriate times to use euphemisms - in descending order - are: giving factual statements (40%); professions of lesser prestige (40%); addiction (40%); and 20% in issues related to disgusting substances and money.

The topics identified above with their frequency and percentages can be referred to as social discomfort; disgusting and embarrassing topics. These topics cannot be discussed openly without the use of euphemisms in Tshivenḓa. Traditional Healer A said:

> Ri shumisa ḽitatathino kana manakisedzi kha u amba vhunzhi ha maipfi o iledzwaho, maipfi a sa takadzi-ho u amba. Kha Tshivenḓa hu na maipfi na maitele ane a ri thivhela u sokou amba zwithu hu si na u londa. (We use euphemisms as a way to speak banned concepts, unpleasant words. In Tshivenḓa, there are certain words and customs that prevent us from just talking without taking the necessary precautions.)

Traditional Healer B added:

> Yes, there are certain times that call for you to call a spade a spade, don't you think? Euphemism lightens the blow of something unpleasant in nature. Do you think you can discuss issues concerning menstruation cycles, sperms, ejaculation, defecation, ejaculation, fluctuation, vomiting process and death with easy? No! It is not proper.

The responses of Traditional Healers A and B imply that talking about something related to the body effluvia in Tshivenḓa is a taboo. According to Traditional Healers A and B, human body effluvia is embarrassing and disgusting. The Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2008) describes effluvia as something that is unpleasant or with a harmful odour or discharge. In English and in other languages terms, such as menstruation blood, defecation (shitting) and urination (pissing) refer to bodily effluvia and acts of excretion that are generally used as expletives.

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Although completely natural and ever present in our lives, these bodily emissions are taboo to discuss openly.

Various bodily functions which result in the emission of matter from human bodies in Tshivenḓa culture are regarded with varying degrees of disgust. The following is a discussion of the various bodily fluids/excretions mentioned by Traditional Healers A and B that are regarded as taboo and which cannot be talked about without using euphemisms.

4.3.1.1.1 Menstruation

Njoroge and Mukhwana (2015:190) describe menstruation as the shedding of blood by mature female humans every month with an average periodicity of 28 days and this is done through the vagina. Allan and Burridge (2006:162) believe that in most societies menstruating women are, or have been, taboo. Allan and Burridge (2006:162), Njoroge and Mukhwana (2015:190) and Jackova (2010:21) all suggest that this may, in part, be because of the magical coincidence between a woman's ovulatory cycle and the lunar month.

It is well-known that the menstruation process is somewhat messy and many cultures have absorbent material that is worn externally or internally to limit the spread of the menstrual flow and to prevent it from being seen by the public. In Tshivenḓa menstruation blood is not to be seen by everybody. If the blood happens to be seen in public, it is an embarrassment for the woman and she is deemed to be careless and irresponsible; it is also considered to be a face-threatening act. Traditional Healer D supported this idea by saying:

> Maṱambo a musidzana ha sokou vhoniwa nga muṅwe na muṅwe, vha no silinga vha a dzhia vha nga a silinga na u beba a sa tsha beba. (Girls' menstruation is not to be seen by each and every person; witches can take that blood and treat it in such a way that she may end up not giving birth.)

Pastor A gave his views as follows:

> Mafhungo a kwamaho u ṱamba ha vhafumakadzi ndi mafhungo a teaho u ambwa hu na u shumisa luambo lwa u vhuvhisa. Maṱambo ndi tshithu tsha ndeme kha vhafumakadzi nga Tshivenḓa. Sa zwine vha zwi ḓivha hu na kereke dzine mafhungo a u ṱamba dza a dzhiela nṱha nga maanḓa, arali a tshi khou ṱamba na u bika ha biki, zwi ḓi nga na kuvha

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zwiambaro zwa munna wawe na u sendelwa tsini nga munna wawe ha sendelwi, zwi a lwadza,a a vhulaha. Mufumakadzi nga itsho tshifhinga u dzhiiwa e na dzitshika. (Issues concerning menstruation are issues that need to be euphemised whenever talking about them; menstruation is a very sensitive topic in Tshivenḓa. As you know, there are some churches among the Vhavenḓa that take issues of menstruation seriously. If a woman is menstruating, she is banned from cooking, washing her husband's clothes - even sleeping with him because menstruation blood is thought to cause illness and even death. A woman at during her period of menstruation is considered unclean.)

In support of the views given by Pastor A, above, Njoroge and Mukhwana (2015:190) and Mills (2003:162) agree that there is virtually a universal belief that during their periods women are unclean and, consequently, dangerous to themselves and to others; for this reason, they tend to use euphemistic expressions to hide its embarrassing nature. Allan and Burridge (2006:163) quote the Bible that refers to the menstruation taboo in the Judeo-Christian tradition:

> The Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron, saying . . .
> 19. And if a woman have an issue, and her issue in flesh be blood, she shall be put apart seven days: and whosoever toucheth her shall be unclean until the even.
> 20. And everything that she lieth upon in her separation shall be unclean: everything also that she sitteth upon shall be unclean.
> 21. And whosoever toucheth her bed shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even.
> 22. And whosoever toucheth any thing that she sat upon shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even.
> 23. And if it be on her bed or anything whereon she sitteth, when he toucheth it, he shall be unclean until the even.
> 24. And if any man lie with her at all, and her flowers be upon him, he shall be unclean seven days; and all the bed whereon he lieth shall be unclean (Leviticus 15:1, 19-24).

Women's menstruation is associated with the great mystery of fertility and life itself and is, therefore, seen as an important bodily process in African culture (Mills, 2003:162). Traditional Healer D explained that if a woman is menstruating, she is banned from cooking and washing her husband's clothes - even sleeping with him - because menstruation blood is believed to cause illness and even death; for women this issue of menstruation is a major challenge. According to Walker (2014:11), the use of euphemism in relation to women is common when addressing the subject of menstruation. Women use euphemisms in their own discussions that involve

complaints about a menstrual problem or as an avoidance mechanism for carrying out certain domestic activities and obligations.

In *Euphemisms on Body Effluvia in Kikuyu* Mukhwana, and Kabiru (2014: 67) maintain that among the Kikuyu people it is traditionally taboo to have intercourse with a woman in her menses. If a man discovers that a woman's menses has just started and that the blood has touched his body, both he and the woman have to go to a traditional doctor to be purified. If they fail to do so, it is believed that one of them will surely die. This view is supported by Walker (2014:13) who considers menstruation as a pollutant that weakens a woman; a debilitating quality that is thought to have the potential to transfer to a male partner and could even lead to the male's death. Menstruation is, therefore, viewed negatively and is shared by many different societies; it is partly why menstruation is considered a universal taboo (Agyekum, 1994:374).

Some euphemisms that relate to menstruation in Tshivenḓa are derived from the Bible. In the Venḓa Bible, especially in Leviticus 15:19, the following statement is found:

> Arali musadzi a tshi ṱamba nga maitele a vhasadzi, tshika dzawe ndi dza maḓuvha maṱanu na mavhili. Ane a mu fara misi yeneyo, u ḓo vha wa tshika ḽa vhuya ḽa kovhela. (If a woman has an issue and her issue is in the flesh be blood, she shall be apart seven days, and whatever toucheth her shall be unclean until in the evening.)

In the above statement the euphemism, "a woman has an issue" is used to replace the tabooed phrase "menstruating woman." It is used figuratively to avoid the reference to tabooed bodily effluvia. The euphemism of a woman having an issue in Tshivenḓa is *'u ṱamba'* and is literally translated back to English to mean 'to wash'; menstruation blood is figuratively referred to as *"dzitshika"* (dirt).

When menstruating, Venḓa women often use euphemisms like *"ndi a lwala"* (I am sick) and *"ndi maḓuvhani"* (to be out in the sun) in order to not disappoint their husbands and make them uncomfortable about the subject. The study found, however, that male respondents were uncomfortable when discussing the concept of menstruation - whether tabooed or euphemised - despite being close to girlfriends, wives, sisters and mothers.

Various euphemistic terms that are used in Tshivenḓa to refer to the act of menses are given in Table 4.8, below.

Table 4.8: Euphemisms for the Act of Women having Menses in Tshivenḓa

Ordinary Venḓa word	Venḓa Euphemisms	English Literal meaning
U bva malofha	*U ṱamba*	To wash
	U hula/u aluwa	To grow up
	U vha maḓuvhani	To be out in the sun
	U vhona ṅwedzi	To see the moon
	U vhona maṱambo	To see one's blood
	U sema vhakegulu	To be grown up as checked through menstruation.
	Muserwa	Menstruation blood
	Dzitshika	Menstruation blood
	U lwala	Not well
	U sa vuwa	Not well
	U vhona ṋowa	To see a snake
	Tshipofu	Young girl who has not started to menstruate

4.3.1.1.2   Defecation

Defecation is the process of eliminating solid or semi-solid waste from the body through the anus (The Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 2008). The act is generally regarded with cultural distaste among the Vhavenḓa community; the people in this community are fastidious about defecation and, generally, perform the act in seclusion and in a designated location known as "*bungani*" meaning "toilet."

According to Traditional Healer C:

> Mafhungo a mashika a kwamaho makaka na malatwa ndi zwithu zwi ṋengisaho, zwi a shonisa u amba ngazwo vhukati ha vhathu zwi songo vhuvhiswa. Hu na mavhuvhisi o teaho a Tshivenḓa a teaho u shumisa. Na sokou amba ngazwo ni songo vhuvhisa vha ni dzhia sa a si na ṱhonifho na mikhwa kha Vhavenḓa. (Issues concerning faeces are

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disgusting; it is embarrassing to talk about it among the people without euphemizing it. There are suitable and relevant euphemisms related to defecation in Tshivenḓa. If you talk about it recklessly without considering the relevant euphemistic words, people would regard you as lacking of respect and good morals.)

When in polite company, the word is avoided as it is considered as a face-threatening act; instead one would excuse him/herself and say; "*Ndi ya u ḓithusa"* literary meaning: "I am going to help myself."

Pastor B added:

> Malatwa ndi mashika, ha tei u vhonwa na u vhonwa, a thi ri na mmbwa vha a i vhona, i tshi fhedza u bva i a fukedza yone iṋe. Na bivhilini zwo ḓi bulwa uri u tshi ya ḓakani, wa fhedza u tea u fukedza zwe wa sia. (Feaces are dirty, they are not to be seen, as you can see from a dog; after relieving itself it hides its faeces on its own. It has also been mentioned even in the bible that after relieving yourself in the bush you must hide your faeces.)

Khan (2013:870) refers to the fact that even in the bible menstruation blood and defecation are euphemised; he maintains that menstruation and defecation are distasteful bodily functions.

Pastor C said:

> Euphemisms that avoid distasteful things in the Venḓa bible include *"u tshi ya ḓakani"* meaning "to sit outside". *"U ḓithivhedza milenzhe"* meaning "to cover your legs" for "to defecate." Menstruation is referred to "woman's way". If you want to check the truth about this read Deut. 23:14 and Gen. 18:11.

There are various euphemistic terms used in referring to defecation in Tshivenḓa which are given in the following table.

Table 4.9: Euphemisms for Defecation in Tshivenḓa

Ordinary Venḓa word	Venḓa Euphemisms	English Literal meaning
Makaka	Tshika / Malatwa	Dirt
U kaka	U ḓithusa	To help oneself
	U bvela nga nnda	To go outside
	U ṱambuluwa	To remove faeces
	U ya shangoni	To go to the land
	U ya u rea maivha	To go to relieve oneself

4.3.1.1.3   Flatulation

Flatulation is the release of gaseous substance from the lower intestinal tract through the anus (*The Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary,* 2008). It is often accompanied by some noise. Among the Vhavenḓa, it is socially unacceptable to flatulate in public and it is considered a face-threatening act. This is due to the foul smell of the discharged gases. Venḓa children are taught from a young age, through songs, that it is wrong to flatulate in public and if they do it they are mocked with songs. It is sometimes hard to control flatulation and the noisy discharge is often heard causing embarrassment; among polite company it is considered as a lack of respect and of good morals. Whenever it is spoken of, suitable and acceptable euphemisms are used to avoid embarrassment.

Various euphemistic terms are used to refer to flatulating in Tshivenḓa; these are given in the following table, Table 4.10.

Table 4.10: Euphemisms for Flatulation in Tshivenḓa

Ordinary Venḓa word	Venḓa Euphemisms	English Literal meaning
U sula	*U bvisa muya*	to pass out air
	U pinya	to pass out air
	U tshikafhadza mufhe	to spoil the air
	U ponyokwa	to pass out air unexpectedly

4.3.1.1.4   Urination

According to *The Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (2008) urine is a clear amber solution of waste product resulting from the filtration process that takes place in the kidney and urination is the act of passing it out of the body - a very important bodily process. However, urination is not a process that openly discussed, especially in polite company, and if there is a need to mention it, a euphemism should be used in order not to annoy or irritate the listeners. In many cultures, including Tshivenḓa, men urinate standing and women urinate squatting down which explains the different use of urinals and toilet seats for men and women respectively. Traditional Healer C explained:

Ṅwananyana u gudiswa uri a tshi ṱambuluwa a ṱambuluwe o gwadama kana u tumba hai o ima sa mutukana. Zwi a ila nahone zwa dovha zwa shonisa u vhona musidzana a tshi ḓithusa o ima nahone u tea u ḓithusa bvungwi ho khudaho. Vha a vhona mutukana, uyo ha dini u tea u mona na muri a ḓithusa na ene o dzumbama. (Girls are taught to urinate while squatting down, not boys. It is taboo and embarrassing to see girls urinating while standing and it must be in a secluded place away from the public, to a boy there is no problem, he must hide himself behind a tree to relieve himself.)

The above response from the Traditional Healer C is echoed by Njoroge and Mukhwana (2015:193) when they write:

In many cultures, Kikuyu being one of them, men urinate while standing and women urinate while squatting down, thus the difference of urinals and toilet seats for men and women respectively. This must be in a secluded place away from the public, as urination in public is treated as a face threatening act which can result in punishment.

The various euphemistic terms used to refer to urination in Tshivenḓa are included in the following table.

Table 4.11: Euphemisms for Urination in Tshivenḓa

Ordinary Venḓa word	Venḓa Euphemisms	English Literal meaning
Runda	*U ḓithusa*	To relieve oneself
	U ima	To stand
	U kaidza mbevha	To chase mice away
	U tambuluwa	To pass out urine
	U shisha	Urination of children

4.3.1.1.5   Ejaculation

Ejaculation happens when the male genitalia is stimulated or excited and the seminal fluid is forced to flow down in the urinary tract and out of the body. From the study, it was found that among the body effluvia processes the only one known to give consistent pleasure is ejaculation (Shail, Andrew and Gillian, 2005:148). Although in most societies the main aim of ejaculation is reproduction, it has a secondary function of recreation with a cooperative partner (Mukhwana & AKabiru, 2014:57).

Ejaculation is a taboo and sensitive topic in Tshivenḓa. According to Allan and Burridge (2006:1), taboos surround topics, such as bodies and their effluvia; the organs and acts of sex which includes ejaculation; defecation; disease; death and killing, including hunting and fishing; naming, addressing, touching and viewing

persons and sacred beings, objects and places; and food gathering, preparation and consumption. In support of this Chief A said:

> Aya a u helwa ndi a lemelaho na u a thoma, ha ambei zwi a ila. Hezwi ndi zwi fhelekedzaho vhudzekani. Arali zwa sa vha hone u takadzana hu ḓo vha ngafhi? Vhana vha ḓo bva ngafhi. Ndivho yazwo ndi yeneyo. (This topic of ejaculation is a sensitive one to start discussing; you can't talk about it, its taboo. If ejaculation is not reached where sexual pleasure and children would come from, that is the main aim of ejaculation.)

Pastor B added that the issue of ejaculation was even discussed in the Venḓa Bible:

> The bible says in Leviticus 15:16-18: Arali munna o fhalalelwa nga mbeu yawe, onoyo nga a ṱambe muvhili wawe woṱhe, a vhe wa tshika ḽi vhuye ḽi kovhele. Zwiambaro zwoṱhe zwe zwa rothelwa nga mbeu yawe, na nguvho dzoṱhe dzi ṱanzwiwe nga maḓi, dzi vhe dza tshika ḽi vhuye ḽi kovhele. Na musadzi we a lala na munna we a fhalalelwa nga mbeu yawe, vhuvhili havho nga vha yo ṱamba, vha vhe vha tshika ḽi vhuye ḽi kovhele. (When a man has an emission of seed, he must bath his whole body in water and he will be unclean till evening. Any clothing or leather that has semen on it must be washed with water, and it will be unclean till evening. When a man lies with a woman and there is emission of semen, both must bathe with water, and they will be unclean till evening.)

In this bible extract, euphemism is used where, instead of ejaculation, the Tshivenḓa Bible uses *"u fhalalelwa nga mbeu"* ("emission of seed"). *"Vhunna"* ("sperm") is euphemised as "seed". It advises that the emission of seed should be followed by a bath regardless of how it came about. The bible says that one who comes in contact with somebody's fluids should regard him/herself as unclean and seek cleansing.

Various euphemistic terms are used to refer to ejaculation in Tshivenḓa, such as those in the following table.

Table 4.12: Euphemisms Used to Refer to Ejaculation in Tshivenḓa

Venḓa Euphemisms	English Literal meaning
Vhunna	Sperm
Thanga	Seeds
U hwela	Ejaculate
ngoṅwalurandala	Impotence

According to the findings of this study, during sexual intercourse both men and women ejaculate. However, Traditional Healer C maintained:

> Hai, ndi munna a no helwa, musadzi u helwa a tshi ita mini, (No! Only men ejaculate, what is the reason for a woman to ejaculate.)

As the Vhavenḓa is a male dominated community - despite being matrilineal - ejaculation is regarded a male affair and the euphemisms in Table 4.12 are male dominated.

Generally, participants' views and the literature suggest that what are considered disgusting and embarrassment topics, such as menstruation, defecation, urination and ejaculation are related to body effluvia that in Tshivenḓa cannot be discussed openly without the use of euphemisms. It has been shown to be supported by the Tshivenḓa Bible. Bodily effluvia and acts of excretion in Tshivenḓa are part of taboos which relate to many different things, ranging from names of ancestors to certain natural processes of the body (Walker, 2014:3). According to Allan and Burridge (2006:1), taboos emerge from social constrictions on behaviour that may cause harm, discomfort or injury to speakers or listeners; how each taboo is handled depends greatly on the cultural norms of a given society. In Tshivenḓa it is believed that open discussions of some bodily effluvia can cause harm or discomfort for interlocutors. It has been said that the cultural norms of a given society determine what is acceptable and what must be avoided. Tshivenḓa cultural norms compel avoidance of open discussions concerning menstruation, defecation, urination and ejaculation processes. The taboo nature of these bodily effluvia makes them unacceptable issues to discuss openly without the use of euphemism. Indeed, euphemisms are a "shield against the offensive nature of taboo expressions" (Agyekum, 1994:372).

Chief C said:

> Vha nga mu vhudza muthu vhone uri u khou penga naho a khou penga, u a lowa, vha nga zwi amba uri muthu u a tswa vhone, kana uri muthu u na HIV na AIDS, zwi a ri balela sa Vhavenḓa u amba nga ha u felwa ri sa shumisi manakisedzi. Zwi a lwisa na u vhanga dzikhakhathi. Manakisedzi ndi a ndeme kha haya masia a luambo nga maanḓa ri tshi amba nga mafhungo a vhaisaho. (Can you tell a person that he/she is mad even if he/she is mad; can you tell person that he/she is a witch; can you openly tell a person that he/she is a thief; or he/she has HIV and AIDS. It is difficult for us as Vhavenḓa people to discuss death issues without using

euphemisms. It leads to squabbles and conflicts. Euphemisms are of great importance in this regards especially when talking about heart breaking news.)

From the chief's response, it can be said that topics – other than those connected to bodily effluvia - such as those related to madness, witchcraft, theft, diseases and death cannot be discussed openly without the use of euphemisms in Tshivenḓa. These are topics that cause social discomfort and are heart-breaking topics. Elderly Man A cited the use of euphemisms for death:

> Na dzula ni tshi amba ngalwo ni vha ni tshi khou lu ramba muḓini, a lu ambwi ngalwo, lufu lu a vhaisa na ofhisa. Mavhuvhisi a hone a u shumisa. (If you continue talking about death, you invite it to your home; death causes pain and it is frightening. There are euphemisms to use.)

The above response by Elderly Man A supports the fact that Tshivenḓa speaking people have traditionally been reluctant to deal with the subject of death in straightforward terms. They do not understand it and they feel uneasy when talking about it. It is true that death causes pain; it is common human nature to avoid mentioning things that cause pain and unpleasantness as they are exactly the very things people try to avoid. Generally, all people do not feel happy and comfortable around dead bodies as they are shrouded in mystery.

As in many cultures, in Tshivenḓa death is considered a taboo topic and there is some hypersensitivity towards it because of its connection with meanings and ideas that people cannot mention overtly. The concept underlying death as a taboo topic implies that it may not be touched or approached as it is sacred and, therefore, forbidden. Allan and Burridge (1991:153; 2006:222), Hughes (2000:43-43) and Mey, (2001:33-34) argue that death is a free-based taboo in which different fears coexist, namely: fear of the loss of loved ones; fear of the corruption of the body; fear of evil spirits; and fear of what comes after death.

The fact that death is connected with pain over the loss of a loved one, trying not to make this pain worse requires a careful choice of words. Whether because of superstition, fear or social respect, the fact remains that when facing death speakers try to soften the effect of what they really wish to communicate; death euphemisms are used to avoid embarrassing death words and expressions and they are replaced with more moderate ones. Watts (2003:67) believes that death euphemisms foster

harmony in the course of social interaction and bridge the hiatus generated from the taboo topic of death. Elderly Woman A, an educator from one of the secondary schools, said:

> Musi hu na zwiwo zwi vhaisaho sa lufu muḓini, hu tshi khou bikwa nga khulu ndi hone hune wa ḓo pfa hu tshi shumiswa mavhuvhisi nga vhuḓalo. (In times of heart breaking disasters like in times of death in the family, it is that time when you will hear people using euphemisms abundantly.)

In support of the Elderly Woman A mentioned above, Pastor B explained that when consoling others in times of bereavement euphemisms are always used.

The word *"u fa"* (to die) or *"lufu"* (death) in Tshivenḓa are considered to be taboo words. People feel that it is better to use indirect words in their place which supports the Speech Act Theory of Austin (1962) and Searle (1969) which concerns saying things indirectly. Searle (1979) is of the opinion that speakers communicate more to the listeners than they actually say by way of their mutually shared background knowledge - both linguistic and non-linguistic, together with the general power of rationality and inference on the part of the listeners. At times interlocutors use indirect forms because they do not want to hurt those that they are telling this "heartbreaking news."

There are people who, if they are told heartbreaking news may faint or die and, therefore, it is better to use mild words; for instance, instead of saying *"to die" (u fa)* use the phrase *" u eḓela"* (to sleep). They could say *"Makhulu wanga vhe vha vha vha tshi khou lwala sibadela vho eḓela"* (My granny who was ill at the hospital has slept). In this example sentence, the interlocutor uses a euphemism, *"u eḓela"* (to sleep) which is less painful than the ordinary phrase, *"u fa"* which refers to "death". The interlocutors using the above example are cooperating which is the reason why they are able to understand each other and are able to converse with one another amicably.

In terms of heartbreaking issues or topics that cause social discomfort special words are available to veil those circumstances. In addressing issues connected with death in Tshivenḓa words that follow usually dominate the scene. For example, *"Vha tshi yo vha ṱolela sibadela vho wana "hu si tshe na muthu"* (When visiting her/him at the

hospital no person was found). The expression *"hu si tshe na muthu"* literally means "no person was found." *"Hu si tshe na muthu"* is a euphemism for the word "die". In Tshivenḓa blunt word "die" is not used when referring to an instance where a person has died, rather polite words are used, like "*a hu tshe na muthu*" or *"a vha tsheho"* which figuratively mean "he/she is no more" and *"Vho ri sia"* (he/she is gone).

When talking about funerals, euphemisms dominate the scene, for example: *"Vho ṱoḓa "vhulalo" hawe naa?"* (Have you searched the "casket" for her/him?). In the example above the word *"vhulalo"* is a euphemism which refers to "casket". During funerals, words like *"bogisi"* (coffin) and *"mavhiḓani"* (graveyard or graveside) are not spoken; instead the euphemisms *"vhulalo"* (casket) and "*vhuaweloni*" are heard. *"Vhulalo"* is a euphemism for the blunt and unacceptable word for "bogisi" (coffin) in Tshivenḓa; the same applies to *"vhuaweloni"* which literally means "place to rest", which is a euphemism for the word *"grave*". *"Vhuaweloni hawe ha tshoṱhe"* meaning "his/her final resting place" - referring to his/her grave.

Everything related to death is treated sensitively. People responsible for digging graves in Tshivenḓa are referred to as *"dziphele"* which literally mean "hyenas". In Tshivenḓa *"dziphele"* is a polite word which is used to refer to gravediggers. It is unacceptable to call them *"vhabwi vha mavhiḓa"* (people who dig graves"). According to Chief B:

> Ee ndi vhabwi vha mavhiḓa nga nyito, fhedzi a ri vha vhidzi nga u ralo, ri a zwi nakisa nga u shumisa maipfi a u kuvhatedza mushumo wavho.(Yes they are the gravediggers as the name suggest, but we do not call them like that, we use an acceptable word referring to what they do.)

The Traditional Healers, Elderly Men and Women, Chiefs and Pastors all agreed that *"mavhiḓani"* is the ordinary Tshivenḓa word which refers to "graveyard/cemetery"; it has the following Tshivenḓa euphemisms: *"zwaloni"* (which literally means "dumping site"), "*muḓitshete*" ("quiet house or quiet place"), *"haya ha vho lalaho lwa tshoṱhe"* ("home for those who slept for good) and *"zwirabani"* (which means seedling place).

In the Venḓa area, the euphemistic expression *"haya ha vho lalaho tshidele"* which means "home for those who slept peacefully" is used to refer to a mortuary. For some people who do not know its origin, it can be mistakenly referred to a graveyard or cemetery. The expression, *"haya ha vho lalaho tshidele",* is a slogan of a certain

mortuary which is situated around Ṱhohoyanḓou which accounts for why this expression is most well-known to the people surrounding Ṱhohoyanḓou and those who once used the services of the mortuary. It may, therefore, be said that certain factors influence the formation and origin of some euphemisms in a language. The formation of the expression, *"haya ha vho lalaho tshidele"* ("home for those who sleep peacefully") is in accordance with Arif's (2015:153) statement: "Among the factors affecting the formation of euphemisms, the most essential ones are regional emergence, culture of the area, its customs and traditions, specific location, etc." It can safely be said that the euphemism *"haya ha vho lalaho tshidele"* ("home for those who sleep peacefully") is of regional origin.

The formation of euphemisms of this type is also found in other languages. Arif, (2015:153) gives the following example: for the expression "go to the toilet"*,* in English there are various synonymous expressions, such as "go to the loo"*,* and "to visit Lady Periam." He maintains that if they are carefully examined it can be seen that the latter is more euphemistic in nature and sounds a bit peculiar. Arif, (2015:153) explains that students at the Balliol College of Oxford University, for instance, frequently use the euphemistic expression "visit Lady Periam" instead of "go to toilet" because the college toilets were built on lands donated by Lady Periam.

It is obvious, then, that such a choice of euphemism made during a conversation might not be understood by everyone who lives in the UK, simply because it has a very narrow, specific usage (Arif, 2015:153). In the south of England, for example, another expression, "spend a penny", is used which also means "go to the toilet". Therefore, its creation involves a regional cultural factor and this euphemism will not be perceived by all Englishmen in the same way (Arif, 2015:153).

Elderly Man D was of the opinion that

> Maṅwe matatathino a vhumbea hu tshi tevhelwa maitele a zwe nyito ya iteisa zwone. (Some of the euphemisms are formed based on the way in which an action has taken place.)

He gave the following examples:

- *"Malofha avho o fhalalela badani"* which literally means "their blood was shed along the road."
- *"Vho ḓihaṱula vhutshilo havho"* which means "to kill oneself."
- *"Vhulwadze ho bala"* ("to die after an illness").

The three examples given above are all euphemistic expressions for the blunt and unacceptable *"u fa"* (to die); the meaning of dying is the same, but the way in which such death occurred differs. The euphemistic expression, *"malofha avho o fhalalela badani"* ("their blood was shed along the road"), means that death occurred due to a road accident. They were involved in a car/motor accident and died on the spot.

Another euphemistic expression, "*Vho ḓihaṱula vhutshilo havho*" ("to kill oneself"), is a euphemism for dying by committing suicide; death was a result of suicide while the euphemistic expression, *"Vhulwadze ho bala"*, means "to die after an illness." This is a euphemism for the word "die" but it means that death came as a result of a long illness. These euphemisms owe their origin to a particular manner of the death, namely, the manner in which death occurred. Therefore, the manner in which something happen also has a great influence on the formation of various euphemisms.

Arif (2015:154) contends that some euphemisms owe their origins to a particular manner, location and geographic environment, namely: the mountainous area in the west of America; those referring to "death" in the west are "go with the tide" or "go over the range" or "cross the Great Divide." It appears, therefore, that particular manners, locations and geographic environments have a great influence on the formation of various euphemisms. As Pastor D commented:

> Musi ri kha nyimele dzi vhaisaho, dzi pfisaho vhuṱungu sa dzimpfuni, ri tea u nanguludza maipfi, ra shumisa maipfi a sa ḓo vhaisaho vhalidzi. Ra wana maipfi a khuthadzaho vha muṱa. Bivhili yashu ya Tshivenḓa i na maipfi o teaho u shumisa kha nyimele dzoṱhe, dza madakaloni na zwililoni. (In times of bad situations, times of pains and sorrow like in funerals, we have to select suitable words that can comfort the bereaved family members. Our Venḓa bible has all suitable words that suit every situation, be in times of happiness or in times of sorrow.)

Pastors A, B and C cited a few euphemisms from the bible to support the response given by Pastor D which are included in Table 4.13, below.

Table 4.13: Some Euphemisms from the Bible for Death-related Issues in Tshivenḓa

Ordinary word	Euphemisms used	English Literal meaning	Chapter and verse from the bible
U fa	*U lala*	To lie down	Isaah 14:8
	U eḓela	To sleep	Jeremiah 51:39
	U gonya ha muṋe wawe	To ascend to the father	Genesis 37:5
	U dzhiiwa	To be snatched	Job 9:2
U vhulunga	*U awedza*	To put to rest	Proverb 21:16
Mavhiḓa	*Dzinnḓu*	Houses	Job 17:13

The cited euphemisms from the bible support the statement by Neaman and Silver (1995:66) who consider euphemisms as "indirect substitutes of words naming the dreadful, shameful or offensive, leading to mitigating effect, that are brought to life by moral or religious motives and a linguistic device that acts as bailout."

Fataliyeva (2015:152) believes that "one great use of words is to hide our thoughts." This is a concise explanation of why people use euphemisms - the substitution of an inoffensive word or phrase for something generally considered offensive or insensitively explicit. Because the reality of death and dying makes us feel uncomfortable, we often resort to various euphemisms to indirectly reference the inevitable end of the human condition.

Euphemisms related to death are found everywhere in the world. According to Slovenko (2005:544), in the funeral business in England and other European countries coffins are "caskets"; hearses are called "professional cars"; corpses have become "beautiful memory pictures" to be displayed in a "slumber room"; and undertakers are "funeral directors." In the distant past those who buried the dead were called "gravediggers" and then they became more organized, raised their fees and called themselves "undertakers." As the name "undertaker" had a gloomy connotation, they changed it to "mortician." Now there is what is termed the "death care industry." just as in England and other European countries - mentioned by Slovenko (2005:544), various euphemisms are used to refer to issues related to

death that cause social discomfort and heartbreak in the Tshivenḓa language, such as those given in the following table.

Table 4.14: Some Euphemisms Related to Death as a Topic that causes Social Discomfort and Heartbreak

Ordinary Venḓa word	Venḓa euphemisms	English Literal meaning
Bogisi	*Vhulalo*	Box
	Vhueḓelo	Box
U fa	*U eḓela*	To sleep
	U awela	To rest
	U sia vhathu	To leave people behind
	U laṱetshelwa	To lose something
	A vha tshee ho	He/she is no more

The study has shown that ordinary Tshivenḓa-speaking people use euphemisms to a great extent and do not have any difficulty in identifying them. Several participants interviewed by the researcher confirmed that they found it easy to identify Tshivenḓa euphemisms in that when involved in discussion, it was possible to detect certain words which are not in ordinary use in Tshivenḓa. This, it seems, is particularly easy in the case of persons who are conversant with the Tshivenḓa language and know the meanings of its euphemisms. For instance, the expression *"u ya bungani"* (to go to the toilet) is an ordinary way of speaking which is common and is understood by both native and non-native speakers of Tshivenḓa. As the word *"bunga"* (toilet) sounds impolite, Tshivenḓa speakers rather use a euphemism to sound polite and, hence, the use the following euphemism: *"u ya nḓuni ṱhukhu"* which literally means "to go to the small house." A person who is not conversant with Tshivenḓa euphemisms would not understand the actual meaning of *"u ya nḓuni ṱhukhu"* as going to the toilet but would misinterpret it as going to any small house in the area which altogether distorts the intended meaning. In such a situation there would be what is referred to as pragmatic failure which Thomas (1983:44) considers to be the inability of an individual to understand what is said in an interlocution.

Although *"nḓuni ṱhukhu"* is a Tshivenḓa euphemism for "toilet", the same word, *"nḓuni ṱhukhu"* may have yet another euphemistic meaning: *"ḓakani"* which literally means to go to the bush. Pastor D explained that this phrase may have originated in the fact that in the old days people had no toilets but used to go into the bush to respond to the call of nature.

The use of these euphemisms clearly indicates that there is a tendency by interlocutors to avoid using certain words or phrases which are considered taboo or which may hurt or insult anybody; if these words were to be used, society would say *"o sema muthu"* (one has insulted a person). Tshivenḓa euphemisms are used because speakers want to show respect for their culture - as opposed to using direct words which at times sound insolent. There are specific times when speakers would want to use euphemisms, but not all the time. They would use euphemisms, for instance, when they are talking about the history of the Vhavenḓa kingship to their children round a fire as a way of teaching their children not to be misfits in society.

In the above example it is evident that the Speech Act Theory of Searle (1967) has been applied, where speakers choose to use indirect speech due to the nature of the conversation which is a way of avoiding the use of exact common words for fear of hurting or annoying someone. Indirect illocutions tend to be more polite as they increase the degree of optionality and because the more indirect an illocution is, the more diminished and tentative its force tends to be.

The Politeness Theory of Brown and Levinson (1987) has been taken into consideration by the speakers. In the above examples, especially where there is reference to age, sex and even the nature of relationship between the referents. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), politeness theory contends that politeness should help us try to develop a model that concentrates on choices interlocutors make in actual contexts and it allows for cross-cultural variability. For instance, the short conversation given below would constitute a typical application of euphemistic language.

> **Masindi:** *Vho-Tshinakaho makhulu vho ya ngafhi?* (Tshinakaho, where has granny gone to?)
>
> **Tshinakaho**: *Vho ya nḓuni ṱhukhu* (She has gone to the small house (She has gone to the toilet)).

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The terminology *"nḓuni ṱhukhu"* sounds more polite than *"bungani"* (toilet) which is associated with insolence. In this scenario there is also the idea of not wanting *to* 'lose face' by the two speakers because the word "toilet" is associated with defecatory and excretory activities which causes people in this Venḓa society to feel shy or even embarrassed. Upon mentioning that word, the speaker will not look the one s/he is conversing with in the eyes but would rather shyly look down. This finding is in line with what Wilson (1993:87) says when describing euphemisms as words with meanings or sounds thought somehow to be nicer, cleaner or more elevated and so used as substitutes for words deemed unpleasant, crude or ugly in sound or sense. Allan and Burridge (1991:14) consider euphemisms to be alternatives to dispreferred expressions and are used in order to avoid possible "loss of face." The aspect of face has to do with a person's self-image which is responsible for the emotional and social sense of "self" that every individual possesses and expects every other person to recognise. It is also the desire of an individual to be appreciated and not to be imposed upon (Allan and Burridge, 1991:14).

Oksana (2015:129) and Rawson (1995:1) maintain that euphemisms are society's basic *lingua franca* and, as such, they are outward and visible signs of our inward anxieties, conflicts, fears, and shames; by tracing them it is possible to see what has been, and is, going on in people's minds and cultures. It has been said that all languages have euphemisms and that without euphemisms normal everyday life would become impossible.

Furthermore, in the above example, the aspect of Grice's (1975) conversational implicature is applicable in the sense that the speakers are implying the meaning of *"nḓuni ṱhukhu"* (the euphemism for toilet). Grice (1975) is regarded as the initiator of a communicative principle dealing with indirectly-conveyed meaning called 'conversational implicature' where communication is viewed as a series of cooperative efforts between the participants who observe a common principle which is referred to as the Cooperative Principle (CP). Grice (1975) suggests that conversational implicature is an attempt to explain what a hearer understands from what is said to what is meant; from the level of expressed meaning to level of implied meaning. However, what is implied varies according to the context of the utterance.

The examples cited above suggest that euphemisms may be described on the basis of meaning or semantics. In this regard, they may be classified as hyponyms, where there is one umbrella term with other terminologies. For instance, the term *"u vha na thumbu"* (to fall pregnant) has the following terminologies or euphemisms: "*u ḓihwala*" (which literally means, to carry oneself) and "*u sa ima zwavhuḓi*" (not to stand well). Therefore, it may be said that these other terminologies for the phrase would semantically have different words which mean the same as the initial word.

The subject of sex is normally likely to elicit embarrassment and it is a potent source of euphemism for both African and Westerners of most ages and from most walks of life. It is inappropriate to talk about sex and body organs related to sexual activity without the use of euphemism in Tshivenḓa. Nash (1995:17) states that the sexual act and related body parts - even clothing that is in direct contact with these body parts, i.e., underwear - are embarrassing topics to talk about without the use of euphemism in many cultures. During their early youth Tshivenḓa children are not allowed to look at or see the private parts of the opposite sex; hence, the adage *"ni ḓo swinga maṱo"* (you will be blind) or *"ni ḓo bva tshisikamama"* (you will develop a small pimple below the eyelid). It is taboo to look at the private parts of a sister or brother and if children ask why it is prohibited, they are told that if you look at them they will suffer the consequences. The elders used to say *"ni ḓo zwi vhona"* (you will see) which simply meant that you will be punished; they may also say: *"zwi a ila"* (its taboo) and all taboos of the society or community must respect unless otherwise the consequences for not adhering to them will be suffered.

"U swinga maṱo" (getting blind) and *"u bva tshisikamama"* (developing a small pimple below the eyelid), mentioned above, were the consequences or punishment for not respecting taboos, According to Alland and Burridge (2006:8), taboo is more than ritual prohibition and avoidance; infraction of taboos can be dangerous to the individual and to his/her society and it can lead to illness or death. The violation of taboos may result in penalties, such as corporal punishment, incarceration, social ostracism or mere disapproval.

Although changes have taken place since the sexual liberation of the 1960s and Americans and the English may be more open about sex which is stll a taboo subject in many other cultures (Xiaohua, 2015:137), Tshivenḓa speaking people prefer to

talk about sex in euphemistical terms. Venḓa citizens may feel embarrassed and deem it vulgar when sex is referred to without using a euphemism which is why there is a large number of euphemisms for sexual organs and activities in Tshivenḓa.

All participants interviewed in this research confirmed that sex was a very sensitive and embarrassing topic to discuss without the use of euphemisms. Traditional Healer A even said:

> Hei, haya mafhungo a vhudzekani a a konḓa na u shonisa u ambwa ngazwo". Ro aluwa hu tshi pfi a zwi ambiwi zwi a ila (These issue concerning sex are very difficult and embarrassing to talk about; when growing up we knew that sex is a sensitive issue and it is a taboo to talk about it.)

Traditional Healer B maintained that sex was a life experience too vulnerable to be discussed without safeguards. As such, people are reluctant to deal with the subject of sex using straightforward terms in order to distort reality or make the unpleasant appear attractive.

Traditional Healer C explained that the only place where sexual matters were discussed in the Vhavenḓa culture was in initiation schools – but not the gist of it. At a *"dzikhomba"* school for grown up girls they are only taught how to handle a husband; endurance; solving problems; and to clean their bodies before they go to bed and after sexual intercourse. For boys at *"murunduni"* (boy's initiation school) nothing special about sexual activities is mentioned: the removal of their foreskins becomes the order of the day, and only vulgar words to scorn girls are taught during the night in songs as well as how to solve problems in the family and endurance in the family circle.

Elderly Woman A, who the researcher interviewed, agreed that the only time that she discussed matters concerning sex was when she was about to be married; the discussion took place between herself and her mother; they did not discuss actual sexual activities in detailed but rather how she should clean her body, especially her private parts; how to endure marital problems; cleanliness in the family; and not denying sexual intercourse to her husband if she was not ill.

Pastor A commented on what the Elderly Woman A had related; he maintained that churches had started programmes to initiate women before they were married, referring to it as a shower programme. Initially, this programme was specially designed as a party where a woman would be given gifts before she got married. However, after realising that there was a high rate of divorce and death which, according to this pastor, were related to sexual problems and dishonesty in terms of extra-marital affairs in the family, this shower programme had now started teaching young women and boys how they should behave in the family context. This pastor described how sexual matters were touched on - but not in detail; rather the programme dwells mainly on how to handle financial issues and transparency within the family. If sexual issues are broached, it would be from a biblical point of view where euphemisms would be used to handle such topics.

It seems from the findings of the study that there is a need for euphemisms within the society - both social and emotional - as they allow for discussion of "touchy" or taboo subjects, such as sex, personal appearance and religion without enraging, outraging or upsetting people; they act as a pressure valve whilst maintaining the appearance of civility (Ham, 2001:43).

Pastor A was of the opinion that even in the bible sex has always been considered a private matter and, as such, inappropriate to be discussed in public. However, today churches try to discuss it, especially when trying to resolve family problems. He said that it was not surprising that euphemisms for sex are much older than Shakespeare's puns; some of the oldest recorded ones may be traced back to the Bible. "Why does the Bible say, 'Adam knew his wife'? the pastor A asked and concluded; "Yes, It is obvious he should know the woman to whom he was married!' Another pastor, Pastor B, responded to the question posed by explaining that the expression, "Adam knew his wife", means he had sexual intercourse with her; because, as a result, "she conceived" (Genesis 4:1). To say Adam "knew his wife" (rather than to say 'he had sex with her') is an example of euphemism.

The responses of these pastors led to the discussion of many biblical euphemisms for sexual intercourse which, they said, are listed in *Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible*, The following are some of the euphemisms for sexual intercourse found in the bible which were cited by the pastors:

- Adam knew Eve ... and she conceived (Genesis 4:1).

- Go in unto my maid ... obtain children by her (Genesis 16:2).

- A man ... to come in unto us (Genesis 19:31).

- Jacob ... went in unto her (Genesis 29:23).

- Abimelech had not come near her (Genesis 20:4).

- Thou shalt not approach to his wife (Leviticus 18:14).

- When I came to her, I found her not a maid (Deuteronomy 22:14).

- I went unto the prophetess; and she conceived (Isaiah 8:3).

- Thou hast humbled her (Deuteronomy 21:14).

- He took her, and lay with her (Genesis 34:2).

Elderly Man A added:

> Yaa, a zwo ngo leluwa u amba nga ha mafhungo a kwamaho vhudzekani, ni nga amba na khonani yaṋu fhedzi nahone hu si khagala, ni tshi nga vha no dzula fhethu ho khudaho ni vhavhili, nahone ni tshi khou shumisa mavhuvhisi. (Yes, it is not easy to discuss issues concerning sex; you can only discuss it with your close friend not in public, but in a secluded place using euphemisms).

Sexual issues are very sensitive to discuss in the family circle or in public in the Venḓa culture; when people discuss such a topic in public without using euphemisms, they are called names and they are regarded as immoral and ill-mannered. Those within the community would not even want to be associated with such people or even with members of their families; their families would also be regarded as having no morals. It is for that reason that euphemisms play an important role in all languages, including Tshivenḓa. Allan and Burridge (2006:144) maintain that "sexual activity is tabooed as a topic for public discussion and display and it is severely constrained as a topic for discussion."

Euphemism is a linguistic tool that is universal in almost all languages in both spoken and written discourse. People tend to use euphemism to mitigate discourteous discourse; to hide unmannered ideas; to camouflage unpleasant thoughts; and to use figures of speech, such as metonymy, pun, metaphor and so on, for replacing taboo words (Fan, 2006:73).

According to Elderly Man B:

> Kuambele ukwu kha ṅwana wa Muvenḓa a ku gudiswi muthu, ku ḓa kwone kuṋe musi muthu a tshi khou aluwa muṱani u na mikhwa, a guda u shumisa maipfi a ṱanganedzeaho musi a tshi khou amba na vhaṅwe., Sa tsumbo, a ri nga mu pfi a tshi ri "Vha khou zwifha," u ḓo ri "vha khou swaswa" a tshi mba muthu muhulwane o zwi gudiswa hayani. (A Venḓa child is not taught how to use euphemisms when talking; it just comes on its own while growing up in the family that has morals. S/he learns how to use acceptable words while communicating with others. For an example, you will not hear him/her saying, "You are lying" he/she shall say "you are joking" when referring to an elderly person.)

The responses from the participants suggest that euphemism is a pervasive human phenomenon that is so deeply woven into virtually every known culture that one may be tempted to claim that every human has been pre-programmed to find ways to talk about tabooed subjects - as Ham (2001:42) claims. Keyes (2010:247), on the other hand, calls the pre-programmed way to talk a "euphemizing instinct" and uses medical research conducted by Valerie Curtis as evidence. Curtis claims that our need for euphemisms originates in the newer parts of our brain where complex thoughts are created; spontaneously uttered words emerge from the limbic brain. Keyes (2010:247) agrees with Curtis' theory which suggests that creating euphemisms may have contributed to developing our ability to think, since the brain and our ability to speak have been evolving concurrently.

Even though some participants claimed that the use of euphemism comes on its own while growing up in a family that has morals, they believe that there is a need to apply one's mind and one's intellect. Keyes (2010: 30-31) believes that "euphemisms are a key indicator of increasing complexity of language speech. Saying what we mean takes a high order of intelligence. It takes an even higher order to not say what we mean, while still conveying our thought." Algeo, John, and Pyles (2009:34) are of the opinion that the utilisation of euphemism in language is not simply a formal system of sounds, words and syntactical structures but that language is also a means of communication for humans within their beliefs, attitudes, customs, behaviour and social habits and this is what is meant by culture. Each language in society accumulates rules according to which concrete statements are interpreted abstractly and which are valid through common usage. Similarly, Corder (1995:90) states that "what the learner of a language needs primarily to know, is not so much

how to recognize and produce sentences as linguistic objects but how to make and understand utterances which express certain concepts, perform certain communicative acts, and in general enable the learner to participate in interactional processes of normal language use."

Elderly Woman D reminded participants that, at times, some euphemisms lose their euphemistic function; this happens when a euphemism becomes so common that it sounds like ordinary words and where it no longer perform its euphemistic function of replacing an offensive word or expression. When this happens another euphemism is created to replace it - unless challenges arise that cause an inability to euphemise. Instances where euphemisms lose their function rapidly by association with the actuality of what they designate are regularly replaced with euphemisms which are referred to as the **"euphemism treadmill."**

The term "euphemism treadmill" was introduced and explained in detail by Steven Pinker in his article "*The Game of the Name*" where he says that

> "to a linguist, the phenomenon is familiar: the euphemism treadmill. People invent new 'polite' words to refer to emotionally laden or distasteful things, but the euphemism becomes tainted by association and the new one that must be found acquires its own negative connotations, for an example: 'Water closet' becomes 'toilet' (originally a term for anybody care, as in 'toilet kit'), which becomes 'bathroom,' which becomes 'restroom,' which becomes 'lavatory.' The euphemism treadmill shows that concepts, not words, are in charge: give a concept a new name, and the name becomes colored by the concept; the concept does not become freshened by the name" (Pinker, 1994:34).

An example of the "euphemism treadmill" in Tshivenḓa is the expression *"u lalana";* originally the expression *"u lalana"* (to sleep at each other) was a euphemism but its continuous use by people in their everyday life caused it to lose its euphemistic value and it no longer functioned as a euphemism but just as an ordinary expression. The expressions "*u eḓela tshihulwane"* (to sleep in an elderly manner); *"u daha fola"* (to smoke a cigar); *"u nwa maḓi"* (to drink water); and *"u ka muroho"* (to pick up the vegetable) are all euphemistic expressions that have replaced the expression *"u lalana"* (to sleep on each other) which has lost its value.

Another euphemism treadmill example is in the expression: *"u khou vhaisala"* (not well)*;* originally this was a euphemism for the word *"u lwala"* (to be ill). The continuous usage of the euphemism *"u vhaisala"* (to be not well) resulted in the loss of its euphemistic value. Other euphemisms for the word *"u lwala"* (to be ill) that still have their euphemistic value are *"u khou fhisa"* (to be hot) *and "u sa ḓipfa zwavhuḓi"* (not feeling well).

If the expression that has lost its euphemistic value is not replaced with another one, the task of euphemism - as remarked by Moskvin (2001:43) - to neutralize or soften unpleasant expressions or concepts by replacing them with an alternative, more neutral wording or phrasing in order to remain polite and potentially save the speaker or hearer from embarrassment, is compromised.

There are various terms associated with sexual activity and body effluvia in the Tshivenḓa language and their euphemisms which are given in the following table.

Table 4.15: Some Euphemisms in Tshivenḓa Associated with Sexual Activity and Body Parts

Ordinary word	Venḓa Euphemisms	English Literal meaning
U hulelwa	*U huluwa*	Abnormal enlargement of penis and testes
U sa tsha vutshelwa	*U kumala*	To become sexually inactive due sexual transmitted diseases
U zwimba maḓasi/matshende	*U wela*	To be swollen in the testes
Matshende	*Maḓasi*	Testes
U tatamudza vhudzimu ha musidzana	*U kwevha, U mona murahu ha tshiṱanga*	Stretching of vaginal lips by girls.
Tshifevhi	*Thumbudzi*	Prostitute
U nyovhana	*U lalana*	To sleep on each other
Bunyu	*Ṱhuru*	Naked

Elderly Woman E, an educator who teaches languages in one of the schools, commented:

Ḽitatathino ndi figara ya muambo, figara dza muambo dzi na mushumo kha luambo, kha u amba na maṅwalwoni. Figara dza muambo, u fana na ḽitatathino zwi shuma u koḓela luambo na u nakisa luambo. (Euphemism is a figure of speech; figures of speech are useful in a language - in spoken language and in literature. All figures of speech are used to enrich and to decorate the language.)

The response by this Elderly Woman suggests that another appropriate use of euphemism is to enrich and decorate language. Kientpointner (1997:263) agrees in describing euphemism as a figure of speech that is employed to add colour, decoration and an imaginative expression to linguistic use. The following examples are euphemisms of a metaphorical origin; they serve to enrich language and to decorate it:

- *"Ṅwana uyu u tou vha ṱhase ya maṱo anga, ndi takadzwa nga ningo yawe ya mupfa"* (This girl is a star of my eyes; her sharp nose gives me pleasure).
- *"ṱhase ya maṱo anga"* and *"ningo ya mupfa"* (sharp nose).

Instead of using the expression *"ṱhase ya maṱo anga"* (star of my eyes) the ordinary expression *"musidzana a takadzaho maṱo anga"* (a girl who pleases me) could have been used and instead of *"ningo ya mupfa"* (sharp nose), the expression *"wa ningo ndapfu"* (with long nose) could have been used. For girls or women it is interesting and amusing to be told that *"she has a sharp nose"* because it is believed that a sharp nose is associated with beauty and that "She has the eyes of a dove" *(maṱo a ḽiivha)* because a dove is believed to have beautiful eyes.

Aitchison (1994:76) is of the opinion that some euphemisms are intended to amuse and Pesola (1999:54) believes that even though the primary function of euphemism is to help people discuss matters involving embarrassing aspects, their usage has another role as well; metaphorical euphemisms can cause amusement and it is appropriate to use euphemisms for amusement. Elderly Man D, who is an educator, invited participants to

> … consider the expression *"ṱhase ya maṱo anga"* (star of my eyes) and the expression *"ningo ya mupfa"* (sharp nose) again. These expressions are euphemisms of metaphoric origin, their task as euphemisms are not to replace an unacceptable statement or word but to give a factual statement. The expression *"ṱhase ya maṱo anga"* (star of my eyes) becomes a fact to the speaker. To speaker the girl or the woman in question is star of his eyes.

The response from the Elderly Man above gives an impression that euphemisms as figures of speech make a factual statement; but, in fact, they make more than a factual statement. Not only do they say more, but they refer to vast and abstract elements, such as love, the sun, gesture, happiness, human warmth, pleasure and even more. According to Stockwell (2002:43), as figures of speech euphemisms are often used to express factual statements and abstract emotional or philosophical concepts. The euphemism attaches the abstract concept to a material object and, thus, is instrumental in creating powerful and dynamic communication. Therefore, the appropriate time to use euphemisms is when there is a need to express a factual statement and to make or emphasise a point. The following are typical examples:

- *"ndo mu vhudza, ha na nḓevhe"* '(I've told him, he/she does not have ears), *"u dzula nga nḓevhe"*, (he/she sits with his/her ears) and *"ha na nḓevhe"* (he/she does not have ears) are euphemisms for the expression *"ha pfi"* (he/she does not listen).
- *"u dzula nga nḓevhe"* (he/she sits with his/her ears), is a euphemism for *"ha thetshelesi"* (he/she does not listen).

The expressions *"ha pfi"* and *"ha thetshelesi"* are harsh to the listener; it is considered to be uncalled for to use *"ha pfi"* and *"ha thetshelesi"* (he/she does not listen)*,* especially when referring to an adult. It is not literally true that he/she does not have ears; that he/she does not listen; or that he/she sits with her/his ears. The speaker wants to make a point - to emphasize that he/she does not listen to anyone. This example confirms that euphemisms are appropriate to use in instances where you want to make and emphasise a point.

According to Chief D, a politician from the Tshisaulu area,

Ano maḓuvha ḽitatathino ḽo no vha na mushumo nga maanḓa nga vhorapolotiki, vhoramabinḓu na vhaṅwe. Vhorapolotiki ano maḓuvha vha shumisa ḽitatathino u fhirisa mafhungo mavhi avho nga maanḓa a sa pfesesei (These days euphemism has an important task, especially by politicians and business people and others. Politicians use euphemisms to address complicated and unacceptable issues.)

Elderly Educator E agreed with the above response by emphasising that euphemisms deceive by hiding reality in terms of meaning. Politicians, especially, who know how to choose misleading words can mislead people who do not think for themselves. The participants' views suggest that euphemisms in all languages - even in Tshivenḓa - can be used to deceive; to mislead; and to hide reality. Euphemisms serve as strong instruments to influence and sometimes to manipulate the listeners or alter their perceptions of actual facts. Many misleading words are found in public speeches, official papers, the media, etc. In advertisements, for example, euphemisms have an inducing function. Some airline companies divide the grades of passenger compartments into four. Instead of "first class" they use "deluxe" or "premium class"; "second class" is transformed into "first class"; and "third class" is revised as "business class" or "tourist class".

The use of euphemism to deceive; to mislead; and to hide reality has been expounded in various literature studies. Jackall (2009: 55) and Soles (2009:21) state that the use of euphemisms for making unmentionable concepts mentionable and less offensive is, generally, considered to be a good and acceptable things, but there are also serious objections to the use of such terms because they can be used to deceive people. According to Lacone (2003:60), "euphemisms can also hide seemingly simple and straightforward words behind deceptive or overly complex ones." La Rocque (2006:49) focuses on the controversial aspects of some euphemisms and notes that euphemisms which deal with political, military and commercial concepts can be particularly deceptive and controversial. Safire (2008:12) lends support to this view and adds that apart from political, business and military euphemisms, environmental issues, which receive a great deal of attention by both conservation groups and the mass media have led to the birth of a large number of euphemisms, many of which are misleading and highly debatable.

Examples of how euphemisms are used to deceive and hide reality in Tshivenḓa are illustrated in the following dialogue:

(Schools have closed for a holiday; Maemu and her grandmother are talking in their lounge in the morning):

Grandmother: Kwo vuwa hani kurathu kwaṋu? (How is your little sister?)

Maemu: O vuwa zwavhuḓi gugu? (She is doing well Granny.)

Grandmother: *Ha fani na inwi murathu waṋu inwi ni mutshena **ene "ndi murema" vhukuma**. (She is not like you, you are light in complexion, and she is too black in complexion.)*

Maemu: *Haa, gugu **"vha khou swaswa"** na ene ndi mutshena. (Haa, granny, you are joking she is also light in complexion).*

Grandmother: *Yoo! **"U khou kovhola."** (Yoo! She is vomiting.)*

Maemu: *Ni vhone a sa ḓo dovha a ni **"fhambutshela"**. (You have to guard her to defecate.)*

Grandmother: *Mudededzi waṋu vho wana luṅwalwo lwa uri vha ṱalutshedze uri ndi nga ni vha si nga si **"imiswe mushumoni"** nga **"u tambudza ṅwana lwa vhudzekani"**. (Your educator has received a letter requesting him to explain why he could not be laid off because of sexual abusing his child.)*

Maemu: ***"Vhalala"** vha ḓivha nga maanḓa mafhungo a shango. (Senior citizens know every news of the country.)*

Grandmother: *Ndo vhona vha tshi khou tshimbila nga moḓoro mulovha. (I saw him driving a motor car yesterday.)*

Maemu: *Ee, ndi **"second hand"** yo rengwa ṅwedzi wo fhelaho. (Yes, it is a second hand car which was bought last month.)*

In the above snippets of dialogue, all words or expressions written in bold are Tshivenḓa euphemisms, specially designed to deceive, or hide reality. The expression *"ndi murema" vhukuma* (she is too black in complexion) is a euphemism for the blunt and unacceptable expression *"ndi mutswu"* (she is too black or dark in complexion). In Tshivenḓa and in other African languages, people do not want to be

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referred to as *"black"*, especially when it comes to the colour of their skin. They no longer agree with the old adage that "Black is beautiful". If you tell someone that you are black in complexion you will be inviting a negative face, but the reality is that all Africans are black in complexion. The euphemistic word *"murema"* is acceptable but deceives people and they unconsciously accept that they are "black".

The expression *"vha khou swaswa"* (you are joking) is a euphemism for *"vha khou zwifha"* (you are lying). It is unacceptable to tell elderly people that they are telling lies; it is unbecoming and unacceptable; and it shows no respect for elders. The euphemismistic expression *"vha a swaswa"* is deceiving and it hides the reality that "he/she is lying". Respect for old people often prevents direct accusations and remarks concerning them. The euphemistic expression *"u swaswa"* (to joke) is designed out of respect for old people.

"U kovhola" literally means "to vomit" in English. In Tshivenḓa "u kovhola" is vomiting of a child. When a child vomits they say *"o kovhola"* (s/he has vomited). This expression does not apply to elderly people. The expression *"o kovhola"* is a euphemism for the disgusting and blunt Tshivenḓa word *"o ṱanza"* which literally means to vomit in English by small children only. Whether or not it refers to the vomiting of a child, the reality of the matter is that the act of "vomiting" has taken place. *"O kovhola"* (s/he has vomited) is a euphemism specially designed to hide reality. The reality is that the child has vomited and vomit is disgusting; by using the expression *"o kovhola"* it would sound as if vomit is no longer disgusting.

"U fhambuwa" literally means to defecate, the process of passing the contents of the bowel out of the body (The Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 2008). In Tshivenḓa, *"u fhambuwa"* (to defecate) only refers to a child. During this process faeces are removed and they are disgusting. As mentioned earlier in previous paragraphs, terms such as menstruation blood, urination, defecation (shit), and urination (piss) refer to bodily effluvia and acts of excretion that are generally used as expletives. Although completely natural and ever present in life, these bodily emissions are taboo topics to openly discuss without the use of euphemisms. *"U fhambuwa"* is a euphemism for the unacceptable and disgusting word "*u kaka*" which literally means "to defecate" in English. The euphemistic expression *"u fhambuwa"* is used to describe in a more acceptable way the act which is associated with the

processes defecation; it is used to hide reality of defecation. If the expression *"u fhambuwa"* (to defecate) is used people feel that feaces of a child is not disgusting. Therefore *"u fhambuwa"* is a euphemism in Tshivenḓa that deceives people into not thinking that defecation is disgusting and embarrassing.

The expression *"u imiswa mushumoni"* (to be laid off) is a euphemism for the general concept in Tshivenḓa *"u pandelwa"* (to be fired). Nobody easily accepts being fired from work. The expression "explain why you cannot be fired from work" is unacceptable to an employee; it is a harsh statement that can even lead to unacceptable consequences; an employee may even go as far as committing suicide. The euphemistic expression *"u imiswa"* (to be laid off), therefore, has the connotation of just being off duty for some few days but not being fired. Generally, however, the expression "to be laid off" simply means to be fired or expelled. This means that the euphemism *"u imiswa"* (to be laid off) has a deceiving power for the employee. It is clearly used in order to express an intolerable fact in a tolerable way and it suggests that the boss is trying to do him/her a favour. It is this deceiving power of euphemisms that leads Popova (2010:23) to refer to euphemisms as unpleasant truths wearing diplomatic cologne.

"u tambudza ṅwana lwa vhudzekani" (sexual abusing a child) is a Tshivenḓa euphemism which literally means to have sexual intercourse with your own child; it is also referred to as *"u eḓela tshihulwane"* (to sleep in an elderly manner with your child). This euphemism is used to replace the unacceptable and harsh Tshivenḓa expression *"u lala ṅwana wau"* (to sleep of your child). The euphemism expression *"u tambudza lwa vhudzekani"* (sexual abusing a child) is soothing and is able to hide the reality of sexual intercourse. Because the general Tshivenḓa expressions *"u lala na ṅwana* and *"u dzekana na ṅwana"* are embarrassing and disgusting, the expressions *"u tambudza lwa vhudzekani* and u *eḓela tshihulwane"* (sexually abusing a child) were coined to ease the embarrassing act associated with it; but the fact remains that sexual intercourse has taken place.

"Vhalala" (senior citizens) is a plural form for the word *"mulala"* which literally means an old person. *"Vhalala"* is a euphemism that replaces Tshivenḓa words *"vhakegulu na vhakalaha"* (Female and male elders). The words *"Vhakegulu and vhakalaha"* in Tshivenḓa have negative connotations for old people. They can

mean that these old people are no longer useful in life; they are useless. That is why old people no longer want to be regarded as *"vhakegulu* and *vhakalaha"* (old people); they want to be regarded as *"vhalala"* (senior citizens). For them, to be referred to as *"vhakalaha and vhakegulu"* (old people) is offensive, but the euphemism "senior citizens" sounds good because it has the connotation of them as people of "higher ranks" and, as such, they deserve the respect of the younger generation. This euphemism *"vhalala"* (senior citizen) has also been introduced to hide reality, the reality of the fact that they are, indeed, old.

Slovenko (2005:540) confirms that age, like death, is a taboo topic. Age euphemisms include: "senior citizen", "he's getting on", "golden years" and "elderly". The name of the AARP's publication is *Modern Maturity.* In Mexico, an elderly man is addressed *as Joven* (young man). A police chief in England has directed his officers not to use the terms "old codgers", "old dears" or "old fools".

A further expression which has been borrowed from English in Tshivenḓa in order to serve as a euphemism replacing an unacceptable blunt word "old thing" is the noun *"secondhand".* Euphemism is a special language phenomenon which not only includes those euphemistic expressions accepted by community members, but also the euphemistic communication style that people adopt in a specific environment (Yu, 2013:45). The adopted euphemistic expression *"secondhand"* is commonly used in Tshivenḓa and other African languages to avoid harsh and distasteful reality. *"Secondhand"* is a euphemism designed to divert attention from the fact that it really applies to things which are "used" rather something that is not of good quality.

From all the examples given above, it may be said that euphemisms can be appropriately used to disguise unpleasant realities. They are capable in deliberately misleading listeners or they may just make the unpleasant sound less unattractive and displeasing. Lutz (1987:349) maintains that a euphemism used for this purpose is language designed to alter perceptions of reality.

In instances where euphemisms are used to deceive and mislead people they become "doublespeak" (Lutz, 1987:349). Lutz, the former editor of the *Doublespeak Quarterly Review,* describes "doublespeak" as a euphemism that:

> Misleads, distorts reality, pretend to communicate, makes the bad seem good, avoids or shift responsibility, makes negative appear positive, creates a false verbal map of the world, limits, conceals, corrupts, prevent thought, makes the unpleasant appear attractive or tolerable and creates incongruity between reality and what is said or not said (Lutz, 1987:350).

The sole purpose of doublespeak is to make the unreasonable seem reasonable; the blamed seem blameless; and the powerless seem powerful.

According to Samoškaitė (2011:21) citing Lutz (1989), the term "doublespeak" was coined as an amalgamation of two Orwellian expressions, "doublethink" and "newspeak", both of which appeared in Orwell's dystopian novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. The basis of doublespeak is incongruity: the incongruity between what is said, or left unsaid and what really is; between the essential function of language (communication) and what doublespeak does – misleads, distorts, deceives, inflates, obfuscates. Mirabela (1990:127) refers to "doublespeak" as "doubletalk"; he describes it as any language that deliberately disguises, distorts or reverses the meaning of words, resulting in a communication bypass. For Mirabela (1990:127) such language is associated with government, military, and corporate institutions. When distinguishing doublespeak from euphemisms Mirabela (1990:127) suggests that doublespeak may be in the form of bald euphemisms, such as "downsizing" for "firing of many employees", or deliberately ambiguous phrases, like "wet work" for "assassination". What distinguishes doublespeak from other euphemisms is its deliberate usage by government, military, or corporate institutions to mislead or deceive while euphemism implies an attempt to soften something harsh (Mirabela, 1990:127). Similarly, Carrol (2004:30) further distinguishes euphemisms from doublespeak by explaining that euphemisms become doublespeak when the inoffensive, less emotive word or expression is used to mislead or deceive about unpleasant realities, such as referring to a policy of mass murder and rape as "ethnic cleansing."

Another topic that elicited general agreement from participants was the improper discussion of financial status without the use of euphemisms; topics related to money require to be euphemised. This is in line with Pesola's (1999:76) findings that some aspects of the topic of money are very close to becoming modern-day taboos as many people find it embarrassing to admit that they are poor or well off. Generally

speaking, it may be said that it is not considered socially acceptable to discuss one's own financial matters without the use of euphemisms, especially if one is rich. Elderly Man E commented:

> A zwi ngo tou vha zwavhuḓi u amba nga tshiimo tsha muthu tsha masheleni. Tshenzhemo i sumbedza uri vhunzhi ha vha re na masheleni a vha tendi u amba na u ambiwa uri vho ima zwavhuḓi,zwi fana na vha si na tshithu, zwi a sinyusa u vhudza muthu uri u khou tambula, ha na tshithu. Ndi nga kha matatathino fhedzi hune vha nga pfa vhe khwiṋe zwi tshi ambiwa (It is not good and unacceptable to talk about the status of someone's money. Experience tells us that those who are financially able do not want to be told that they are financially stable, like those who are financially poor get crossed when told that they have nothing, it is only through the use of euphemisms that they can feel better.)

The following table contains a selection of Tshivenḓa euphemims that relate to financial status.

Table 4.16: Tshivenḓa Euphemims that Relate to the Financial Status

General word	Its euphemism	Literal English Translation
U pfuma	*U ima zwavhuḓi*	To stand well
	U vha na zwau	To have something of yours
	U vha na zwa ṋalani	To have something in your fingers
	U sa sendelwa	Dare not go near him/her
	U vha tshigwili	To be too rich
U sa vha na tshelede	*U sa vha na tshithu*	To have nothing
	U ḽa nnda wa sevha nga gai	To have totally nothing to eat
	Khuhu i tevhela muthu	When a chicken follows a person.
	Tshelede yo kuvha	Money is finished
	U dzula u makandani	To be always penniless
	U sa vha na zwa ṋalani	To have nothing in your fingers (to be poor).
	U vha maḽambane	To be extremely poor
	U vha mmbwa	To be a dog (to be poor)
	U vha mbevha ya kerekeni	To be poor like a rat

Traditional Healer E cited another instance where euphemisms are used: when reference is made to the human body and its bodily functions which are thought of as somehow embarrassing. According to Nieman and Silver (1983:15-16), euphemisms for sexual organs of the body tend to function in two ways - they either enhance and glamorise or they conceal and bonalize; for example, the female genitalia can be

referred to as "the forest of righteous truth" and the male genitalia as "the thing." They further stated that all forbidden territories of the body are referred to either as "exotic paradise" or "a foot worn path unworthy of notice." Traditional Healer E said: *"Zwa bvungwi bvungwi mapitoni zwi ambiwa, a zwi ambiwi zwi a ila"* (issues concerning private places are not talked about, it is taboo).

In Tshivenḓa some body parts, especially sex organs are discussed using euphemisms because they are so sensitive that it becomes embarrasing to discuss them using ordinary words. Table 4.17, below lists sensitive body parts and their functions with their euphemisms in Tshivenḓa.

Table 4.17: Sensitive Body Parts and Fuctions and their Euphemisms in Tshivenḓa

General word	Its euphemism	Literal English meaning
Maraho	*Pfuralelo*	Buttocks
U vutshelwa, u vuwelwa	*U takuwa ha musanda*	Penis erection
U zwimba matshende	*U wela*	To be swollen in the testes
Matshende	*maḓasi /kholomo*	Testes
Bunyu ḽa mufumakadzi	*Tshiṱombo/Tshisima*	Vagina
Milevhe	*Maḓali*	Vaginal lips
Bunyu/ munna	*Tshitungulo/Thonga*	Penis
Bunyu (munna na musadzi)	*Vhudzimu*	Private parts

In continuing the discussion of euphemisms in Tshivenḓa, Elderly Man C commented that these days other languages, like English, have developed euphemisms connected to professions of lower prestige. Bedroll (2007:45) and Holder (2008:53) cite many euphemisms in today´s English that refer to jobs to avoid offending people working in low positions or people whose jobs are considered to be inferior. For example, the word 'agent" is commonly used to elevate the title of a job as in 'press agent" for publicist; the euphemistic expression "exterminating engineer" refers to a rat catcher. Slovenko (2005:543) agrees that one purpose of euphemisms is to elevate the name of an occupation of humble status: farmers become 'agriculturists"; garbage collectors are "sanitation engineers"; janitors are called "custodians"; and a doorman becomes an "access controller". In addition, the terms "institute" and "college" are applied to schools for auto mechanics, television repairmen, barbers, embalmers, and others. Plato's school for advanced education and the first institutional school of philosophy was called an academy, but today

organizations are called "academies", such as the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law.

In Tshivenḓa euphemisms for words connected to professions of lower prestige have been developed; there are not many of them and the following are examples:

- *"Matshingilane"* *tsho tshaisa* (Security guard has knocked off).
- *"Mushumi wa nḓuni"* *ha shumi ṋamusi* (Domestic worker is not working today).
- *"Vhabwi vha mavhiḓa"* *vho fhedza* (Grave diggers have finished).

In the examples given above, the *words "matshingilane", "mushumi wa nḓuni"* and *"vhabwi vha mavhiḓa"* are all general and unacceptable words referring to professions of lower prestige. The noun *"matshingilane"* (security guard) is no longer used because it has an unacceptable derogatory meaning. An acceptable euphemism *"mulindi wa tsireledzo"* has been developed to replace the noun *"matshingilane"*. *"Mushumi wa nḓuni"* is a blunt and unacceptable word referring to a domestic worker which has the connotation of slavery. An acceptable euphemism *"muthusi"* (assistant) has been developed to replace the general word *"muthusi" (assistant);* it gives the impression that not only one person works, but that both are working and the connotation of slavery has been removed in this euphemism. *"Vhabwi vha mavhiḓa"* (grave diggers) is an unacceptable word which has been replaced by a euphemism *"dziphele"* (literally meaning hyenas in English). It may be concluded that the name *"dziphele"* is seen to be suitable because in the past graves were dug during the night and the diggers were like hyenas that feed during the night.

In developing the discussion of euphemisms further, Elderly Man B suggested that the Tshivenḓa language has euphemisms that are used to refer to certain behaviour related to addiction, like in the following:

> Masindi uri ndi tshi swika *ndo wana vho fhela*, ri sa tsha amba musanda ndi maitele a musanda haano maḓuvha, *vha dzula vho wela mativhani*. Uyu wavho mukololo na ene *u vho dzula o kombodzala*. Ri sa tsha amba *u omba ḽone gologodo*. (Ndi maipfi o ambwaho nga muṅwe wa vhadededzi). (One of the educators said when she arrived she founded her/him drunk, not to mention the chief these days, he is always drunk. His prince always stays drunk, not to mention to be under the influence of dagga.)

From the above paragraph it can be said that all words in italics are euphemisms. These are Tshivenḓa euphemisms related to addiction of some kind. This simply means that certain behaviour which is in some way harmful to people's health is often treated with respect in Tshivenḓa; they are not openly discussed without the use of euphemism.

Table 4.18: Euphemisms Related to Addictions in Tshivenḓa

General word/expression	Its euphemism	Literal English meaning
U kambiwa	*U fhela*	To be finished
	U wela mativhani	To be drunk by the chief
	U kombodzala	To be unable to see because of being drunk
	U omba gologodo	To smoke dagga
	U hoha mphasi	To smoke dagga
	U dzelelwa	To be slightly drunk
	U la mavhele	To be drunk
	U fura mavhele	To be drunk
	Thumbu yo no sutshee!!	To be drunk

Tshivenḓa euphemisms have been developed to discuss issues, such as alcohol and drug abuse. Pesola (1999:65) believes that as with sexually explicit material, matters involving "bad habit" are likely to go through some censoring by the writers and producers. He explains that euphemisms are important tool for avoiding the realities of the world, including alcoholics and drug addiction as well as such topics as death and sex; a group of euphemisms have been developed for expressing intoxication. The expression "*u wela mativhani*" (literally meaning to get drowned by alcohol) is a euphemism for the general expression *"u kambiwa"* (to be drunk), but it is not used to refer to each and every person. It is only used for a chief when he is under the influence of liquor and is a type of royal euphemism. If you say to a chief *"vho kambiwa"* (he is drunk), you can be charged for not showing respect to your chief.

4.3.1.2   Inappropriate times to use euphemisms in Tshivenḓa

The word inappropriate is synonymous with the word "unsuitable" that is described as something that is not acceptable or right for someone or something (The Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 2008). Participants were asked to describe; to explain; and to identify instances where it is not suitable to use

euphemisms during conversation in Tshivenḓa. As a researcher it was appropriate to know whether there is time when euphemisms are not required during a Tshivenḓa conversation.

Table 4.19: Participants' Views of Inappropriate Times to use Euphemisms in Tshivenḓa

Participants	Number	Inappropriate time
Traditional Healers	5	• Talking to young children at home • When giving orders on how to take medication • Talking to a non speaker of the language • When inculcating good manners in children • When you want to be clearly understood • In court • When angry.
Chiefs	5	• Talking to young children • When you want to be clearly understood in a meeting • Talking to a person who is not a native speaker of Tshivenḓa, • When passing judgement on an offender/ wanting to be heard • In court • When drunk
Pastors	5	• When teaching during couples conferences • Talking to a person who is not a native speaker of Tshivenḓa, • When guiding and teaching children in Sunday school

		• When you wanted to be clearly understood • In court
Elderly Men	5	• Talking to young children, • Speaking to a person who is not a native speaker of Tshivenḓa, • When inculcating good manners in children • When you wanted to be clearly understood • In court. • When angry
Elderly Women	5	• Talking to young children, • Speaking to a person who is not a native speaker of Tshivenḓa, • When inculcating good manners in children • When you wanted to be clearly,understood • In court • When angry

From the evidence in Table 4.19, above, it can be seen that many participants agreed that there are instances where euphemisms cannot be used in Tshivenḓa. The themes suggested by participants where euphemisms cannot be used include the following: when talking to young children at home; when giving orders on how to take medication; talking to a non-speaker of the language; when inculcating good manners in children; when you wanted to be clearly understood; when angry; and when people are drunk. Important themes identified as inappropriate to use euphemisms are listed in Table 4.20, below, using frequency and percentage in terms of considering various participants' responses.

Table 4.20: Comparison of Responses of Inappropriate Times to use Euphemisms Given by the Participants

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Talking to children	5	100%
Wanting to be understood	5	100%
When angry	5	100%
In courts	5	100%
Talking to a non-speaker of the language	4	80%
Inculcating good manners in children	3	60%
When drunk	1	20%

From the above table it is evident that for the participants the most important times in which euphemisms cannot be used are: when talking to children; when you want to be understood; when angry; and in court (100%). These were followed in importance by when talking to a non-speaker of the language (80%) and when inculcating good manners to children (60%). The least appropriate time to use euphemisms is when drunk (20%).

All participants agreed that when talking to young children who do not know the basics of language, euphemisms should be avoided because they will just confuse them and prevent them from grasping the meaning of what is said. The following table contains examples of euphemisms that children would find difficult to understand.

Table 4.21: Euphemisms Difficult for Children to Understand

Euphemism	General meaning	Literal meaning in English
Vha a khada zwiṋoni	*U penga*	To chase birds
U ḽa matanda	*U daha mbanzhe*	To eat herbs
U fura mavhele	*U kambiwa*	To fill the stomach with mealie-meal
U ri sia	*U lovha*	To leave us behind
U sala fhedzi	*U lovhelwa nga ṅwana*	To be left with nothing

If children are spoken to using the above mentioned euphemisms, the speaker will end up talking in isolation because the children will not understand what is being said. *"U khada zwiṋoni"* (to chase birds away) is a euphemism for the general expression "*u penga*" (to be mad). Children will be confused because they would be looking for birds that are being chased away - not knowing that it is a euphemism used to refer to somebody who is "mad"*. "U ḽa matanda* (to eat herbs) is a euphemism with an idiomatic origin which replaces the general expression *"u daha mbanzhe"* (to smoke dagga*).* For children these expressions would be difficult to comprehend; they would be amazed to hear about a person eating "wood". Even if you explained to them that "*matanda"* refers to *"mbanzhe*" they would end up confused concerning what you are taking about. *"U fura mavhele"* (to fill stomach with mealie-meal) is a euphemism for the blunt and unacceptable expression *"u kambwa"* (to be drunk). Children who have not been taught idiomatic expressions would not know that it means to be drunk. As it is not acceptable to tell someone that he/she is drunk, it is important to avoid euphemisms when talking to children who do not know them.

The fact that it is not suitable to use euphemisms when talking to children because of their lack of knowledge of euphemisms in a language is confirmed in the study conducted by Abdullah (2014), *The Awareness of Euphemism by Kuwaiti Speakers of Arabic.* One of the study's aims was to answer the following question: *To what extent does the age of Kuwaiti speakers of Arabic influence their awareness of euphemisms?* This study had two hypotheses and the second hypothesis was that there are statistically significant differences between the old and young participants with respect to their awareness of euphemism.

Sixty participants, randomly chosen, were involved in the study. The participants were from Kuwait and they were all native speakers of Kuwaiti spoken Arabic. Their ages were between 25 to 65 years. A euphemisms test to discover the level of understanding of different euphemisms was administered to those participants. At the end of the study the second hypotheses was confirmed. The older participants performed better than the younger ones; it seems that old people transfer their knowledge and experience into their language both in speech and in writing. Therefore, it is important that young people should be made more aware of the different uses of words that could be regarded as harsh and unpleasant. This

awareness may help them accomplish a better understanding of other language speakers and, thereby, improve their communication and speaking skills. This could be achieved by having lessons and exercises that target this issue during their school education.

According to Alireza (2012:554), euphemisms and figurative language pose significant problems for young and foreign learners as they often lack the background knowledge needed for making sense of euphemisms and words used figuratively in different contexts. Echoing the views of the above-mentioned authors, Hammond and Bransford (2012:21) note that euphemisms can pose problems, such as confusion and failure to adequately interpret information, not only for language learners but also for language teachers and, therefore, the authors emphasize the need to prepare today's language teachers to cope with the many complexities of language-teaching - including those dealing with euphemisms - in a rapidly changing world within a changing language landscape.

Participants suggested that when a person wants to be clearly understood or when an important message is to be delivered to an audience, euphemisms cannot be used. The same applies to a person who is angry; some said that an angry man is a mad person. According to the participants, when a person is angry, he/she no longer takes care of what he/she utters and is unconcerned whether his/her words cause pain for the listener or hearer.

Traditional Healer A related an instance when women are angry - especially when they are accused of not being faithful to their husbands; there is an old saying which they usually utter and they usually say it when angry: *"Mukovha nnyo u kovha yawe"* (he or she who is involved in extra marital affairs is using his/her penis/vagina). This proverb is unacceptable as it hurts the listener or hearer. All participants agreed with this view and maintained that people utter this proverb when they are not in their right state of mind.

Another example of unacceptable words that are usually uttered by women without using euphemisms because they are angry includes the following cited by the participants: *Vhone vho dzula hangeo makhuwani na makhaḓa avho ngeno riṋe ri khou nya* maḓi (you are settled where you are in the city with women of other tribes while here at home we are starving from hunger). From the example given, the word

in italics *"u nya"* is not a polite word; in this context it means starving or suffering, especially from a lack of food. It is uttered by a person who is angry in Tshivenḓa and it reflects how angry the person is. It is related to othe Venḓa euphemisms that a sober person could use, namely: *"u tambula", "u shengela"* and *"u ḽa damba" (*all mean to suffer or starve from hunger).

Another example of an expression that usually comes out of the mouths of people when angry, especially men, is *"Vha ḓo nya vhone"* (you will defecate). This expression is unacceptable to listeners. A sober minded person is a person who is not drunk who cannot use this expression; only an angry person uses this expression without being euphemistic. A person who is not angry can use a euphemistic expression, such as *"vha ḓo luga vhone"* (you will come alright).

The examples given above confirm that when a person is angry, and wants to be heard and understood he/she is likely not to use euphemisms because there is no longer any care about another's face. Chief A asked:

> Can you see now, there are places where a spade should be called by its name, where you are expected to call a spade a spade, places like courts, euphemisms are not allowed?

The court is responsible for trying civil cases, such as assault cases, insults, divorces, rape cases, pregnancy and accusations of witchcraft, among others. All the participants agreed that euphemisms are not allowed in court as the two parties in the cases are supposed to understand what is being talked about in plain language. Traditional Healer B explained that in a case of pregnancy, phrases such as *"No nyovhana ngafhi?*" (Where were you having sexual intercourse?) were used. Some times common euphemisms, such as *"no lalana ngafhi"?* (which literally means, where were you sleeping each other?) and *"no ḽana ngafhi"* (where were you eating each other?) are used. Table 4.22 contains some words and their euphemisms given by the participants that are uttered using plain language without the use of euphemisms in order to avoid misleading the court.

Table 4.22: Some Words used in Court without Euphemisms

Ordinary venḓa word	Euphemism	English translation
U ṋea thumbu	*U tshinya musidzana* *U mu ṋea mihwalo*	To impregnate a girl
U nyovhana nae	*U lalana nae* *U ṱangana tshihulwane nae* *U vhonana nae* *U kana muroho noṱhe*	Having sexual inter course with her.
U fa	*U lovha* *U ri sia* *U fhambana naḽo*	To die
U sa vutshelwa	*U vha ngonwalurandala*	Impotence/ no erection
Muvhulahi	*Phondi,* *Tshigevhenga*	Criminal
U beba	*U vhofholowa*	To deliver a baby
Phongwe	*Phiranawe*	Prostitute
U sula	*U ponyokwa* *U bvisa muya*	To fart
U guba	*U gidima* *U shela*	Diarrhoea
Matshimba	*Malaṱwa*	Faeces

As far as the participants were concerned, talking to people or addressing an audience of non-speakers of the language using euphemisms is unacceptable. They argued that by addressing those using various figures of speech would result in them not understanding. Elderly Man B asked:

> What is the need for addressing people using a language that is difficult to your audience if you want to be heard? This leads to an instance where you find audience slumbering while a person is addressing them because they would not get your message.

The participant's view is echoed by Dana and Allen (2015:5) in their article, *Appropriate Language: Overview,* which covers some of the major issues with the use of appropriate language. They emphasise that when writing or speaking, it is

important to use language that suits an audience and matches the purpose of doing so. Inappropriate language filled with various kinds of figures of speech could damage the speaker's credibility, undermine the argument and alienate the audience (Dana & Allen, 2015:5). They maintain that speaking and writing in a style that the audience expects and that fits the speaker's purpose is the key to successful speaking and writing. They warn speakers to avoid using slang or idiomatic expressions in general academic writing and when addressing audiences of foreign language speakers and avoid using euphemisms (words that veil the truth, such as "collateral damage" for the unintended destruction of civilians and their property) and other deceitful language.

In conclusion, this section has covered the appropriate and inappropriate times to use euphemisms in Tshivenḓa. The appropriate times to use euphemisms, according to the participants, include when speaking about topics, such as menstruation, urination, sex, sexual organs, disgusting substances, sperm, ejaculation, death, disease, virginity, faeces, when an attempt is made to conceal reality as well as when discussing other embarrassing topics. However, talking to young children at home; when giving orders on how to take medications; talking to a non speaker of a language; when inculcating good manners to children; when wanting to be heard and understood clearly; when angry; and when drunk were identified as themes that do not need to be euphemised.

4.3.2   Categories of Tshivenḓa euphemisms

The Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2008) describes categories as a system for dividing things according to appearance, quality and type; a group of things having some features that are the same. The Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2008) gives the following words as synonymous with category: class, classification and group. The above definitions allow the researcher to refer to categories of Tshivenḓa euphemisms as types, classes, classifications and groups. For the sake of this research, the word 'category' was used to refer to types, class, classifications and groups of euphemisms in Tshivenḓa.

Euphemism can be classified in many categories according to different criteria, rules and principles; it can also be divided into periods, such as Middle Ages, Victorian, twentieth century and contemporary euphemism (Chen, 2002:45). According to Hott (2012:26), euphemism is the product of a specific historical setting, Therefore, there is no uniform classification standard; the motives of the different classifications are to discover and understand the characteristics of euphemism from different perspectives.

When participants were asked to list various categories of Tshivenḓa euphemisms, they cited the following, contained in Table 4.23, as the main categories.

Table 4.23: Suggested Main Categories of Euphemisms

Participants	Number	Categories
Traditional Healers	5	• Human body parts and sex • General or common euphemisms • Euphemisms for death
Chiefs	5	• Human body parts and sex • General or common euphemisms • • Euphemisms related to death
Pastors	5	• Human body parts and sex • General or common euphemisms • Euphemisms for death • Religious euphemisms • Disease
Elderly Men (educators)	5	• Human body parts and sex • General or common euphemisms • Euphemisms related to death • Addiction and drugs • Disease • Political
Elderly Women (educators)	5	• Human body parts and sex euphemisms • General or common euphemisms • Euphemisms for death • Religious euphemisms

All participants agreed that Tshivenḓa euphemisms can be variously categorised. They all categorised Tshivenḓa euphemisms as those that relate to death; those that relate to human body parts and sex; and general or commonly used euphemisms. The Pastors and the Elderly Women (educators) also suggested euphemisms that deal with drugs and addiction as well as religious euphemisms. Euphemisms that deceive people or that hide reality were also cited by the Elderly Men participants. The Chiefs added royal euphemisms. For the purpose of this study, euphemisms related to death are referred to as death euphemisms, euphemisms that are related to human body parts and sex are referred to as human body and sex parts euphemisms and general or commonly used euphemisms are referred to as general or common euphemisms. There are also political euphemisms, disease euphemisms and religious euphemisms.

Table 4.24, below, contains the main identified categories of Tshivenḓa euphemisms and indicates frequency and percentage of responses given by the various participants.

Table 4.24: Main Categories of Tshivenḓa Euphemisms Using Frequency and Percentage

Response	Frequency	Percentage
• Euphemisms related to death	5	100%
• Human body parts and sex euphemisms	5	100%
• General or common euphemisms	5	100%
• Diseases related euphemisms	2	40%
• Political euphemisms	1	20%
• Religious euphemisms	1	20%

Figure 4.1, below, reflects the main categories of Tshivenḓa euphemisms using a graph format to show the responses given by various participants. In this study death euphemisms, human body and sex parts euphemisms; general or common euphemisms, and political euphemisms were analysed.
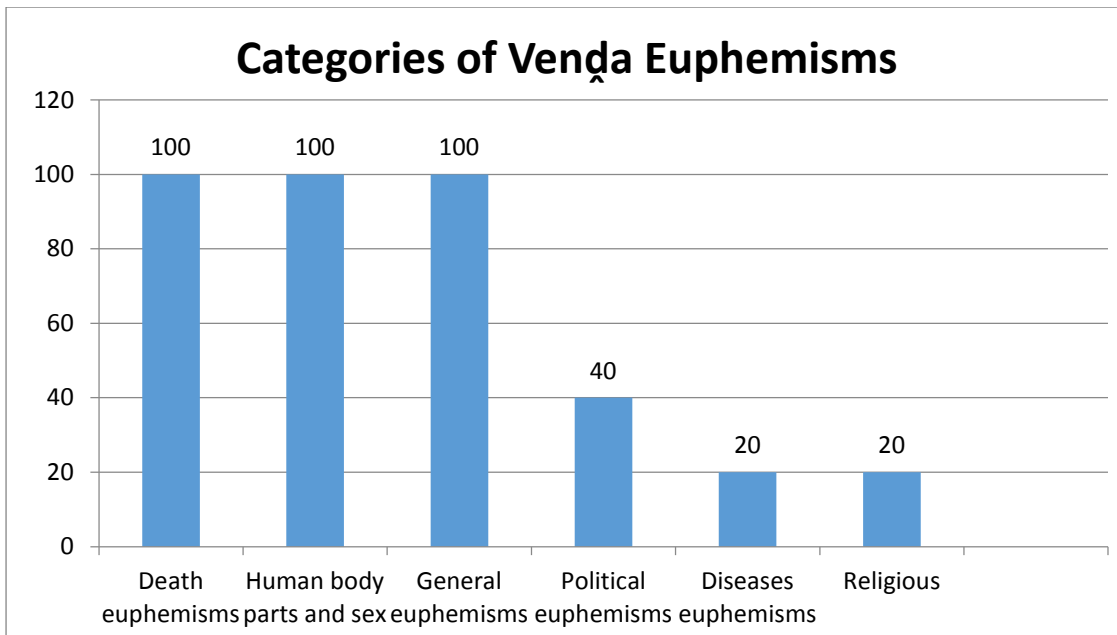
Figure 4.1: Main Categories of Venḓa Euphemisms in Terms of Percentage

4.3.2.1 Death euphemisms

In many societies, including Venḓa, death is feared and so people tend to avoid mentioning death directly and talk about it euphemistically. As in other cultures, there is a fear that if people continue talking about death they are inviting it at home. They, therefore, try to employ pleasant terms to express themselves without directly mentioning death. Death has hundreds of soft, decent and better-sounding names in most languages; examples of these are found in relevant literature studies that cite euphemistic expressions for death commonly used in most languages. Those studies reveal that the words that are often used suggest leaving for unknown places or sleeping and they include the following: to pass away; pass on to the other side; pass over; pass into the next world; leave the land of the living; go to heaven; go to our rest; go to a better place; go to your long home; go west; go under; sleep away; and return to ashes (Hott, 2012:46).

In English euphemisms for suicide are prefixed by the word self, such as "self-deliverance", "self-execution" and "self-violence". The table below show various words and their euphemisms that were categorised under death euphemisms by participants in this study.

Table 4.25: Participants' Views of Various Euphemisms Related to Death as a Main Category of Tshivenḓa Euphemisms

Participants	Number	Ordinary word	Death Euphemisms	English Literal Meaning
Traditional Healers	5	*U fa*	*Zwo bala* *A hu tshe na muthu* *A vha tsheho* *U tsela matongoni* *U tevhela vhomakhulukuku* *U ri sia.* *U tshinyala*	To die
		U felwa *U bwela mavuni* *mavhiḓani*	*U laṱeshelwa* *U swiṱiwa* *zwirabani*	To lose a child To be buried in the graveyard
Chiefs	5	*U fa*	*Ho ṋengiwa* *Zwo bala* *Mativha oxa* *U dzama* *Bako ḽo dzhena maḓi* *Ro ṱangulwa* *Ro sala fhedzi* *U miliswa tshivhindi* *U zwizwiedzwa* *U tsela matongoni.*	
		U felwa nga lutshetshe	*U huma nḓila*	To miscarry
		U felwa *U bwelwa mavuni mavuni*	*U zhakiwa* *U swiṱiwa*	To be buried
		U belwa mavuni	*U awedzwa*	To be laid to rest

		Vhabwi vha mavhiḓa	*Dziphele*	Gravediggers
		U bwelwa mavuni mavhiḓani	*U vhulunga Tshiendeulu*	To bury Royal graveyard
Pastors	5	*U fa*	*U fhalala ha malofha*	To die
			U awedzwa	
			U awela	
			U dzhiiwa	
			U vhidzwa	
			O ri sia	
			O ri ṱutshela	
			O fhambana	
			U dzama	
			U eḓela	
			U takulela nṱha	
			U tsela fhasi	
			U fhumudzwa	
			U dzhia nḓila nnyi na nnyi	
		U fa	*U khunyeledza*	To bury
		U bwela mavuni	*U fhelekedza*	To be buried/ To be laid to rest
		U bwela mavuni	*U awedzwa*	
		Mavhiḓani	*Vhudzulavhafu*	Grave yard
		Mavhiḓani	*Zwalo*	Graves
Elderly Men (educators)	5	*U fa*	*U lovha;*	To die
			U ri sia	
			U dzhiiwa nga mudzimu	
			U fhambana naḽo	
			Vho ṱuwa	
			U dzama (king)	

			Vho zhakiwa	
			Vho awela	
			U bika nga khulu	
			Zwo kunda	
			(vhulwadze) zwo bala	
			Vho tshinyala	
		U bwela mavuni	U vhulungwa	To be buried
		bogisi		
			Vhulalo	Coffin
Elderly Women (educators)	5		Vho tshinyala	To die
			U lovha	
			U ri sia zwo bala	
			A sa tsha vha na muthu	
			U fhira shangoni	
			U bika nga khulu	
		Bogisi	Vhulalo	Coffin
		U bwela mavuni	U iswa haya havho	To be buried
		U bwela mavuni	U vhulungwa	To be buried

From the above table it can be seen that the various participants have their own special euphemisms to refer to death and other words related to burial. Euphemisms related to death used by the Traditional Healers differ from those used by the Chiefs, Pastors and Elderly Men and Women. This simply confirms that euphemisms take the status of people into consideration and this is supported by the study conducted by Xiaohua and Peiwen (2015) entitled: *An Analysis of Euphemisms in 2 Broke & Girls.* One of the research aims of this paper was to determine whether different people use different euphemisms. The study confirmed that people who come from different social status use different euphemisms; their social status may affect the euphemisms they use.

For the Traditional Healers euphemisms for the word *"u fa"* (to die) are *"A hu tshe na muthu"* (no person); *"a vha tshe ho"* (he/she is gone); *"u tsela matongoni"* (to go down to the forefathers); *"u tevhela vhomakhulukuku"* (to follow the ancestors); *"u tshinyala* (to perish); *"u laṱetshelwa* (lost something like a baby); and *"u swiṱiwa"* (to be buried). Only two euphemisms are commonly used by all participants, namely, *"u ri sia"* (to leave us behind) and *"zwo bala*" (it has failed). This means that Traditional Healers have their own special euphemisms for dying. It seems that the two euphemisms, namely, *"u ri sia"* (to leave us behind) and *"zwo bala"* (it has failed) are the only euphemisms that immediately occur to Tshivenḓa-speaking people when they experience death.

As may be seen from the responses given by different participants, people of different social status use their own style of euphemism to express their thoughts concerning life. They live in different circumstances and are constantly in contact with their own kind of people; how they handle and view problems vary considerably, as does their use of euphemisms. It can be concluded that euphemisms used by different speakers reflect their different levels of social status and life situations and that this kind of distinction exists in every society.

Pastors, as participants, had the most number of euphemisms for the unacceptable Tshivenḓa word *"u fa"* (to die) when compared to the other participants; they have 19 euphemisms, Chiefs have 17, Elderly Men have 14, Traditional Healers have 11 and Elderly Women have 10. The fact that the pastors and the chiefs have the most euphemistic expressions for the word "die" suggests that pastors and chiefs value and take death more seriously than the other participants. The higher the number of euphemisms for a certain taboo word, reflects the degree of sensitivity to the topic, namely, death which confirms the findings of Hughes (2006) in Yasser and Shi (2012:5) concerning euphemisms; he maintains that euphemisms are responses to taboos and the stronger the taboo, the greater the number of euphemisms. It may be assumed that the reason for pastors and chiefs having the most number of euphemisms that address death could be that pastors and chiefs are people within the society with a heavy responsibility to look after their charges and that they are very concerned when people die. As Traditional Healers only have 11 euphemisms for the unacceptable word "die', it may be assumed that their lower number of words

- compared to Pastors and Chiefs - could be because they are more involved with death when many patients who are in their care die.

Analyses of death euphemisms in relation to social status have been conducted by various scholars. In their analysis of death euphemisms, Yasser and Shi (2012:5) conclude that death for people from different social classes or of different social status and ages there are corresponding euphemisms, such as 'demise of the crown' for emperors, 'pass away' for vassals and 'die' for civilians. Robinson (1983:23) believes that euphemism is a phenomenon associated with some middle-class groups that are frightened to call "a spade a spade". She lists a number of euphemistic expressions that are used by these groups, including 'under the influence of alcohol' or 'a little merry' for 'drunk'; 'educationally sub-normal' or 'educationally deprived' for 'stupid'; 'domestic assistant', 'home helper' or 'helper' for 'servant'; 'transport facilities' for 'car or bus coach';, 'I have a cash-flow problem' for 'I have no money'; 'the smallest room in the house' for 'lavatory';, and 'senior' for 'old person'.

Gao and Wei (2004:131) analyse death euphemism in both English and Chinese from a cultural anthropological perspective, based on the five orientations of Kluckhohn *et al.* (1961): (1) human nature, (2) relation between human and nature, (3) time orientation, (4) human activities and (5) human social relations. They argue that the Chinese focus on members' identity, i.e., on "who are you". Identity is represented by behaviour and utterances, especially in ancient China and, therefore, different death euphemisms are used for people at different levels of society.

From the responses given by the participants, it can be concluded that they view death from different perspectives. Traditional Healers use the euphemistic expressions *"a hu tshe na muthu"* (he/she is no more), *"a vha tshe ho"* (he/she has gone), *"vho tsela matongoni"* (he/she has gone to the ancestors) and *"o tevhela vhomakhulukuku"* (she/has followed her/his forefathers). In checking the literal meanings of all Tshivenḓa euphemisms in English, it was found that all of them are clearly explained by the verb "has gone" which seems to mean that death or to die in Tshivenḓa is described as going somewhere; in other words to die is a journey. The Tshivenḓa, therefore, taken for granted that when you die you are going to your ancestors and to your forefathers. For the Traditional Healers death is best

described by the conceptual metaphor: "Death is a journey" which suggests that the dead person is longer with us. Bultnick (1998:31) points out that human mortality is conceptualized as a departure from this world in which a basic domain of experience, like death, is understood in terms of a different and more concrete domain - as a journey, an association which provides the basis for the verbal mitigation of the taboo. In this conceptual metaphor, the act of dying corresponds with the act of leaving; the destination of the journey is an encounter with the forefathers or ancestors; and the dying person is the one that embarks on the journey. The destination of this journey, according to the Traditional Healers, is not to God in Heaven, it is down underground where the ancestors are believed to stay. The reason could be because traditional healers do not believe in Christianity.

From Table 4.25, above, it may be deduced that euphemisms for death and dying are specific to certain groups. Chiefs are from the royal families and royalty use their own special language; they have their own special way of addressing issues - even those related to death: "*Bako ḽo dzhena maḓi*" (a cave is filled with water) In Tshivenḓa a cave is used to hide enemies, a place where people can go to hide from their enemies. In the royal family each and every member is referred to as "bako" which figuratively means 'protector'. The same applies to the euphemism *"Ro ṱangulwa"* (to be left with nothing) which can be used when referring to instances where a royal child has died or even when a chief has died. It is not usually used to refer to the death of a commoner. The people who would be left with nothing would be those staying behind. When royalty say "*Mativha o xa*" (dams are dry*),* this is a special euphemism to refer to the death of a chief. Commoners are not allowed to use any other words for the death of a chief. It is a punishable offence if you are heard addressing the death of a chief by not using the correct language or proper terminology. When 'the dams are dry' - as literally translated into English - people are left with no other place to get water, i.e., the death of a chief is a loss to the people in the Tshivenḓa culture. *"Bako ḽo dzhena maḓi,* (a cave is filled with water), *"ro ṱangulwa"* (we are left with nothing) and *"mativha o xa"* (dams are dry) are also euphemisms referring to a death of a chief.

All euphemistic expressions mentioned above have a connotation of losing something valuable. In other words, for the royal family and all commoners death is best described by the conceptual metaphor "death is a loss". In this instance death is

viewed negatively because it takes a valuable asset from the family. This conceptual metaphor perceives life as a valuable object and death is seen as the loss of this possession which is an unavoidable event that people cannot control. Allan and Burridge (1991:162) maintain that the conceptual metaphor of death as loss evokes death as "malign fate" or as an event that human beings cannot control that leaves them powerless in the face of the unavoidable event. When death is conceptualised as loss, those who are left "regret" and "lament" the loss. Both terms are commonly found on the obituary pages of newspapers to underline the grief experienced by the relatives and close friends of the deceased.

Another factor of note is that the euphemisms used by the royal families differ greatly from those used by ordinary people, suggesting that there are differing degrees of politeness in these two parts of society. There is the aspect of "secret words" which are called *"tshiḓinḓa"* and are not known by everyone but only those who live or are familiar with life at the palace. Those who are ignorant of these polite or secret phrases are not allowed in the palace because they may be regarded as misfits, unable to use the appropriate language of this place according to context and shared background knowledge. For example: "Muhali *vho dzama* madekwe, vha ḓo *swiṱiwa* nga Ḽavhuraru vhusiku Tshiendeulu" (The king has died he will be buried on Wednesday evening at the royal grave yard). In the example the expression *"vho dzama"* means 'to die' but it is used especially with the death of a king. *"U swiṱiwa"* means 'to be buried' but it also refers to the burial of a king. *"Tshiendeulu"* is a place where all members of the royal family are buried; members of the royal family are not buried anywhere - they are buried at a special burial site which is called *Tshiendeulu* in Tshivenḓa. The word for death in ordinary Tshivenḓa language is *"u fa"* but, according to the Vhavenḓa people, the king can never be referred to as dead but *"khosi yo dzama"* (royal death) should be used. A royal death among the Vhavenḓa is held in very high esteem and is not referred to in the same way as any ordinary death. It is taboo for anyone to say: *"khosi yo fa"* (the king has died); as a show of 'politeness' or respect, euphemisms, such as *"mativha o xa"* (the necklace has split) and *"khosi yo dzama"* (to our own), are used. All the euphemisms written in italics are secret polite phrases that are used in the palace and all people are obliged to use them.

From these examples one is able to recognise that there is widespread use of conversational indirect speech acts at the palace. This finding relates to the Speech Act Theory espoused by Searle (1969; 1975) where there is an assumption that language is regarded as a form of behaviour and is governed by a set of rules. As such, a speech act is an utterance which serves a particular function in a conversation.

Furthermore, there seems to be an aspect of 'face', according to Brown and Levinson (1987) who looked at one's favourable public image, where any threat may be lessened by the use of indirect phrases. The use of euphemism, therefore, is seen as a way of being polite. Politeness is regarded as a strategy employed by speakers to promote and maintain harmonious relations. Conversational implicature - as applied by Grice (1975) - is also applicable in the sense that the interlocutors imply what they mean by what they say in a conversation. What is said is inferred and interlocutors are able to cooperate in their communication because they belong to the context and share the same background.

As far as the Pastors are concerned death is the most euphemised topic when compared to other participants. Some euphemistic expressions include *"u awedzwa"* (to put to rest), *"u awela"* (to rest), *"u fhumudzwa"* (to be made quiet), *"u eḓela"* (to sleep), "*u vhidzwa"* (to be called) and *"u dzhiiwa"* (to be taken). It may be concluded that metaphorical euphemisms for death describe death as a means of resting from something as all euphemisms have an underlying notion of resting, i.e., death is viewed as a rest. They describe death in terms of a peaceful rest after an earthly existence. During funerals when obituaries are read they are often concluded by the expression "*vha awele nga mulalo"* (rest in peace) which is also the source of euphemistic substitutions, such as resting place referring to as a 'grave'. *"U awela"* (to rest), *"u eḓela"* (to sleep) and *"u vhidziwa"* (to be called) are temporary. In terms of the Pastors' views, therefore, euphemisms for death conceptualise it as a temporary event. Pastor A explained: *"Kha u awela, kha u fhumudzwa na u awedzwa ndi zwa tshifhinga-nyana"* (Resting, to be made quiet and to be put to rest is just for a short period of time) which suggests that death is thought to provide some sort of relief for the dying person. For Christians, death is the beginning of new life; they believe that the body dies but the soul departs back to its creator - that

death is a kind of a transition of the soul from "the worldly life" into "the eternal life", (Fernandez, 2006:120).

Some euphemisms portray death as a reward, like *"vho takulelwa nṱha* (to be taken up high) where the act of dying is a religious reward and a reward after a virtuous life on earth; the Christians belief is that a meeting with God in Heaven is their reward. It is figuratively associated with a reward for moral discipline after a life of good deeds. Some euphemisms view death as the end of the process of human life; examples include euphemisms for death, such as *"u lovha"* (to die) and *"u khunyeledza"* (to finish). However, there are instances where euphemisms view death as a disaster, like *"vho tshinyala"* (to decompose). Willis and Klammer (1981), in Yasser and Shi (2012:5), point out that in ancient times - controlled by supernatural power - people thought of death as a disaster and mystery. They were afraid to mention this word, which, then, became a social habit.

4.3.2.2   Euphemisms related to human body parts and sex

Discussions on subjects related to human body parts and sex are likely to elicit embarrassment; they are, therefore, a potent source of euphemism for Africans and Westerners of most ages and from all walks of life. The boundaries of sexual euphemism are deceptively wide, encompassing the sexual act itself, associated body parts and even clothing that is in direct contact with those body parts, i.e. underwear (Nash, 1995:54). In fact, if the size of the euphemism collection indicates the size of the taboo, as suggested by Rawson (1981:66), human body parts and sexual taboos are greater than any other.

Human body and sexual parts and their activities are sensitive topics that people tend to avoid talking about in almost all cultures (Slutkin, 1993) but when they do euphemisms tend to be used. Euphemisms of this nature occur in Tshivenḓa; the Tshivenḓa euphemisms related to body parts and sex suggested by the participants during the interviews are given in the following table.

Table 4.26: Various Euphemisms for Human Body Parts and Sex in Tshivenḓa Suggested by Participants

Ordinary Venḓa word	Euphemism	English literal meaning
U nyovhana (sexual intercourse)	*U tshetshelana*	To taste each other
	U vhonana lwa muvhili	To see each other bodily/physically
	U ṋeana	Act of giving each other
	U dahana fola	Act of giving snuff to each other
	U ḓivhana	To know each other
	U funana	Act of loving each other
	U fushana	Satisfying each other
	U itana	Doing each other
	U lalana	Sleeping with each other
	U gonyana	To climb each other
	U ṱangana tshihulwane	To meet in an elderly manner
	U dzekana	To make love
	U tambisana	To play with each other
	U rabana miraḓo, u tsiḓululana miraḓo	To massage each other
	U awela nṱha ha muṅwe	To relax the body of each other.
	U tambana vhugevhenga	To be sexually unfaithful to each other
	U dudedzana	To warm each other
	U ka muroho	To pick vegetables
	U mu rwa nga thonga	To beat her with a knobkirrie
	U ita ṅwana	To make a child
	U rundela	To ejaculate
	U shela	To pour
	U ṋukadzwa	To be made wet

	U fushea	To feel good
	U ṱoḓa vhana	To search for children
	U nambatelana	To join or to come into contact
	U vha nḓuni	To be making love
	U dzhenana	To enter each other
	U mutshetshekanya	To pierce each other
	U ḽa muri	To make love
	U ḽa zwiḽiwa	To eat meal
	U nwa maḓi	To drink water
	U hwedza	To give in
	U ḽana	To eat each other
Nnyo (penis) and vagina parts	*Thonga*	Knobkirrie
	Vhudzimu	Male and female private parts
	Kholomo	Testes
	Maḓali	Vaginal lips
	U takuwa ha musanda	Penis erection
	U wa ha musanda	When penis is in weak position
	Musanda vha khou pembela	Ejaculation state

From the table above, 34 euphemisms for the unacceptable Tshivenḓa expression "*u nyovhana*" (to make sexual intercourse) and 7 euphemisms to describe the penis and vagina were given by the participants. From the 34 euphemisms the study identified six conceptual domains for sexual intercourse. All euphemisms that share the same theme were grouped under the same conceptualisation. The six categories that conceptualised sexual intercourse were identified as companionship, war, games, work, utility/function and food.

4.3.2.2.1 Euphemisms that conceptualise sexual intercourse as companionship

The euphemisms that conceptualise sexual intercourse as companionship are given in Table 4.27, below.

Table 4.27: Euphemisms that Conceptualise Sexual Intercourse as Companionship

Euphemisms	Literal meaning in English
U tshetshelana	To taste each other
U vhonana lwa muvhili	To see each other bodily/physically
U ṋeana	Act of giving to each other
U dahana fola	Act of giving snuff to each other
U ḓivhana	To know each other
U funana	Act of loving each other
U fushana	Satisfying each other
U itana	Doing each other
U lalana	Sleeping with each other
U gonyana	To climb on each other
U ṱangana tshihulwane	To meet in elderly manner
U dzekana	To make love
U tambisana	To play with each other

Table 4.27, above, shows 'sexual intercourse as companionship' having the most common metaphorical euphemisms, i.e., 38% of the total euphemisms for sexual intercourse. The idea of companionship is morphologically marked by the reciprocal morpheme *-an-,* as in the verb *lalana* (to sleep each other) in the following example: "*u vhonana lwa muvhili*" (to see each other bodily or physically) where there is mutual reciprocity expressed by the usage of the reciprocal morpheme *(-an-).* In the following examples the effect of the sense of touch during sexual intercourse as the male and the female genitalia come into contact is clearly discernible:

- *U thetshelana* (to taste each other)

- *U ṋeana* (act of giving each other)

- *U dahana fola* (act of giving snuff to each other)

- *U ḓivhana* (to know each other)

- *U funana* (act of loving each other)

- *U fushana* (satisfying each other)

- *U itana* (doing each other)

- *U lalana* (sleeping with each other)

- *U gonyana* (to climb on each other)

- *U ṱangana tshihulwane* (to meet in an elderly manner)

- *U dzekana* (to make love)

- *U tambisana* (to play with each other).

The above metaphorical euphemisms emphasize the gratifying nature of sexual intercourse; sexual intercourse is designed to be pleasurable and to bring people closer together as shown by the euphemisms above.

4.3.2.2.2 Euphemisms that conceptualise sexual intercourse as war

Two Tshivenḓa euphemisms conceptualise the issue of sexual intercourse as a war, as is reflected in the following:

> Uḽa musidzana o wanala a tshi tou vhovhola. O vha a tshi tou bvuḓa vhudzimu. Vhatukana vha na tshiṱuhu, hafhu vho vha vho mu tshetshekanya. Vho wanala vho dzhenana zwi tshi khou ofhisa vhukuma. (She was found crying uncontrollably dripping sperms from her private parts. Boys are very cruel, her vagina was pierced. They were found laying down entered each other.)

Although the metaphorical euphemism "*dzhenana*" (to enter each other) denotes reciprocity, the woman has no piercing tool with which to pierce the man or to enter the man. This metaphoric euphemism responds to an overall view of sexual intercourse in terms of hostility, violence and dominance (Beneke, 1982:16). It assumes the existence of a more specific conceptualisation in which the penis is seen as an attack tool with which to maim and kill an adversary (Gathigia & Ndũng'ũ, 2011: 53). According to Crespo-Fernández (2008:103), the lover is the enemy and the penis is the weapon.

4.3.2.2.3   Sexual intercourse as a game

The following metaphorical euphemisms depict sexual intercourse as a game:

- *"U rabana kana u tsiḓululana miraḓo"* (to massage each other). In this sentence sexual intercourse is like two partners who seem to be playing a massage game.

- *"U awela nṱha ha muṅwe"* (to relax the body on top of each other). In this euphemistic expression two partners seem to be playing while having sexual intercourse.

- *"U tambana vhugevhenga"* (to play sexual cheating game). Sexual intercourse is depicted by the euphemism *"u tambana"* (to play each other) but in this metaphoric euphemism it refers to sexual cheating.

4.3.2.2.4   Sexual intercourse as work

Metaphorical euphemisms that illustrate sexual intercourse as work are the following:

- *"U dudedzana"* (to warm each other). In this metaphorical euphemism both partners have the task of warming each other; therefore, sexual intercourse is work. The euphemism refers to the warmth generated when a man and a woman come close to each other in bed. The metaphor may also be considered to fall under the category, 'sexual intercourse as a war.'

- *"U ka muroho"* (to pick vegetables). The act of sexual intercourse is seen as two partners picking some vegetables in the garden, a process which needs energy and that is why sexual intercourse is considered to be work.

- *"U ita ṅwana"* (to make a child). In this euphemism the two partners have a duty, a duty to make a child; hence, the Tshivenḓa saying: "*u beba a si u ka muroho*". (Making children is not a child's play).

4.3.2.2.5   Sexual intercourse as utility/function

In this category sexual intercourse is conceived as a natural and routine activity that fulfils a utilitarian function. It also considers pleasure and passion as essential components. This is illustrated in the following examples:

- *"U rundela"* (to pour" or ejaculate)
- *"U shela"* (to pour)

- *"U ṋukadza"* (to be made wet)
- *"U fushea"* (to feel good)
- *"U ṱoḓa vhana"* (to search for children)
- *"U nambatelana"* (to join or come into contact)
- *"U vha nḓuni"* (to be in bed).

The euphemism *"u ṋukadza"* (to be made wet) corresponds with Murphy's (2001:21) point that the penis is a "mechanical device engineered to pour liquids and can thus be included in the sexual-intercourse-as-a-machine conceptual equation." *"U fushea"* (to feel good) is a vague euphemistic expression for sexual intercourse which is based on sexual gratification. The implication is that sexual intercourse is designed to be pleasurable. *"U ṱoḓa vhana"* (to search for children) shows that the domain of sexual intercourse is also conceptualised as the act of creating children while "*u nambatelana"* (to join or come into contact) seems to stress utility or function rather than pleasure. Biologically, the sperm and the egg come into contact for fertilisation to take place. In traditional Tshivenḓa society, sexual intercourse was geared towards procreation; children were valued as the end product of the sexual act.

4.3.2.2.6 Sexual intercourse as food

Owing to the importance of food as a source of sustenance and pleasure in life, it is common to associate sexual intercourse with food - as illustrated in the following metaphorical euphemisms:

- *"U ḽa muri"* (to eat plant)
- *"U ḽa zwiḽiwa"* (to eat meal)
- *"U nwa maḓi"* (to drink water)
- *"U hwedza zwiḽiwa"* (to give meal - applies specially to the chief).
- *"U ḽana"* (to eat each other).

Eating and food are common sources in naming sexual organs and sex-related actions (Gathigia & Ndũng'ũ, 2011) Kövesces (2006:156) is of the opinion that sexual desire is hunger and points out that appetizing food is normally used to conceptualise sexual intercourse. The relationship between food and sexual intercourse is extensively discussed by Allan and Burridge (2006:190) who argue that food is often the prelude to sex, since "eating and love-making go together."

Other linguists who also discuss the pervasiveness of the food/eating metaphor for sexual intercourse are Hines (2000:143) and Kövecses (2006).

It should be noted that in Tshivenḓa human sexual organs have their euphemisms. "*Nnyo*" (penis) is substituted by the use of the following euphemisms: *"Thonga"* (Knobkirrie) and *"Vhudzimu"* (private parts). Testes are referred to as "*kholomo*" and an erection of the penis is euphemised by the expression "*musanda vho takuwa*"; when it is weak after ejaculation it is said that *"musanda vho wa"* and the ejaculation process is euphemised by the expression *"musanda vha khou pembela."* The female organ, vagina, is referred to as *"tshiṱombo"* whereas the vaginal lips are referred to **as "maḓali".**

4.3.2.3   General or common euphemisms

Ullmann (1992:231) describes euphemism as an ''inoffensive substitute" introduced to occupy the space left by the prohibited word according to the underlying psychological motivation of fear, courtesy, decency or decorum. Euphemism is an indispensable part of every language; it is described as the mirror of morality, customs, politics, life style and background. As euphemism cannot exist without social culture (Genevieve, 2012:31), in any modern society euphemism plays an important role as a universally effective means of communication. As in other cultures, the Tshivenḓa culture makes use of euphemisms in order to ensure effective communication. The study has shown that ordinary Tshivenḓa-speaking people use euphemisms to a large extent and do not have difficulty in identifying them. Several participants interviewed by the researcher confirmed that it was easy to identify Tshivenḓa euphemisms in the sense that, when communicating, it was possible to detect certain words which were not used in everyday Tshivenḓa. This is particularly easy for people who are conversant with the Tshivenḓa language and know the meanings of the euphemisms. The following are various general or common euphemisms that are understood and used by Vhavenḓa people in their daily communication.

The expression *"u bva malofha bunyuni"* (to bleed from the girl's vagina) is a general expression which is common and is understood by both native and non-native speakers of the Tshivenḓa language. Because the expression sounds impolite, Tshivenḓa speakers rather use euphemisms, such as *"u ṱamba"* (which literally

means to wash), *"u vha maḓuvhani"* (to be in the sun), *"u vhona ṅwedzi"* (to see the moon) and *"u sema vhakegulu"* (to insult one's granny). Tshivenḓa speaking people know that these euphemisms all mean 'to menstruate'. However, there are some instances when people misinterpret the meaning of various euphemisms, such as when the euphemistic expression *"u ṱamba"* (to menstruate) is interpreted as *"washing with water"* and *"u vha maḓuvhani* (to menstruate) is interpreted as "*sitting at the sun".* When this happens, there is pragmatic failure which Thomas (1983) in Mwanambuyu (2012:73) suggests is the inability of an individual to understand what is said in an interlocution.

Elderly Man C provided the following examples of various euphemisms:

> Vho vha vho ima vha tshi khou *kombodza mbevha*. Vhasidzana vha tshi fhira vha vhona *zwiluvhelo* zwavho. Ndi Savhadina uḽa a *seisanaho* na Shonisani. Vho-Ranziḓa vho wanala vho tou *ṱhuruu!* Nge vha rwelwa *u binya* Shonisani. (He was standing urinating, when girls passing by, they saw his underpants. It is Savhadina who is in love with Shonisani. Mr Ranziḓa was found naked after being beaten by Savhadina for raping Shonisani.)

In the above extract the following general or common euphemisms are apparent: *kombodza mbevha* which literally means irritating the eyes of a mouse; *zwiluvhelo* means clothes; *seisanaho* means to laugh with someone*; ṱhuruu!* means to be without clothes*;* and *u binya* means to rape*.*

The expression "*u kombodza mbevha*" *(*irritating the eyes of a mouse), is a general euphemism that is commonly used by Vhavenḓa people when referring to the act of urinating, especially in elderly people. According to Popova (2010:22), euphemism is "the act or an example of substituting a mild, indirect, or vague term for one considered harsh, blunt, or offensive." *"U kombodza mbevha" (*irritating the eyes of a mice), is a general euphemism that is used as a substitute for the offensive and unacceptable expression *"u runda"* (to urinate). It is culturally offensive in Tshivenḓa to use the expression *"u runda"* (to urinate) in referring to an elderly person; determined and compelled by culture (Popova, 2010:23) the euphemism *"u kombodza mbevha"* perfectively replaces *"u runda"* (to urinate). The importance of such a replacement or substitution is to avoid possible loss of face. Allan and Burridge (1991:14) maintain that euphemisms are alternatives to dispreferred expressions and are used in order to avoid possible "loss of face."

"Zwiluvhelo" (literally clothes) is another euphemism that is commonly used by the Vhavenḓa people which simply means 'underpants of elderly people.' It is a taboo and it is insolent for a young person to see and touch the underpants of elderly people. For that reason they are not publicly placed on a washline to dry; they are culturally respected pieces of attire. In Tshivenḓa they have a special phrase to describe them; hence, the euphemism *"zwiluvhelo" or "zwi ya nḓuni"* (clothes to sleep with). This is consistent with the views of Nash (1995:17) who states that the sexual act, body parts and clothing that is in direct contact with these body parts, i.e., underwear, are embarrassing topics to discuss without the use of euphemism in many cultures.

"Seisanaho" literally means to laugh with someone. Figuratively, this is a euphemism which means to be in love with someone. It is a polite word that is a substitute for the blunt Venḓa expression *"u pfana"* (to be in agreement with someone). If it is said that someone is in love using the expression *"u pfana",* there is a danger of inviting negative face or "face threatening acts*"* as the desire of every "competent adult member" that his/her action be unimpeded by others (Brown and Levinson 1987:62). In order to avoid negative face, the polite word *"u seisana"* (to be in love) is used which emphasises the importance of politeness in daily communication and is an integral part of life in any human society. Stephan and Lieberman (2010:268) argue that whenever we address a person, we choose how polite to be - ranging from such polite forms as "dear Professor Friedman" to the more colloquial "Hey, Ron."

"Ṱhuruu" (to be without clothes) replaces the blunt and unacceptable word *"bunyu"* which means to be naked and in Tshivenḓa this word may also mean "private parts". As the mention of sexual body parts leads to embarrassment without the use of euphemisms, the euphemism *"ṱhuruu"* (to be without clothes) is used instead of *"bunyu"*. In some instances this euphemism can refer to the nakedness of an elderly person.

As the word "*U binya*" (to make love without consent) is embarrassing for both males and females, it is unacceptable and it is a taboo that needs a special terminology to discuss it. In Tshivenḓa it is a euphemism for rape. Elderly Woman A, a teacher, referred the researcher to Ṋefefe's (2008) book, entitled "*Milomo ya Ṋukala*" where

he uses many euphemisms to teach learners Tshivenḓa figures of speech; the following extract is an example from the book:

Vho-Bukuṱa: *(Vha mu fara nga tshanḓa tshiṅwe tshi tshi khou ṱoḓa zwine vha khou ṱoḓa zwone) Ndi khou amba hedzi **nḓuhu**.* (Holding her with one hand and the other hand showing her what he wanted) I am referring to these peanuts.

Ntshengedzeni: *(A tshi khou lila) Baba **vha songo ita tshithu**.* (While crying) Daddy do not do anything (Ṋefefe, 2008:7).

From this extract it may be seen that two euphemisms have been used, namely: *"Nḓuhu"* literally means (peanuts) and *"vha songo ita tshithu"* (did not do anything). The word *"nḓuhu"* is a euphemisms used by the author to refer to the 'vagina'. As the speaker was talking to his child, the euphemism used matches perfectly well to the scene; the euphemism *"nḓuhu"* has a connotation with the vagina of a young person. Instead of using an unacceptable word *"nnyo or bunyu"* (private parts), the author used the euphemism *"nḓuhu"* to refer to vagina.

The expression *"vha songo ita tshithu"* (do not do anything) is a euphemism that is commonly used by the Vhavenḓa people, especially when they feel uneasy in mentioning the blunt and unacceptable word *"u nyovha"* (to make love). This is another way in which euphemism can be formed; circumlocution is a roundabout, verbose way of speaking or writing to express an idea (Hasegawa, 2005:23; Hott, 2012:45; Gathigia, Ndung'u Martin & Njoroge, 2015:30). The above example supports the definition of euphemism given by Burchfield (1995:13) who describes euphemism as a substitution of a mild, vague or roundabout expression for a harsh, blunt or direct one. In other words circumlocution is the use of many words to say something that could be said more clearly and directly by using fewer words. The phrase *"vha songo ita tshithu"* (do not do anything) could have been the more straight forward *"u nyovha"* (to make love). The expression *"vha songo ita tshithu"* (do not do anything) is not only euphemistic but also periphrastic.

Further examples from Ṋefefe's (2008) work are the following:

Vho-Takalani: *Naho ndo **khukhulwa tshikunwe** muthu ndi a ṱavhanya nda amba.* (Even if I hurt my toe I must immediately talk or speak).
*Mmbudzeni no **ṱamba uno ṅwedzi**?* (Tell me, did you wash this month?) Ṋefefe (2008:26).

Vho-Bukuṱa: *A thi ri **matotoya ndi anga ndi khou ḓi ita ndi tshi devha**. Zwino u dinelwa mini?* (Is it not that these young and tender peanuts are mine, at times I eat them. So, why do they disturb her?) Ṋefefe (2008:30).

In the above examples three euphemisms have been used, namely: *"khukhulwa tshikunwe"* which literally means to hurt one's toe; *"ṱamba uno ṅwedzi"* (to wash this month); and *"matotoya ndi anga ndi khou ḓi ita ndi tshi devha"* (young and tender peanuts that I sometimes eat).

The speaker uses the euphemistic expression *"u khukhulwa tshikunwe"* (to hurt one's toe) to avoid using the offensive expression *"ni na thumbu"* (you are pregnant) knowing full well that she is talking to a child who will also understand what is being referred to. *"U khukhulwa tshikunwe"* (to hurt one's toe) avoids a blunt Tshivenḓa expression *"ni na thumbu"* (you are pregnant).   As euphemisms are characterised by avoidance language and evasive expression where a speaker uses words as a protective shield against the anger or disapproval of natural or supernatural beings, there are euphemisms that can be used to avoid the expression *"ni na thumbu"* (you are pregnant) in Tshivenḓa, such as *"No pfukwa", "u gonya miri"* or *"ni mirini"*, *"u sa vhona ṅwedzi"*, *"u sa ṱamba", "u pfukwa", "u vha muthu wa thovhela"* and *"u vha mahosi"*.   All these expressions mean to be pregnant in Tshivenḓa and could be used to avoid the offensive Tshivenḓa phrase *"ni na thumbu"* (you are pregnant). For this reason euphemisms are classified as hyponyms, where there is one umbrella term for other terms (Mwanambuyu, 2012:76).

"U ṱamba uno ṅwedzi" (to wash this month) is a euphemism that replaces the general unacceptable expression in Tshivenḓa *"u bva malofha"* (bleeding from the vagina). Figuratively, it means to menstruate. It is not proper in Tshivenḓa culture to use the expression *"u bva malofha"* (bleeding from the vagina) referring to

menstruation. To maintain *"positive face"*, euphemisms, such as *"u vhona ṅwedzi"*, *"u ṱamba"*, *"u vhona maḓuvha"* and *"u vhona ṋowa"* may be used.

The expression "*matotoya ndi anga ndi khou ḓi ita ndi tshi devha*" (young and tender peanuts that I sometimes eat) figuratively means that the child belongs to him and he can make love to her at any time. The euphemism *"matotoya"* (young and tender peanuts) refers to the child's private parts that are not used to sexual intercourse; hence, the use of the euphemism *"matotoya"*.

"U devha" literally means to break the husk of the peanut in order to eat the inside. Figuratively, *"u devha" (to break)* here means to make love to her; it also has a connotation of making love to someone who does not always make love; hence, the euphemism *"u devha"* (to break). Elderly Man B commented by saying: *"It is only something that is hard to crack that can be broken."*

Table 4.28, below, contains common or general euphemisms - given by the participants - that are used in Tshivenḓa.

Table 4.28: Common or General Euphemisms Used in Tshivenḓa Cited by Participants

ORDINARY VENDA WORD/EXPRESSION	EUPHEMISM(S)	ENGLISH LITERAL MEANING
U lowa	*U vha muhulwane*	To be a witch
	U vha mudenya	To be a witch
	U vuwa	To be a witch
	U tota	To be a witch
	U silinga	To be a witch
	U buba u songo ṱohola	To bewitch
	U dodonga	To bewitch
U sula	*U bvisa muya*	To fart
Murundo	*Muṱambuluwo*	Urine
U runda	*U ṱambuluwa*	To urinate
	U kaidza mbevha	To urinate
U bvafha	*U teledza*	To be lazy
U lwala	*U vha thovhoni dzi fhisaho*	To be ill
	U sa vuwa zwavhuḓi	To be ill

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U guba	U rithea dangani	To have diarrhoea
	U gidima	To have diarrhoea
	U vha na thumbuni	To have diarrhoea
U vha na muhumbulo ya ṅwana	U vha vhusiku	To think like a young person
U funesa vhasadzi	U vha na tsindi	Fond of women
	U vha na sheḓo	Fond of women
	U sa fhira muthu	Fond of women
	U sa fhira tshikete	Fond of women
	U vha lupfimbi	Fond of women
	U vha na tsindi	Fond of women
U ambadza nnyo khondomu	U ambara gaweni	To put on a condom
U funana na muthu	U vha vhathihi	To love each other
	U dzula nae	To make love to someone
	U vha wa gakwani	To love someone secretly
	Muthu wawe	To be in love with someone
Tshanḓanguvhoni	U putisa muthu	To bribe someone
	U ṋea kholoḓiringi	To bribe someone
	U ita tshisevho tsha vhana	To bribe someone
	U ṋea vhurotho ha vhana	To bribe someone
U kambwa nga halwa	U ḽa mavhele	To be drunk
	U takala	To be drunk
	U wela mativhani	To be drunk (chief or a king)
	U fura	To be drunk
U nga muthu a no penga	U kiwa muvhungulo	To behave like a mad person
U penga	U khadza zwiṋoni	To be mad
	U pandamedza zwisusu	To be mad
U penga	U ri hovho!!	To be mad
	U vha na havhia	To be mad

U penga	*U sa vhuya dzoṱhe*	To be mad
	U sa vha na khithi	To be mad
	U fhira dzi tshi hanwa	To be mad
	U ṱangana ṱhoho	To be mad
	U kokota tshiselo tsha mpengo	To be mad
U beba ṅwana	*U tsa mirini*	To give birth
	U vhofholowa	To give birth
	U vhuya na magaraba	To give birth
U lwala ha ṅwana	*U fhisa*	When a child is ill
u ṱambesa muvhili	*U vha ṱhambelamaḓi*	To love washing one's body
	U vha khovhe	To love washing one's body
U vha na vhudele ho kalulaho	*U vha tshimange*	To always keep oneself clean
U sa ṱamba	*U shavha maḓi*	To hate washing one's body
	U vha musworo	To hate washing one's body
U lwala nga eḓela na musadzi o pwasha thumbu	*U wela*	To be ill
U khaula thumbu nga u sa i funa	*U pwasha thumbu*	To terminate a pregnancy
U sa vutshelwa	*U vha ngonwa*	To be impotence
U lala musadzi u sa bvisi mbeu	*U vha ngonwalurandala*	Inability to ejaculate
U ṱolela musidzana uri o no laliwa naa	*U setsha*	To check the girls' virginity
U tswa	*U doba*	To steal
	U vha na gunwe	To steal
	U silinga	To steal
	U sa vhona tshithu/	To steal
	U sa fhira tshithu	To steal

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U sedza muthu nga nḓila ya u nyala	*U koḓa thanga*	To abhor
U lwala vhulwadze ha Tshinzhilitilamushonga	*Vhulwadze vhuhulwane*	HIV and AIDS
	Tshimbambamba	
	Vhulwadze vhu sa fholi	
	Vhulwadze vhu si na dzilafho	
	Tshonnambatela	
	Dzwadze ḽi dzhenaho na pfamoni	

4.3.2.4 Political euphemisms

In addition to death, human body parts and sex organs and general euphemisms, the Tshivenḓa language also has euphemisms related to politics, disease and the economy - as in other languages.

4.3.2.4.1 Description of political euphemisms

Euphemism is defined in different ways in terms of the perspectives of pragmatics and style. Euphemism is a replacement of ordinary expressions with appropriate or exaggerated ones (O'Neill, 2011:286; Brno, 2012:27).

Zhao and Dong (2010:117) maintain that political euphemisms are tools that political leaders use to control information transmission. They add that as a tool, political euphemism hides the truth and legalises draconian behaviour; it influences people's sense of right and wrong as well as their understanding of the objective world and, thereby, succeeds in persuading them. In terms of Austin's Speech Act Theory (O'Neill, 2011:286) political euphemism performs two main social functions: disguising or cheating and persuading.

When comparing political euphemisms or Political Correctness (PC) and doublespeak, political euphemism is normally taken to be less harmful than doublespeak in that the intention of the user is to reduce embarrassment. Whereas doublespeak is "a deliberately constructed language that is used to disguise

thought… it is usually deliberately misleading or deceiving; it is used to create more favorable and flattering expressions" (From, 2007:41). From's concept of doublespeak is similar to some of the ways in which euphemism is used. According to Lutz (1987:349), doublespeak performs the following functions:

- It misleads and distorts facts - as in 'voluntary severance' for being fired from a job.
- It pretends to communicate - as in 'elimination of unreliable elements' for killing imprisoned people without trial.
- It turns evil into good - as in 'friendly fire'.
- It avoids responsibility - as in 'protective reaction strikes' for 'war and bombardment'.
- It turns negatives into positives - as in 'senior citizen' for 'old'.
- It limits, conceals, corrupts and prevents thought - as in 'national defence' for 'military'.

Quoting Katamba, From (2007) defines Political euphemism as "a term used to describe language, ideas and policies that minimize offence to racial, cultural or any other identity group." Andriy Sytnyk in his Ph D thesis: *Argumentative euphemisms, political correctness and relevance* defines PC as neologisms that "are often viewed as replacing biased judgmental expressions devaluating individual's race, sex, sexual orientation, age, health condition, social status and appearance with neutral units, which do not possess negative connotations, by means of introducing changes on the lexical level." He cites examples, such as 'chairperson' for 'chairman' and 'people of colour' for 'black, darkie and nigger'.

4.3.2.4.2 Purpose of Political Euphemisms

Orwell (1946), in Zhao and Dong (2010:117), believes that political language is designed "to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable." Political language consists largely of euphemism, question-begging and sheer cloudy vagueness. In his essay, *"Politics and the English Language"*, Orwell (1946) gives examples of this by writing that defenseless villages are bombarded from the air, the inhabitants driven out into the countryside, the cattle machine-gunned and the huts set on fire with

incendiary bullets: this is called "pacification"; millions of peasants are robbed of their farms and sent trudging along the roads with no more than they can carry: this is called "transfer of population or rectification of frontiers"; and people are imprisoned for years without trial, or shot in the back of the neck or sent to die of scurvy in Arctic lumber camps: this is called "elimination of unreliable elements."

When the government's aim is to conceal the unpleasant realities of war, it designs terminology that makes it sound less concrete and less terrible, for example, *"collateral damage"* instead of *"killing innocent bystanders";* "collateral damage", used during war, is particularly galling. "Collateral" means "secondary" or "indirect" and "damage" is "physical harm caused to something in such a way as to impair its value, usefulness, or normal function." The function of the term is to distance people from the horrors that actually happened: the killing and wounding of non-combatants during an act of war. Other PC language used by governments to cover up the unpleasant realities of war include *"asymmetric warfare"* for *"suicide bombing* attacks" and "enhanced interrogation" which in fact means *"torture".*

The purpose and effect of politically correct language is to prevent bullying and offensive behaviour and to replace terms loaded with offensive undertones with allegedly impartial words. So, for example, people are discouraged from referring to someone with a mental disability as "mentally retarded"; instead they are encouraged to refer to him/her as "differently-abled" or as "having special needs."

Smith (2013:13) gives the following political correct euphemisms: "downsizing*"* for firing employees, "ethnic cleansing*"* for genocide, *"gentlemen's club"* for strip club, "pre-owned vehicle*"* for used car, "family planning*"* for contraception, "between jobs" for unemployed, "adult material*"* for pornography and "late-term abortion*"* for murder of unborn baby.

4.3.2.4.3   Features of political euphemism

Euphemism is defined in different ways from the perspectives of pragmatics and style. Wen (2002) quotes several representative definitions which all suggest that euphemism is a replacement of ordinary expressions with appropriate or exaggerated ones. Political euphemism is created by political life and serves political purposes. Generally speaking, it is a tool for politicians to hide scandal; disguise the

truth; and guide public thoughts when discussing social issues or events. Despite some common features political euphemisms share with others, they have three typical features.

4.3.2.4.3.1   Greater degree of deviation from its signified

According to the Swiss linguist, Saussure, language signs are a combination of the signifier: the phonetic forms of language and the signified: objects in existence represented by linguistic forms (Warren, 1992:130). Due to a lack of direct or logical relationships between the two, they have a discretionary relationship with each other which makes it possible to create a euphemism by replacing the signifier. Because euphemism is created by transforming the signifier to enlarge the association distance between the signifier and the signified, euphemism meanings remain relative to their former zero-degree ones (Xu, 2002:7).

Although euphemism and its former zero-degree signifier refer to the same signified, political euphemism is different from commonly used euphemistic forms in order to avoid mentioning death and other physical phenomena; it deviates greatly from the meaning expressed by its former signifier and it may even be a complete distortion. For example, Former US President Reagan once called the 10-warhead intermediate-range missile a *"peacekeeper";* later political participants called their attacks "active defense"; and they even replaced *"recession"* with *"negative growth"* because it sounded less offensive to the ear (McArthur, 1996:56). It is quite obvious that these expressions are not a simple replacement of the former zero-degree signifier but opposite to their literal meanings, just like replacing *"black"* with *"white"*. Euphemism's deviation degree might just as well be marked with a range of 1 to 10 where the greater number refers to the greater degree of deviation. In which case, the above-mentioned political euphemisms could be marked 10 while some ordinary expressions such as *"overweight"* and *"fat"* could only be marked 1.

4.3.2.4.3.2   More vague meanings

George Orwell pointed out two characteristics of political discourse in his *Politics and the English Language* (1946), i.e., the obsolescence and vagueness of figures of speech. Euphemism, characterized by replacing direct expressions with implicative, obscure and vague ones, plays an important role in demystifying the connotations of political discourse when it serves political purposes. Some common demystifying

methods for political euphemisms include replacing specific meanings with general ones; replacing hyponyms with superordinates; and replacing derogatory meanings with neutral or even commendatory ones. For instance, people often refer to the atomic bombs used in Hiroshima as "the gadget", "the device", "the thing" or other vague meanings (Pinker, 1994). When talking about the American army's invasion of Grenada in 1983, President Reagan was dissatisfied with the word "invasion" used by the journalists; instead he expressed it as "a rescue mission", glorifying the military invasion as US help offered to other countries. Similarly, US air attacks in Vietnam and Libya were called "air operation"; President Bush also glorified military attacks on Iraq with some neutral and general expressions, such as "military operation" or "disarm" in his speech delivered on the very day the US declared war against Iraq in 2003 (Toynbee, 2003).

4.3.2.4.3.3   Strong characteristic of times

Euphemism is a language reflection of social culture (Peng, 1999:66); therefore, changes in social development propel those in language. In international relationships and conflicts political euphemism tends to boom. The US's important role in international politics as well as its dynamic domestic politics and economy, provides for a rich creation of political euphemisms. Pinker (1994) cites the following examples of political euphemisms: in terms of US economic decline "recession", "disinflation" and "negative growth" have been created which, in turn, have given birth to some euphemistic expressions, such as "downsize" and "workforce adjustment".

After Watergate quite a few euphemistic expressions were produced to hide the political scandal. Military actions are an extension of politics; war brings about not only death and destruction but it leads to the creation of new euphemisms because they make death sound less terrible (Page, 2003). The US Department of Defense called their air attack in Vietnam "air support" and "protective action"; their destruction of Vietnamese villages a "pacification program"; and the homeless refugees "ambient non-combat personnel". Similarly, deaths and injuries caused by their bombardment over other nations were "collateral damage" (Hutton, 2001). Euphemism's characteristic of times can also be reflected in variation in the signifier of the same objective phenomenon with time - as illustrated by different euphemisms

of military attack in different periods of history. In the 1950s Truman described the Korean war as "police action"; in the 1960s and 1970s the Vietnam war was called the "Vietnam conflict"; in 1983 the US invasion of Grenada was said to be "a rescue mission" instead of an "incursion"; its invasion of Panama was called "Operation Just Cause" and the Bush Government saw the Iraqi war which started in March 2003 as "Operation Iraqi Freedom" (Hutton, 2001).

In a language system, constant changes in time evolve from the relationship between the signifier and signified. Although there is no relation between linguistic signs and their signified, people tend to relate a euphemism to its signified after it has been used for a period of time. As a result, former vagueness and sense of distance disappear and euphemistic colour fades away and, consequently, politicians will always rack their brains to find alternative expressions.

4.3.2.4.4   Social functions of political euphemisms

A large number of political euphemisms find their roots in profound social reason, which is discussed below.

4.3.2.4.4.1   Speech Act Theory and social functions of political euphemism

It has been shown that political euphemisms differ from others that express physical phenomena or are used in other fields, such as in careers, because they have obvious political language characteristics; political language is neither romantic as in literature or precise as in foreign trade - it is purpose-oriented (Tian, 2002:24). It will be shown how political euphemism performs illocutionary and perlocutionary acts in terms of Austin's Speech Act Theory. Austin claims that speech performs three speech acts simultaneously: a locutionary act, an illocutionary act and a perlocutionary act (He, 1997:85-86). This theory provides theoretical support for the social functions of political euphemism. However, with individual listeners as his subjects, Austin mainly focuses his attention on the function of speech act verbs in the three levels of the speech act. The researcher undertook an analysis of this linguistic phenomenon from a wider perspective with political leaders (including governmental officials) and the public as the two sides of the communication. He concluded that implication was an important part of euphemism in addition to its narrative and signified functions.

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4.3.2.4.4.2 Illocutionary act - political euphemism's disguising and deceptive function

Political euphemism is an effective tool for political leaders to control the quantity and quality of information transmission, whereby disgraceful behaviour or motivation will be glorified or hidden and public criticism and accusation is avoided. For example, US ex-President Nixon and his partners called their spying in the Watergate scandal "intelligence gathering" and their lies "less than truthful" and "prevarication" (Page, 2003). Page (2003) suggests that as such trivialised expressions are used to smooth over bad influences that have been exerted.

The US Government once called their nuclear experiment in the South Pacific "operation sunshine" (Dong, 2000:25). It is widely known that atomic bomb experiments are mainly intended to test the extensiveness and effectiveness of their use, but a euphemistic name hides their nature. It is impossible for people who are uninformed to associate such a beautiful name with such a terrible nuclear weapon.

In news reports about US military attacks on other nations in recent years, people hardly find expressions, such as "surprise attack"; instead, other expressions, such as "preemptive strikes" and "surgical strikes" are employed to add a color of justice. However, all these are defense expressions to hide illegal attacks. Politicians may be said to be euphemism masters because they skilfully deliver their lies in their own language. Zhao and Dong, (2010:120) comment that 2500 years ago the Chinese militarist, Sunzi, referred to military behaviour as "nothing is too deceitful in war", which also seems applicable to politicians. George Orwell (1946) believes that political language is designed to make lies sound truthful and murder the respectable.

4.3.2.4.4.3 Perlocutionary act - political euphemism's persuasive function

Lakoff (1990) claims that politics is language and that language is politics. Political euphemism is similar to political propaganda in that both aim to persuade and influence the public. It has been a long time since linguists realised that language is not only for ideograms or to reflect social culture but for participating in social events and constructing social relationship; it is a social practice and an intervention. Berger and Luckmann (1967) point to the important role of language in the construction of social reality. Although it does not change signified things in existence, it changes

conceptual connotations because sometimes people's concepts of a meaning are based on their knowledge of words (Hudson, 2000:92-93). Political leaders attempt to shape people's recognition and knowledge of the world by using euphemisms and they influence their views of the world and intervene in terms of their knowledge and sense of right and wrong. Critical linguists are of the opinion that language is not a true reflection of reality; while helping people to know about the objective world, language also imposes a set of extremely subjective classification on them on behalf of their group interests - which is often used to deceive people without detection (Dong, 2000:25). The influences exerted by political euphemism are not immediate; they are subtle and potent - hence, the planting of illusive concepts into people's minds and changing them into facts which are accepted by the people.

The following snippets from the local radio station (FM1) programme on current issues, contain some Venḓa political euphemisms:

> "Muṅwe wa masipala u wanalaho kha Tshiṱiriki tsha Vhembe u khou humbula *"u fhungudza tshivhalo tsha vhashumi"* vhunga mulangi wa masipala uyo o tangwa nga mavharivhari a *"u sa shumisa masheleni nga nḓila yavhuḓi".* Muhasho wa vhuendi wa masipala uyo wo eletshedzwa u renga *"goloi dzo no shumaho"* hu si ntswa tenda dza vha *"dzo magiwaho Dzheremane".* Ano maḓuvha ni tshi dzhena masipala uyo ni lavhelelwa u ḓadza *"fomo ya vhuḓipfi haṋu".* Vhoṱhe *"vhathu vha sa koni",* vha no kundelwa vha ḓi wana muḓagasi wa mahala". (2016.04.15). (One municipality in the Vhembe District is considering downsizing its employees because its municipality manager is accused of misappropriation of funds. Its Department of Transport has been advised to procure only pre-owned vehicles rather than new as long as they have been manufactured from Germany. When you enter the municipality building you are expected to complete the response form. All indigents still continue to receive free electricity.)

It has been suggested above that euphemism - characterised by replacing direct expressions with implicative, obscure and vague ones - plays an important role in demystifying the connotation of political discourse when serving political purposes. Some commonly employed demystifying methods in political euphemism include replacing specific meanings with general ones; replacing hyponyms with superordinates; and replacing derogatory meanings with neutral or even commendatory ones. The Venḓa political euphemisms in the snippets of radio broadcast above are typical examples of euphemisms formed by replacing specific meanings with general ones and replacing hyponyms with superordinates ones.

- *"U fhungudza tshivhalo tsha vhashumi"* (downsizing, lay-off, layoff, right size, headcount adjustment, reduction in force, realignment): This is a political euphemism which has replaced the specific meaning *"u pandela"* (to fire employees or to dismiss employees). When the political euphemism expression *"u fhungudza vhashumi"* (downsizing) is used, it sounds better because it has replaced the specific term *"u pandela"* and *" u thatha"* (to fire, to dismiss) which sound very harsh to the listeners.

- *"U sa shumisa masheleni nga nḓila yavhuḓi"* (misappropriation of funds): This political euphemism is commonly used when high ranking government officials and politicians have been involved in matters relating to improper government spending and stealing money. It is a political euphemism that replaces the harsh statement: *"u tswa masheleni, u ngalangadza masheleni"* (to still government's money or to make money disappear). *"U sa shumisa masheleni nga nḓila yavhuḓi"* (misappropriation of funds) replaces a connotative meaning for theft; it sounds better than the specific words *"u tswa"* *"u ngalangadza masheleni"* (to steal money).

- *"goloi dzo no shumaho"* (pre-owned cars): This is a political euphemism that replaces the expression *"goloi dza kale"* (used cars; old cars). For most people, saying that they are buying an old car does not sound good; it is usually associated with poverty and as no one wants to be associated with poverty, the political euphemism *"goloi dzo no shumaho"* (pre-owned cars) covers the connotative meaning of *"goloi dza kale"* (old cars). In the extract above, this political euphemism serves politician's purpose of disguising the truth by using the expression *"goloi dzo no shumaho"* (pre owned cars). The people would praise them and say that they were not wasting government money - forgetting that even pre-owned cars may be more expensive than new cars.

- *"dzo magiwaho Dzheremane"* (cars manufactured in Germany/German cars): To be more specific *"goloi dzo magiwaho Dzheremane"* (cars manufactured in Germany) include Mercedes Benz, BMW and Audi; these cars are not cheap. They are expensive whether they are pre-owned or new. The expression *"dzo*

magiwaho Dzheremane" (manufactured in Germany) becomes a political euphemism by replacing hyponyms with superordinates, *"goloi dzo magiwaho Dzheremane*" replaces Mercedes Benz and BMW. People who do not know that cars manufactured in Germany are expensive would, then, praise the politicians for not wasting government's money.

- *"fomo ya vhuḓipfi haṋu"* (response form): This is a political euphemistic expression which has replaced the more specific expression, *"fomo ya mbilaelo"* (complaint form) which sounds harsh but when referred to as a "response form" sounds better.

- *"vhathu vha sa koni"* (indigents): According to The Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary indigents are very poor people. It is an insult in the Tshivenḓa culture to refer to any person as *"tshishai"* (poor). *"Vhathu vha sa koni"* (indigents) has become a common political euphemism that is used by politicians to refer to people who are poor. *"Vhathu vha sa koni"* (indigents) disguises the fact that the people are poor.

The following piece of news information was broadcast on 14 May 2016 by FM 2.It was reporting on the causes of student protests at the Vaal University of Technology.

> Matshudeni vho sinyuswa nge vhulangi ha University ha vha vhu sa khou bvisela khagala uri vha ḓo fhelisa lini mbekanyamushumo yavho ya "*u thola vhashumi vha nnḓa vha sa nyagi masheleni manzhi a muholo*". Miraḓo ya vhane vha ḓivhidza "*vhalwela mbofholowo*" "vho *imedzana*" navho nga "*khaedu*" iyo. Vhulangi ha ima kha ḽa uri matshudeni "*a vha na mbuno dzo linganaho*" u nga hanedzana navho nga ha iḽo fhungo. Vhulangi ha Universithi hone ha simesa ḽa uri kha hu vhe na "*tshiimo tsho dzikaho*". Matshudeni ngeno vha tshi simesa ḽa uri "*vhulangi vhu khou vha xedza*" nahone "*a vha khou fhulufhedzea*" kha nyambedzano navho.
>
> (Students were angry because the university management was not clear about the university's "outsourcing programme". Members who call themselves "freedom fighters" engaged with university management on this "challenge". The university management stood firm insisting that "students do not have enough evidence" to deliberate with them about that issue and told students "to have stability" at the university; students accused the university's management of "misleading" them and "negotiating in bad faith" with them.)

From the above section of the news, the following expressions are Tshivenḓa political euphemism expressions:

- **"*u thola vhashumi vha nnḓa vha sa nyagi masheleni manzhi a muholo*"(outsourcing):** When politicians and other people, especially those in cooperative management, want to save money for their companies they hire workers who would not be asked to sign a contract and they would be not be likely to receive high wages. Politicians have created a suitable euphemism for this form of exploitation; they refer it as "outsourcing". Workers hired in this way would not be permanent and they would not qualify for any benefits that permanent worker's received. The political euphemism *"outsourcing" (u thola vhashumi vha nnḓa vha sa nyagi masheleni manzhi a muholo)* has been created to avoid using the general expression or words, *"vhashumi vha sa ḓuri"* (cheap labour). It has been created knowing full well that it would be unacceptable for workers to be referred to as "cheap labourer". It is for that reason that politicians and other high ranking people prefer *"outsourcing".*

- **"*vhalwela mbofholowo"* (freedom fighters)**: This is a political expression created to distort the fact that when people fight for freedom many die in the process. They die because freedom fighters are armed political rebels. When referred to as *"vhalwela mbofholowo"* (freedom fighters) it sounds as if they fight for freedom unarmed; possibly through dialogue, but many people may die in the process. This political euphemism has been created to distort and disguise what really happens when people fight for freedom. Samoškaitė (2011:22) recognises the deception when she says: **"**basic to political euphemisms is incongruity: the incongruity between what is said, or left unsaid, and what really is."

- **"*khaedu"* (challenge)**: This word has now become a common political euphemism to describe something needing great mental or physical effort in order to be achieved successfully. Instead of using the general word *"vhukonḓi"* (problem) politicians use the euphemism *"khaedu"* (challenge) which distorts the difficulty of achieving the intended result. Problems are described using euphemism word "challenges" to make it sound easy despite

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some difficulties. It is for that reason that Samoškaitė (2011:24) comments that the sole purpose of political euphemism is to make the unreasonable seem reasonable, the blamed seem blameless and the powerless seem powerful.

- **"a vha na mbuno dzo linganaho" (lack of enough evidence)**: This political euphemistic expression is used to avoid the general and unacceptable word *"nonsense".* What they have presented as evidence has no sense. To avoid hurting people the political euphemism "a vha na mbuno dzo linganaho" (there is no enough evidence) is preferred to "their evidence has no sense".

- **"vhulangi vhu khou vha xedza" (to mislead)**: *Vhulangi vhu khou ri xedza* (management is misleading us) is a Tshivenḓa political euphemism that replaces the less acceptable expression *"vhulangi vhu khou ri zwifhela"* (management is lying). The political expression *"u xedza"* (to mislead) sounds more acceptable rather than the harsh word "*u zwifha*" (to lie). It is like the political euphemistic expression *"a vha khou fhulufhedzea kha nyambedzano"* (negotiating in bad faith). This, essentially, means that they are not faithful; they have been telling lies. Political euphemism is described as "not quite lying" and "not quite the truth" (Williams, 1975:23).

The table below shows some Tshivenḓa political euphemisms that are used to disguise, mislead, distort, deceive, inflate and obfuscate (Lutz, 1989).

Table 4.29: Examples of Tshivenḓa Political Euphemisms

Tshivenda political euphemism	General words	English translation
• *U shandukisa muvhuso*	*U wisa muvhuso*	Regime change
• *U imedzana*	*U lwisana*	To engage
• *Tshigwevho tsha vhutshilo*	*Tshigwevho tsha lufu*	Capital punishment
• *Vhathu vha tshivhalo (vho lovha)*	*Vhathu vhanzhi*	Large number (of people died)

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• *Tshiimo tshine tsha khou thenga thenga*	*Tshiimo tshi songo dzikaho*	Unstable situation
• *Ndindakhombo ya vhutshilo*	*Ndindakhombo ya lufu*	Life cover or life insurance.
• *U thudzelwa kule,* • *U vhetshelwa thungo,* • *U humiselwa murahu*	*U laṱelwa kule*	To be thrown out of the court
• *U shuma navho nga nḓila yo teaho*	*U lwa navho*	To deal with them appropriately
• *U tsireledza*	*U lwela*	To defend
• *Vhabvazwiṱhavhelo*	*Khuvhabvu dza nndwa*	Civilian casualties
• *U ngalangadza masheleni*	*U tswa masheleni*	Embezzlement of funds
• *Fhethu ha ndulamiso*	*Dzidzhele*	Correctional facilities
• *Lushaka lune lwa kha ḓi aluwa, bvelela*	*Lushaka lu shayaho*	Poor communities economically marginalized communities
• *Vhalala*	*Vhathu vho kegulaho kana U kalaha*	Senior citizens
• *U amba mafhungo a kanganyisaho*	*U zwifha*	Uttering conflicting statements
• *U teledza*	*U bvafha*	Motivationally deficient
• *Vhabvannḓa*	*Dzitshavhi*	Asylum seekers, illegal alien
• *U tshinyadza hu si nga phoswo*	*U vhulaha nga nṱhani ha u sa londa*	Collateral damage:
• *Vhalwelambofholowo*	*Matherorisi*	Freedom fighters
• *Ḽikumedzwa ḽi fhisaho*	*Fhungo ḽi konḓaho*	Robust debate
• *Vhadzia u vhona uri hu vhe na mulalo*	*Maswole*	Peacekeepers
• *U ḓipilela vhukuma*	*U ḓilwela vhukuma*	Active defence
• *Nyaluwo i si yavhuḓi (masheleni)*	*Nyaluwo yo vhifhaho*	Negative economic growth
• *U tshoṱela*	*U lwa*	Intervention
• *Fulo ḽa nga muyani*	*Nndwa ya nga muyani*	Air operation
• *Fulo ḽa mmbi*	*Nndwa nga maswole*	Military operation

• *U tsela fhasi ha ekonomi lwa tshifhinganyana*	*U wela fhasi ha ekonomi lwa tshifhinga nyana*	Recession
• *Thikhedzo ya muyani kana nga muyani*	*Nndwa nga muyani*	Air support
• *Vhukando ha u ḓitsireledza*	*Vhukando ha u ḓilwela*	Protective action
• *Vhatheli*	*Vhadzulapo*	Taxpayers
• *Midio ya muyani*	*Nndwa ya nga muyani*	Surgical strike
• *U dzimela*	*U thivhela*	To neutralize or service
• *U takala*	*U khwaṱha*	Gravitationally challenged Overweight
• *Malwadze a vhudzekani*	*Malwadze a matshilisano*	Social diseases
• *U vhifha*	*U sa sedzea*	Modest, plain, unattractice
• *U vha tshipai*	*Tsevhi*	Agent or source of information
• *U tandulula*	*U bvisela khagala*	Resolve
• *U amba*	*U bvisela khagala*	Disclose
• *U ṱuwa ha muḓagasi*	*U khakhisea ha tshumelo*	Service interruption
• *Mutshedeni a sa koni*	*Mutshudeni a kundelwaho*	Underachiever, underperformer

According to Pinker (1994) and Zhao and Dong (2010:119), one of the features of political euphemism is "more vague meanings" where the specific meanings are replaced with general ones; the hyponyms are replaced with superordinates; and derogatory meanings are replaced with neutral or even commendatory ones. From the table above all Tshivenḓa political euphemisms are characterised by "more vague meanings" as essential features of political euphemism.

4.3.2.4.5   The "euphemism treadmill"

Words originally intended as euphemisms may lose their euphemistic value by acquiring the negative connotations of their referents. As feminist author Greer (1971:298) maintains: "It is the fate of euphemisms to lose their function rapidly by association with the actuality of what they designate, so that they must be regularly replaced with euphemisms for themselves." This is a word-replacement strategy of political correctness which, according to Pinker (1994), is a cyclical one, giving rise to what has been dubbed "the euphemism treadmill". The "euphemism treadmill" is a process of language change where a euphemism that has been coined to allow speakers to avoid using a disreputable or unpleasant term that itself becomes so associated with a disreputable or unpleasant thing that a new euphemism is coined to replace it (Pinker, 1994). This is the well-known linguistic process known as pejoration and it is illustrated by Figure 4.2.below.
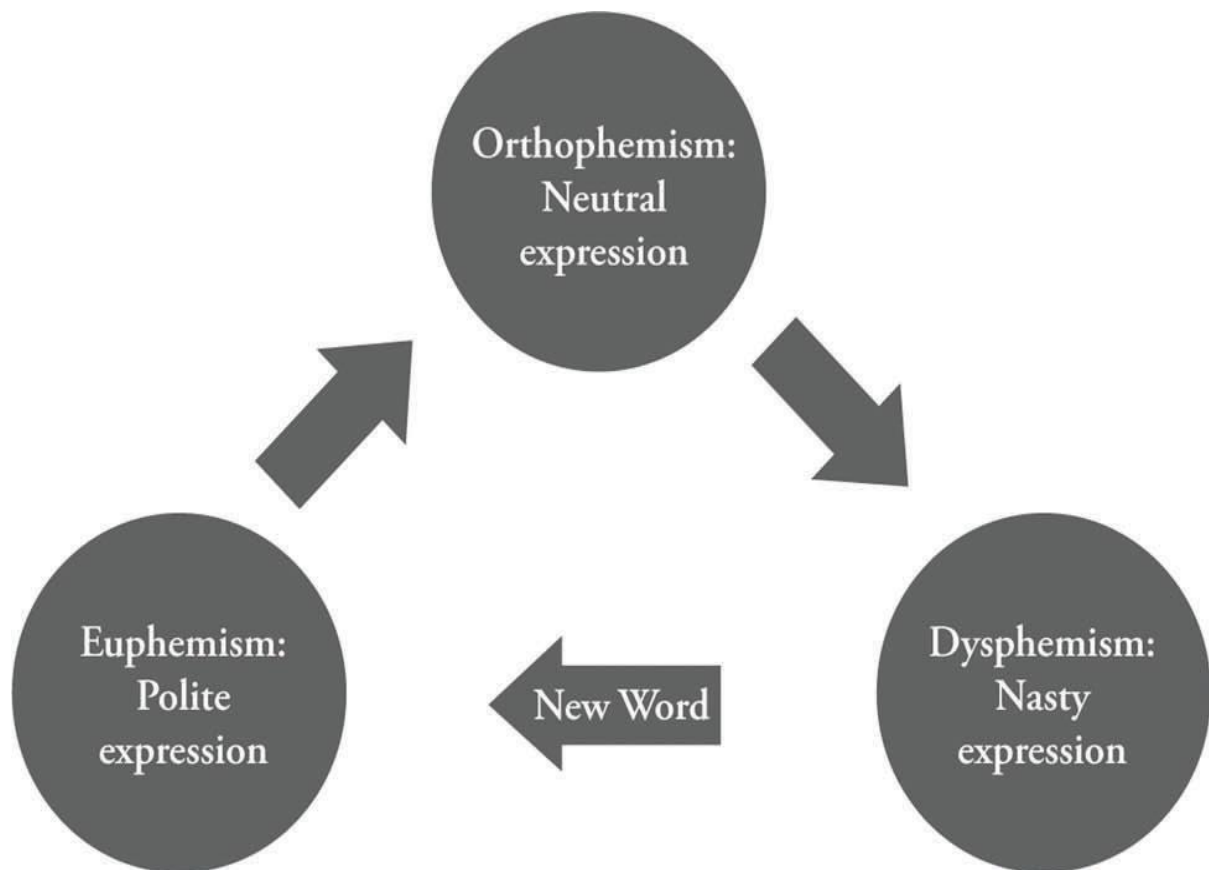
Figure 4.2: Anatomy of the "Euphemism Treadmill"

In this process an initially neutral term or orthophemism gradually takes on negative connotations through its use as an insult and, thereby, becomes a malicious term or dysphemism. It is then replaced with a politically correct term or euphemism which gradually becomes common use and is, then, seen as the appropriate neutral expression. This process repeats itself again and again, as is illustrated above in Figure 4.2. The "euphemism treadmill" is a slow cyclical process and even when a term that resolves the problem of negative semantic change appears to have been found, this victory is short-lived and the new neutral word eventually enters circulation and is used by bullies as an insult. As long as the social dynamics remain the same, the cycle repeats itself indefinitely, resulting in a growing list of discarded dysphemisms – words, such as idiot, moron and spastic rather than crippled, handicapped, disabled, physically challenged and differently-abled.

Contradicting the claims made by advocates of politically correct language, linguist Burkhardt (2010, 363) explains that "as long as the prevailing taboo or discrimination prevails, another euphemism will be found or created by the speakers to replace the

expression which is no longer felt to be euphemistic. The very moment a euphemism is commonly accepted, its former meaning fades and the search for a new euphemistic expression begins. Such euphemisations may occur several times throughout language history with regard to the same referent. . . . This explains why political correctness can never be successful over a long period of time".

Thus, the advocates of politically correct language commit themselves to a cyclical process of word replacement, creating a growing list of discarded terms - all of which are accepted exclusively as epithets. This process gives the schoolyard bully a buffet of insults, while encouraging others to alter their use of language periodically. Politically correct language is, at best, a short-term fix for the problem of semantic change and offensiveness.

An example of the "euphemism treadmill" in Tshivenḓa is given and explained as follows: Originally the expression, *"u khou vhaisala"* (not well)*,* was a euphemism for the word *"u lwala"* (to be ill). The continuous usage of the euphemism *"u vhaisala"* (to be not well) resulted in the loss of its euphemistic value. Other euphemisms for the word *"u lwala"* (to be ill) that still have their euphemistic value are *"u khou fhisa"* (to be hot) *and "u sa ḓipfa zwavhuḓi"* (not feeling well).

4.3.2.4.6   Criticisms labelled against the political correct euphemisms

Many scholars have been critical of the use of political euphemism in a language. In his essay, "*A Critique of Politically Correct Language*", O'Neill (2011:279-280) is of the opinion that those in favour of politically correct language claim that society discourages the use of words that have negative or offensive connotations in order to become more "civilized" and, as a result, victims of unfair stereotypes gain more respect. He adds that "for the advocates of politically correct language, replacement of existing terminology with politically correct terms has two purported virtues: it reduces the social acceptability of using offensive terms and it discourages the reflexive use of words that import a negative stereotype, thereby promoting conscious thinking about how to describe others fairly on their merits."

O'Neill (2011:286) expresses his disagreement with, and strongly criticises, the alleged purpose of politically correct language, i.e., discouraging the reflexive use of words and promoting conscious thinking; in his opinion the effect is exactly opposite:

"Politically correct language is narrow, faddish, and highly reflexive in character, consisting in large part of euphemisms. It sometimes promotes or amounts to outright dishonesty. Moreover, the drive for this kind of language involves aggressive attempts to delegitimize the use of politically incorrect terms that fail to keep up with current fashions."

Other concerns expressed by a rising number of people is that political correctness actually limits open debate and that it threatens freedom of speech (Brno, 2012:28). Citizens of democratic countries tend to highly value the possibility to express one's opinion openly in public, without being imposed on by those in power who decide what is politically correct and what is not. This concern is reflected in both serious articles and satirical performances and certain websites. Satire seems to flourish as a result of increasing sensitivity to politically correct terms which are rather controversial and misleading or are too complicated and, therefore, they are often ridiculed. The table below shows some English terms designed to ridicule political correctness.

Table 4.30: Terms Designed to Ridicule Political Correctness

• Alive	Temporarily metabolically abled
• Bald	Follicularly challenged
• Lazy	Motivationally deficient
• Fat	Gravitationally challenged
• Poor	Economically marginalized

Postman (2012) believes that a society changes its values by altering its vocabulary and O'Neill (2012:291) argues that "we may legitimately debate whether crippled, disabled, handicapped, or another term is the best, most accurate and most sensitive term to use in a given context. But to move toward euphemistic terminology that is stripped of all meaning and to attack aggressively those who continue to use meaningful words are not examples of sensitivity…At the heart of politically correct language lies dishonesty, not civility. This reality is manifested in the preference for euphemism over literalism, for vagueness over specificity, and for propaganda over honesty. The politically correct society is not the civilized society, but rather the dishonest society."

Allan and Burridge (2006:90), on the other hand, do not see political euphemisms or political correctness in as good a light. For them, political euphemism is "a brainwashing program … politically driven, a form of censoring… it reflects and seeks to enforce social change, manipulating people's thought and changing their linguistic behavior. This is partly true in that the use of politically correct expressions is not always sincere. It does not necessarily reflect the true beliefs and attitudes of the speaker. The fact that someone uses the title 'Ms' may be politically correct but it does not necessarily reveal his views on gender equality." Allan and Burridge (2006:93) maintain that political correctness has contributed to 'trivializing' major issues, such as racism, feminism and other controversial political issues, by shifting the focus to minor linguistic matters instead of the core issues.

4.3.2.5   Diseases related to euphemism

Euphemisms in this category deal with the most serious diseases. Because of an association with death or generally with misfortune, disease is often treated with superstition or associated with the belief that illness is providential (Sontag, 1978:17). Holder (2008:45) claims that medical jargon is often used by doctors instead of a generally understood reference to the illness. Scientific terms are not clear euphemisms, but the message is indirect and understanding might be doubtful; for example: "coronary inefficiency", "under the weather", "out of sorts" or "doing as well as may be expected".

Medicine is one of the first domains in which euphemism was used, starting in Old English which had the term "Sceandword" to denote an opprobrious term (Burchfield 1985, 20). According to Holder (2008:55), medicine borrowed mainly Latin terms in order to label and discuss disease and many of these Latinate terms were absorbed into lay terminology as euphemisms for referring to dreaded illnesses. Holder, (2008:55) claims there are many negatively associated terms in English containing the word "French" which is the result of mutual antagonism between England and France. "French" is used in relation to diseases that have obvious negative connotations but it is unclear which diseases are being discussed; for example, "French ache" or "French disease" refers to syphilis. Heart conditions are, according to Holder (2008:55), another instance where euphemistic substitutions are used. He

points out that a bad heart condition or heart attack could be replaced by "cardiac incident", "cardiac arrest" and "heart problem".

Table: 4.31: Euphemisms for Mental Illness in Tshivenḓa

General Tshivenḓa word	Euphemism	English translation
U penga	*U khada zwiṋoni*	To be mad
	U pandamedza zwisusu	
	U khada zwisusu	
	U ri hovho	
	U vha na havhia	
	U kokota tshiselo tsha mpengo	
	A dzo ngo vhuya dzoṱhe	
	U sa vha khithi	
	U fhira dzi tshi haṅwa	
	U ṱangana ṱhoho	
	U vhaisala ṱhohoni	
	U mama mme vha tshi penga	

From the list of euphemisms for mental illness above, instances of the euphemism treadmill can be seen. Where the reality denoted by the words has negative connotations less offensive terms are recreated to show respect and to give hope to family members. Holder argues that the meanings of mental diseases could be obfuscated by an unmentioned extent of the illness. The words referring to mental diseases are not graded; the word "mad" could mean a slight mental disorder but it can also be used for more serious mental illnesses. The hidden degree of seriousness is a euphemistic feature of words like "off the wall", "off your gourd", "off your head", "off your napper", "off your rocker", "off your tree" and "off your trolley". Parker (2007:23) points out that the euphemism treadmill is clearly apparent in words denoting mental diseases. At the beginning of the 19th century words like "idiot", "imbecile"and "moron" were euphemisms.

According to Johnson (2003:78), euphemism has had an interesting and complicated impact on physician-patient communication in medicine. They argue that physicians tend to be direct about death and illnesses relative to the general population which has become more the norm with the decrease of paternalism in modern medicine. However, Parsons (2000:374) believes that the use of euphemism, such as "sugar disease" for diabetes, does exist and can be detrimental to patient care and health outcomes. Taylor and Ogden (2005:323) tested the impact of these euphemisms on patients' perceptions of illnesses and found that they experienced less distress and a greater estimation of their health and prognosis when alternate, euphemistic terms were used for diseases which create a conflict between truth/accuracy and patient comfort/deception.

AIDS is one illness that is greatly euphemised in all languages, including Tshivenḓa. Various euphemistic names have been created in Tshivenḓa for this dreaded disease; the table below shows that Tshivenḓa has many terms that are used when mentioning AIDS.

Table 4.32: Euphemisms for AIDS in Tshivenḓa

General Tshivenḓa word	Euphemism	English translation
Vhulwadze vhu wanwaho vhu fhedzaho maswole a muvhili (VWFM)	*Vhulwadze vhuhulwane ha VWFM*	AIDS.
	Tshimbamba	
	Tshonnambatela	
	Vhulwadze ho ḓadzaho shango	
	Vhulwadze vhu sa fholi	
	Vhulwadze vhu si na dzilafho	
	Dzwadze ḽi dzhenaho na pfamoni	
	U kanda khevhele	To be infected by AIDS

From the list of all Tshivenḓa names referring to AIDS in the table 4.32, above, it can be seen that all names created to replace "VWFM" refer to AIDS but they all still have a negative connotation. It can also be said that these names for AIDS in Tshivenḓa have not been created as a results of the euphemism treadmill but by the negative stigma that is attached to the disease. In the table below are some of the other diseases that have been euphemised in Tshivenḓa.

Table 4.33: Other Tshivenḓa Diseases and their Euphemisms

General Tshivenḓa word	Euphemism	English translation
Tshifakhole	*Tshiivhana*	Epilepsy
Tshifunga	*Muṱamboṱambo*	Bilharzia
Mapele	*Vhulwadze ha lukanda*	Leprosy
U guba malofha na malatwa	*Ṋowakhulu*	Diarrhoea
U guba (muthu muhulwane)	*U vha/ U farwa nga malani U gidima, U huda*	Running stomach
U guba (ṅwana)	*U shela*	Running stomach (child)
Thusula	*ḓorobo*	Drop
Tshiṱanzo	*U vha na ndulu/ nyongwe*	Vomiting
Vhulwadze ha u zwimba maḓasi	*U wela*	Sexual transmited disease
U kaka ha ṅwana na malofha	*U inga*	Passing bloody stools by a child
U beba vhana vha tshi lovha	*U huma nḓila*	Miscarriage

Comments on the other diseases listed in the above table, Table 4.33, are the following:

- **"Tshifakhole" (epilepsy)**: The disease *"Tshifakhole"* (epilepsy) in Tshivenḓa has a negative connotation; it is, therefore, considered as harsh to say that someone is suffering from "*Tshifakhole"* (epilepsy) when there is a suitable and acceptable euphemism.

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- **"*Tshifunga*" (Bilharzia):** The term "tshifunga" in Tshivenḓa seems to be an unacceptable term when referring to Bilharzia; the name itself seems to be self-explanatory as it contains a connotation of blood. The term *"muṱamboṱambo"* (Bilharzia) seems to have a hidden meaning of action that takes place when urinating which makes it a suitable replacement for the term *"Tshifunga"(Bilharzia).*

- *"U guba"* **(diarrhoea)**: This disease causes embarrassment for people. In Tshivenḓa the word *"u guba"* (diarrhoea) is not use; it is replaced with the euphemisms *"u vha na dangani", "u vha na malani", "u huda"* and *"u tshuluwa".* People say that they have been suffering from *"u vha na malani" "u vha na dangani", "u huda"* or *"u gidima"* (running stomach) without any embarrassment. In this word the "euphemisms treadmill" phenomenon has occurred; an initially neutral term or orthophemism has gradually taken on negative connotations through its use as an insult and has, thereby, become a malicious term. It has then been replaced with an more acceptable term or euphemism which has gradually come into common use and is seen as an appropriate neutral expression.

- *"Tshiṱanzo"* **(vomiting)**: Essentially, it means to empty the contents of the stomach through the mouth which is a disguting process that cannot be discussed openly without the use of euphemism. In Tshivenḓa, if this process happens continuously it becomes a disease which is called *"tshiṱanzo".* However, this name is unacceptable because vomiting itself is disgusting and, therefore, there are euphemistic terms that may be used: *"u vha na ndulu"* or *"nyongwe" (vomiting).* These names conceal the the reality of a disgusting process that is accompanied by "*u ṱanza"* (vomiting)

- "*Vhulwadze ha u zwimba maḓasi"* **(sexually transmited disease)**: This disease affects a man when he has had sex with a woman who has aborted a pregnancy. Its symptoms include swollen testes and penis which cause embarrassment to those who have been infected. Due to its embarrassing nature a euphemistic term has been created: *"U wela"* (literally means to fall into something). This name *"u wela"* is better than *"vhulwadze ha u zwimba*

maḓasi" (disease where in testes become swollen). Traditional Healer A commented:

"Hu na malwadze ane a tatisa u amba, ane a shonisa u a amba uri muthu u khou a lwala, malwadze anea a kwamaho zwa vhudzekani, malwadze anea ane muthu a vha o ṱangana ṱhoho". Tshivenḓa tshi na maipfi atsho o teaho u shumiswa u bula malwadze o raloho, mavhuvhisi o teaho." Maṅwe malwadze wa a bula nga madzina ao a nga tshinya kuhumbulele kwa mulwadze siani ḽa phodzo. (There are diseases that are difficult to mention; that are embarrassing to tell a person that he/she suffering from such diseases or illness. These are diseases that are related to sex and mental illness. The Tshivenḓa language has suitable terms that are used to talk about such illnesses - suitable euphemisms. Some diseases are not worthy to be mentioned to the patient as they may put a patient a doubt as to whether he/she might recover from such an illness.)

- *"U kaka ha ṅwana na malofha"* **(passing of bloody stools by children)**: It is   culturally acceptable for parents to follow their children when they go to toilet in order to observe if they are passing healthy stools. At times they find that a child may be passing bloody stools which are a symptom of disease. In Tshivenḓa we have an acceptable term to refer to such instances; rather than saying *"u khou kaka na malofha"* a euphemistic term is used for such a disease: *"u inga"* (literally means to add something on top of another).

- *"U beba vhana vha tshi lovha"* **(miscarriage)**: There are instances where a woman miscarries everytime when she wants to give birth. Culturally, in Tshivenḓa, it is regarded as a disease. It is hurtful to say to the woman: *"ni beba vhana vha tshi lovha"* (you give birth babies and they die). An acceptable euphemistic expression to refer to this disease is: "*u huma nḓila*" (literally to return where you have been going).

Allan and Burridge, (1991:97) and Douglas (2003:23) agree that euphemism occurs when there is a prescription of speech behaviour relating to a taboo. Allan and Burridge (2006:207) explain that the topics most likely to be treated euphemistically are those associated with cultural taboos, such as death, disease, sex and religion. In other words, euphemism results from an interaction between semantics and the social and has, therefore, been the purview of socio-linguistics and of those interested in the socio-historical dimensions of language use and transformation. One of the main social functions of euphemism is "face-saving"

(McGlone & Batchelor 2003) to protect one's own face and to protect the feelings of others. Besides this, euphemism may decrease the emotional intensity of the topic under discussion (Tayler & Ogden 2005:323) which can be measured physiologically (Gray, 1982:31).

4.3.3   Negative and positive effects of euphemisms

While the above discussion has dealt with categories of euphemism, in general, the following discussion deals with positive and negatives effects of euphemisms in Tshivenḓa

4.3.3.1   Positive effects of euphemisms in Tshivenḓa

The positive effects of using euphemisms in Tshivenḓa suggested by the participants are summarised in Table 4.34, below.

Table 4.34: Positive Effects of Euphemisms in Tshivenḓa

Participants	Number	Positive effect
Traditional Healers	5	It helps people feel better. Avoids language that is too explicit or graphic. Makes the language sound more literary. Creates a humoristic effect in the message. Avoids directly naming unpleasant things. Discusses touchy or taboo subjects.
Chiefs	5	People feel good during communication Reduces impact of what is actually being referred to. Makes the language sound more literary. Avoids directly naming unpleasant things. Creates a humorous effect in the message.

Pastors	5	It helps people feel better. Avoids directly naming unpleasant things. Avoids 'calling a spade a spade'. Avoids conflict during communication. Reduces impact of what is actually being referred to.
Elderly Men (educators)	5	It helps people feel better. Avoids language that is too explicit or graphic. Makes the language sound more literary. Avoids conflict during communication. Creates a humorous effect in the message. Avoids directly naming unpleasant things. Beautifies the language. Discusses touchy or taboo subjects.
Elderly Women (educators)	5	Low status professions are easily addressed. Avoids language that is too explicit or graphic. People feel comfortable during conversation. Makes the language sound more literary. Creates a humorous effect in the message. Avoids the direct naming of unpleasant things. Discusses touchy or taboo subjects with ease.

From the evidence in Table 4.34, above, it can be seen that many participants agreed that euphemisms have their advantages. According to the Traditional Healers, euphemisms enable and help people feel better when discussing touchy or taboo topics; they enable them to avoid language that is too explicit or graphic; they make the language sound more literary; they create a humorous touch to the message; and the direct naming of unpleasant things is avoided.

The Pastors, Chiefs, Elderly Men and Women agreed with what the Traditional Healers said and added that euphemisms are the only means that enable them to avoid conflict during communication, reduce the impact of what is actually being referred to and are a reliable way to address low status professions, thereby avoiding to 'call a spade a spade.'

Important themes identified as advantages are listed in Table 4.35, below, using frequency and percentage when considering the responses of the various respondents.

Table 4.35: Important Advantages, their Frequency and Percentage

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Avoids directly naming unpleasant things	5	100%
It helps people feel better	5	80%
Makes the language sound more literary	5	80%
Creates a humorous effect in the message	5	80%
Avoids language that is too explicit or graphic	5	60%
Discusses touchy or taboo subject with ease.	5	60%
Reduces impact of what is actually being referred to	5	40%
Beautifies the language	5	20%
Low status professions are easily addressed.	5	20%

From the above table it is evident that for the participants the most important advantage of euphemism is that it avoids directly naming unpleasant things (100%) Many participants believe that they help people feel better; make the language sound more literary; and suggest humor in the message (80%) as well as avoid language that is too explicit or graphic and discuss touchy or taboo subjects with ease (60%). The least important advantages of euphemisms - in a descending order - are that they reduce the impact of what is actually being referred to (40%); they beautify the language; and low status professions are easily addressed (20%).

4.3.3.2   Negative effects of euphemisms in Tshivenḓa

The negative effects of using euphemisms in Tshivenḓa suggested by the participants are summarised in Table 4.36, below.

Table 4.36: Negative Effects of Euphemisms in Tshivenḓa

Participants	Number	Negative effect
Traditional Healers	5	Can be disrespectful Hinders clear communication Masks reality Is deceptive Leads to miscommunication and general confusion Has a cheating function Hides information Covers up the cruel reality of a complex communication environment.
Chiefs	5	It is deceptive It leads to miscommunication and general confusion It has a cheating function Hides information Covers up the cruel reality of a complex communication environment.
Pastors	5	Hinders clear communication Masks reality It is deceptive It leads to miscommunication and general confusions, It has a cheating function Hides information.
Elderly Men (educators)		Can be disrespectful Hinders clear communication Masks reality It is deceptive

	5	It leads to miscommunication and general confusion It has a cheating function Hides information.
Elderly women (educators)	5	Masks reality It is deceptive It leads to miscommunication and general confusion It has a cheating function Hides information Covers up the cruel reality of a complex communication environment.

The evidence in Table 4.36 indicates that euphemisms have many shortcomings. Participants indicated that euphemisms can be disrespectful; they hinder clear communication; they mask reality; and, at times, are deceptive. They also lead to miscommunication and general confusions; they have a cheating function; and euphemisms can successfully control the information conveyed. Political leaders use euphemisms to influence people's thoughts concerning social life in such a way that they are misled by their cheating function (Mihas, 2005:31), They hide information and cover up the cruel realities of a complex communication environment.

The disadvantages of euphemisms mentioned by Elderly Man D are that euphemisms mask reality and, at times, are deceptive which is echoed by De Beaugrande (2012) who stresses that euphemisms used in modern culture help to conceal something pejorative behind a softened or manipulated expression. The deceptive nature of euphemism has sometimes been referred to as "doublespeak," where they are used as strong instruments to influence and sometimes to manipulate listeners or alter their perceptions of actual facts (Hines, 2000:146).

4.3.4 Evidence of Tshivenḓa usage of euphemisms in various domains

Through observation and interviews the researcher was able to create a list of euphemisms used in various domains. An investigation of the use of Tshivenḓa euphemisms was conducted in seven domains in Venḓa in the Vhembe District: local court, church, home, hospital, girls in seclusion, school and electronic media (FM 1).

4.3.4.1　　　Local court

This court is responsible for trying civil cases, such as assaults, insults, divorces, rapes, unwanted pregnancies and accusations of witchcraft, among others. It is a court which tries cases to maintain peace among the people or citizens in their respective societies. In observing various cases that were tried, the researcher discovered that Tshivenḓa euphemisms in this court were not over-emphasised and that they were not very popularly; the parties needed to understand what was being said in plain language. They believed in 'calling a spade a spade', such as in instances of unwanted pregnancy and rape, they used phrases such as *"u binyela ngafhi?"* (which literally means where did you rape her?) and "*nyovhela ngafhi?*" (where did you have sexual intercourse with her?). In court where a rape case was tried, the prosecutor asked a rape victim: *"No zwi pfa a tshi ni rundela naa?"* (Where did you feel it when he shot sperm into you?) and *"Vho pfa muḓifho naa musi vha tshi khou binyiwa?"* (Did you feel sexual pleasure when he raped you?). At times common euphemisms were used, such as *"No vha ni khou lalana ngafhi"?* (Were you were sleeping with each other?).

In a case of insult the researcher witnessed the prosecutor ask the victim: *"O vha sema a ri mini?"* (What insulting words did he say to you?). She replied: *"O ri kha ndi ṱuwe nnyo yanga a i ḓifhi"* (which literally means pack and go; your vagina is not sweet). The prosecutor then asked her: "*U ri a vha ḓifhi nga mini?"* (Why did he say you are not sweet?) to which she replied: *"U ri ndi a nukha, a thi ṱambi ndi ṱamba milenzhe fhedzi"* (He says I stink, I do not wash, I only wash my legs).

In another case that the researcher attended concerned with theft, plain and embarrassing expressions, such as *"u tswa"* (to steal), were used rather than the euphemistic expressions, *"u doba", " vha na gunwe",* "*u dzhia u songo humbela*" which all literally mean to steal.

In this domain Searle's (1975) Speech Act Theory was implemented where direct speech acts are considered to be utterances in which the speaker's meaning is consistent with what is intended to be accomplished (speaker meaning). That was the reason why the local court justice would directly ask questions, such as: *"U binyela ngafhi"* (Where did you rape her?), "*Nyovhela ngafhi?*" (Where did you have sexual intercourse with her?), *"No zwi pfa a tshi ni rundela naa?"* (Where did you feel

it when he shot sperm into you?), *"Vho pfa muḓifho naa musi vha tshi khou binyiwa?"* (Did you feel sexual pleasure when he raped you?) and *"O vha vhudza uri nnyo yavho a i ḓifhi?"* (Did he tell you that your vagina was not tasty?). All of these phrases could have been substituted by more indirect phrases, namely: *"Lalela ngafh?i"* (Where did you sleep with her?), "*No zwi pfa a tshi ni shela mbeu naa*" (Did you hear him pouring in his sperms?), *"Vho pfa u takadzwa musi vha tshi khou lalilwa naa?"* (Did you feel sexual pleasure when making sexual intercourse) and *"O vha vhudza uri a vha na mukango naa?"* (Did he tell you that you are sexually not right?).

In the court domain there was evidence of what is referred to as conversational implicature where communication is regarded as a series of cooperative efforts between participants who observe a common principle known as the cooperative principle (CP): "Make your contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged" (Grice, 1975:45). The following four maxims of the cooperative principle were observed in this domain:

(i)   Quantity maxim is where contributions to a conversation are to be as informative as is required; no more or less is exactly what is required in this domain.

(ii) The maxim of quality advises that telling the truth with adequate evidence is required in conversations; nothing that is false. In a conversation, interlocutors should be as truthful as possible.

(iii) The maxim of quality advises that telling the truth with adequate evidence is required in conversations.

(iv) The maxim of manner is responsible for avoiding obscurity of expression and ambiguity. Be as clear, as brief and as orderly as possible in what is said.

Other words and expressions were used in this domain which drew the attention of the researcher; *"u ḓitakadza"* and *"u mu takadza"* are euphemisms which mean to amuse oneself. *"Nda bvisa"* is an ordinary word which refers to coming out and had

the following euphemisms: *"u bva khae"* (getting out quickly) and *"takuwa" (*getting up stealthily). All these phrases are considered to convey politeness, according to Brown and Levinson (1987). Searle (1969) also considered them to be indirect speech acts in the sense that they phrases constitute indirect references to the meanings of other words. The speaker communicates more than s/he actually says by way of relying on a mutually shared background with the listener/s as well as knowledge of both linguistic and non-linguistic aspects of a language and the general power of rationality and inference on the part of the listener/s. Therefore, in order to guarantee successful communication in everyday life, it is felt that there should be some norms or beliefs shared by the speakers that govern the communication - as put forward by Grice (1975) who points out that

> Our talk exchanges… are characteristically, to some degree at least, cooperative efforts, and each participant recognizes in them, to some extent, a common purpose, or at least a mutually accepted direction…. We might then formulate a rough general principle which participants will be expected …to observe, namely: Make your conversational contribution such as required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged (Grice, 1975:26, cited in Blakemore, 1992:25; Hasegawa, 2005:33).

Some of the observed Tshivenḓa euphemisms were: *"Tshifevhi",* a Tshivenḓa ordinary word which refers to a woman who loves each and every man. The word *"Tshifevhi"* has the following corresponding Tshivenḓa euphemisms: *"thumbudzi"* *"tseramisiamedzo",* *"gwambudzavhadziba",* *"phelea"* and *"ṱhudzi."* These euphemisms all mean a woman who loves man too much or loves each and every man.

From the above examples, it may be concluded that euphemisms are - to some extent - synonyms in semantic studies. It was easy to classify the above words as hyponyms, where there was one umbrella term for other terms. Other instances include the term or expression: *"u lowa"* (which literally means to bewitch someone) has a number of euphemisms, such as "*u vha mudenya"* (which literally means to be thick), *"u vha muhulu"* (means to be big), *"u vuwa"* (to wake up) and *"u tota"* (to pinch) and term or expression: *"U daha mbanzhe"* (which literally means to smoke dagga) that has a number of euphemisms, such as: "*u ḽa matanda"* (which literally means to eat wood), *"u peta voho* (means to bend one's thigh), *"u ḽa muri mudala"*

(to eat green tree) and *"u ḽa muri u ḽiwaho nga mahosi"* (to eat a tree that is consumed by kings) as well as many others.

There is also the use of conversational implicature (Grice 1975) where there is an aspect of indirectness in speaking about a topic, such as pregnancy which involves a body part which cannot just be talked about at will in public; hence, the use of euphemism where one is able to infer the meaning from context.

It may, therefore, be said that the other terminologies for the phrase *"u daha mbanzhe"* or *"u lowa"* semantically have different words which mean the same as the initial common words. Euphemisms are used depending on the circumstances; for instance, adults use them depending on context so that communication is made easy.

There were more recorded euphemisms which were used in this domain, such as: *"U ḓaḓa"* (to be confused), *"u ṱangana ṱhoho"* and *"u sa vha na khithi"* (which means to be mad) used in cases of being accused of trafficking in intoxicating substances. In a defilement case, there was proper use of direct speech as pointed out by Searle (1969) in the example: *"u nyovhana na musidzana wa miṅwaha ya fhasi ha fumirathi"* (having sex with a girl below the age of sixteen). In this scenario, direct speech was used mainly because the magistrate wanted to ensure that the case was audible so that no one could complain about not hearing. Other words which were used were the usual ordinary words which may be understood by everyone present in court.

4.3.4.2   Church domain

A church is a religious institution where Christians assemble in order to worship their God (Macmillan Study Dictionary, 2009). This is a domain which is responsible for religious activities.

There are various denominations in Venḓa, including the Roman Catholic Church, the Church of the Nazarene, the Evangelical Church, Seventh Day Adventists, the Apostolic Faith Mission Church and the Zion Christian Church, each with their own beliefs and structures. In this domain Mwanambuyu (2011:95) cites death as a concept that, traditionally, human beings have been reluctant to deal with in straightforward language terms. Whether this is due to superstition, fear or social

respect, the fact remains that when facing death language users try to soften the effect of what they really wish to communicate. They, therefore, resort to euphemisms where the semantic or formal process when the taboo has explicit, offensive or obscene overtones. Euphemism is not merely a response to a forbidden subject, as Sexton (1997:336) points out, but rather provides a way to speak about a taboo that is deemed unspeakable and the concept of which is banned from the public domain and removed from our consciousness. As Mwanambuyu (2011:95) argues that death is "a fear-based taboo" in which different fears coexist, namely: fear of the loss of loved ones; fear of the corruption of the body; fear of evil spirits; and fear of what comes after death.

In this domain the researcher, who is a member of one of the churches mentioned above and who visits other local churches, discovered that most of the churches did not talk directly about death because of the uncertainties and mysteries surrounding it. The researcher discovered much superstition associated with death; church members and preachers avoid talking about death directly and, instead, they refer to it euphemistically as *"u awela"* (to rest), *"u eḓela"* (to sleep), *"u vhidziwa"* (to be called), *"u fhumudzwa"* (to be made quiet), *"u awedzwa"* (to put to rest), *"vhutshilo vhu sa fheli"* (everlasting life), *"u ya makoleni, ṱaḓulu"* (going to heaven) and *"u dzhiiwa"* (to be taken).

Pastor A spoke about the issue of *"u dzhiiwa"* (to be taken) - as explained in the Bible - in the following way:

> Bivhili i tshi amba lufu i shumisa matatathino, i amba nga u dzhiiwa. John14:1-3 i ri, mbilu dzaṋu dzi songo tshenuwa, tendani Mudzimu ni tende na nṋe . Nḓuni ya Khotsi hu na madzulo manzhi, arali zwo vha zwi so ngo ralo ndo vha ndi tshi ḓo vha ndo ni vhudza, ndi yo ni lugisela madzulo, ndi ḓo vhuya ndi tshi ni dzhia na ḓa hune nṋe nda vha hone. (Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you.If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am.)

The researcher came to the conclusion that a great deal of emphasis is placed on the statement: *"Murena a tshi ḓa u dzhia vhawe"* (Jesus to come and fetch his own home). Popova (2010:10) maintains that Christians avoid talking about death, so

they talk of awaiting Jesus' return because the belief is that when one dies, he/she goes to heaven to wait for the Lord Jesus' return; all believers anxiously await his return where the dead will resurrect.

4.3.4.3 Girls in seclusion domain

It is the tradition of the Tshivenḓa-speaking people that when a girl reaches puberty and experiences the onset of menstruation she is put into seclusion to be initiated into adulthood. The initiation process involves extensive use of euphemism as much of the syllabus centres on hygiene, sex and motherhood. The mother is expected to report to the elders that the child has started her menstruation periods. When the mothers report to the elders the language of reporting this issue is filled with euphemism. Elderly Woman C gave the following example:

> *"Ndi khou amba ṅwana uri o thoma u sema vhakegulu"* (I am informing you that the child has started menstruating).

In the above statement a euphemism has been used: *"u sema vhakegulu"* (literally it means to insult the grannies). This is a euphemism that replaces the common phrase: *"u bva malofha"* (blood flows). Initiation is a time when advice is given to young girls on the rules of hygiene and how to take care of themselvesf when menstruating. An indirect way of talking about menstruating would be used; instead of saying, "*u bva malofha*" (menstruation blood flows) euphemisms are used, such as "*u vhona ṅwedzi* (which literally means see the moon) or *"u ṱamba"* (to wash) - both are euphemisms or synonyms for menstruation. This indirect way of speaking is discussed by Searle (1969) and it is alluded to by Brown and Levinson (1987) as a way of being polite. In most cases, women would not want to talk about these issues directly because they are topics which relate to body parts of both men and women and they understand each other without difficulties. Elderly Woman C further explained that for the girl or initiate who would be new to the context, an elderly person would be there to explain every euphemism used.

In this domain there is also the aspect of the cooperative principle - as pointed out by Grice (1975) - because the interlocutors are able to understand each other as they belong to the same context and share the same background knowledge. Even though this was the most difficult domain in which the researcher struggled to obtain

data from the participants due to its sensitivity and secrecy, it was found that some of the most popular euphemisms in this domain were those concerned with sex, body parts, excretion and defecation. The following are typical examples:

- *"Vhunna"* (manhood) was a euphemism which was used as opposed *"nnyo"* (penis).
- *"Vhusadzi"* (womanhood) was used instead of *"tshiṱombo"* (vagina).
- *" lala na munna"* (to sleep with a man or husband) was used as opposed to *"u nyovhana"* (to have sexual intercourse).

The main reasons why the women used euphemisms was to maintain both the girls' and of their own 'face' because for them to talk about these words directly or the way they are supposed to be said would sound weird; therefore, the elderly women use euphemisms to avoid taboo words when they used them to speak. Elderly women use euphemisms to lessen *"face threatening acts"* - as advocated by Brown and Levinson (1987) who associate this with politeness theory. Therefore, in this domain context is seriously respected because the language used here reflects the context and shared background knowledge by the interlocutors.

4.3.4.4 Home domain

This is a domain where, in most normal situations, one is likely to find a father, mother, children and other relatives. When the researcher was collecting data for this study in one house, he was drawn to a dialogue between a mother and daughter. The dialogue was as follows:

Mother: *Haa! Ni khou **swaswa** ṅwananga ndi zwa lini zwenezwo?*
(You are joking my child, when was it?)

Daughter: *Ngoho hu pfi **vho ri sia madekwe** nga honovhu **vhulwadze vhuhulwane**.*(It is true, it has been said that he passed away last night due to this big disease.)

Mother: *Vha songo vhonala na **u vhaisala** na luthihi. **Maṱungu** o ḓadza shango ano maḓuvha.* (His illness has not been seen. There are so many illnesses these days.)

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Daughter: *Yaa, na **vhulalo** havho vha ḓo vhu vhona, habe **vho ima zwavhuḓi** havhaḽa.* (You will also see his coffin; mind he is a well-to-do man.)

Mother: *Hafhu vhana vhavho **vho sala fhedzi**, ndi amba nge na mme vho ri ṱutshela mahoḽa.* (His children are left with no one; I am saying that because the mother has left us last year.)

Daughter: *Ndi sa tsha amba uyu **a no pandamedza zwisusu**.* (Not to mention the one who is mentally challenged.)

The euphemisms used in the dialogue above were*: "u swaswa"* as opposed to *"u zwifha"* (to tell lies); "*Vho ri sia"* as opposed to *"vho fa"; "Vhulwadze vhuhulwane"* rather than *"HIV and AIDS"* and *"u vhaisala"* instead of the ordinary expression *"u lwala"*(to be ill)*.*

Other euphemisms that were found to be used include *"maṱungu"* instead of the word *"malwadze"(illneses); "vhulalo"* for the word *"bogisi"* which is unacceptable when referring to a coffin in Tshivenḓa; *"vho ima zwavhuḓi"* replaces the ordinary expression *"vho pfuma",* knowing that in the Tshivenḓa culture it is not acceptable to be referred to as rich; *"Vho sala fhedzi"* replaces the expression *"vho felwa"* which means to be left alone due to the death of both parents; and *"U pandamedza zwisusu"* which literally means to chase butterflies which is a euphemism for the expression *"u penga"* (to be mad).

The conversation between the two speakers was smooth and healthy. All euphemisms used were well understood by the speakers. The use of the euphemisms in this context reflected the politeness theory - as espoused by Brown and Levinson (1987:61), particularly with regard to "face" which they describe as "emotionally invested and that can be either lost or maintained or enhanced and must be constantly attended to in interaction." From the above conversation, interlocutors have observed the politeness theory (Searle, 1969) as they avoided using direct words because they would sound impolite. Grice (1975) maintains that communication is a series of cooperative efforts between interlocutors and his

cooperative implicature principle was also adhered to by the interlocutors; the two were able to cooperate and, hence, their ability to converse successfully. Implicature is similar to Searle's (1975) indirect speech act in the sense that in both these models, there is a stage which involves inferences made in order to understand the indirect illocutionary force.

4.3.4.5 Hospital domain

According to Cain, Schensul and Mlobeli (2015:3), euphemisms are terms that denote one concept but connotatively mean another. Speakers who use this linguistic substitution strategy seek to create a balance between approaching and avoiding conversational taboo topics. In the hospital domain a number of euphemisms, particularly relating to consultations between doctors, nurses and patients, are used. Categories of patients of varying ages, status, occupations and with various illnesses visit hospitals, health centres and surgeries on a daily basis. A variety of euphemisms are used depending on age, status and occupations so that patients are not embarrassed or for the sake of politeness. The euphemisms used in this domain are in line with Searle's (1967) speech act theory suggests an indirect way of interlocution to enhance the 'face' of the listener. The conversational indirect strategies were used by interlocutors; adults used euphemisms in mentioning illnesses concerned with excrement, sex, defecation and male and female body parts when they were consulting a doctor, health practitioner or a nurse at the hospital because these illnesses were ones which caused people to lose *"face"* upon mentioning them in terms of their sensitivity and their embarrassing nature.

For example, an adult patient who is suffering from "diarrhea" feels shy to mention this in an exact Tshivenḓa way because it sounds like an insult and would, therefore, rather resort to using euphemisms. *"U rithea dangani", "tshuluwa", " u gidima"* and *" u rithea ha ṋowa"* (frequent running) are often used as euphemisms for *"u guba"* (frequent running) - "diarrhea". Age also plays a part in the use of euphemisms in Tshivenḓa; when a baby or child is taken to hospital suffering from "*u guba*" (diarrhea) adults will not hesitate or be shy to mention the illness using the ordinary word, namely: "*u guba*" (diarrhea).

In situations where female patients were being attended to by a male doctor or a male nurse euphemisms were the order of the day to maintain 'face' for patients and medical practitioners. In these cases Grice's (1975) cooperative principle was clearly observed by interlocutors in the sense that they were able to infer the meaning of the euphemism used - as in the following two examples:

- *"Ndi tshi vhona ṅwedzi ndi pfa u vhavha" (*literally means when I see the moon I feel pain). This is a euphemism for menstruation; an idiomatic expression which serves as a euphemism that replaces the ordinary Tshivenḓa words, *"ndi tshi bva malofha nga bunyuni"* (when blood flows from the vagina).

- *"Ṋowa yanga a i fari"* (literally means that my snake does not catch). This idiomatic expression serves as a euphemism and is a substitute for the ordinary words, *"a thi vhi na thumbu"* (I do not get pregnant). When talking to a doctor or a nurse it is embarrassing to tell him/her that *"a thi vhi na ṱhumbu";* adults, therefore, tend to use the euphemistic expression, *"ṋowa yanga a i fari"* (I do not get pregnant).

The researcher was reliably informed that some adult patients felt shy to mention some illnesses in ordinary language. For instance, instead of mentioning body parts like penis or vagina, when describing problems, they would euphemise these as experiencing a discharge from their private parts; they would freely say: "There is a discharge to the manhood *(vhunna)* or "here", pointing to the area to avoid using the words penis or vagina.

Pastor A cited another instance of euphemising when foreign words are used to avoid mentioning taboo terms; this is regarded as an effective way of euphemising in Tshivenḓa using the English word. According to Rawson (1981:8), "it is permissible for speakers and writers of English to express almost any thought they wish, as long as the more risqué parts of the discussion are rendered in another language, usually French or Latin." A Tshivenḓa example is*: Ndo zwimba nga fhasi ha "penis"* (I am swollen underneath the penis) as opposed to "*ndo zwimba nga fhasi ha nnyo",* which sounds more offensive. This strategy is referred to as 'code switching' from 'mother tongue' to another vernacular during a conversation. Choosing to use a non-mother

tongue language, such as a colonial language in a non-western setting, during talk on sexual matters is a tactic which reduces the threat to 'face' by displacing the topic from the speaker's own language and culture (Cain, Schensul & Mlobeli, 2015:7). Non-mother tongue terms are often used because they frequently do not hold the same level of connotative and emotional impact that a term with the same meaning would have in mother tongue.

Cain, Schensul and Mlobeli (2015:7) point out that with regard to Voluntary Counseling and Testing (VCT), euphemisms are not used because of the sensitivity of what is being talked about. For example, when talking about the use of a condom, it is necessary to demonstrate how it is used without reservations; failure to do so and a lack of understanding would exacerbate the spread of HIV/AIDS. Therefore, in in terms OD VCT speech act theory is at work; it is concerned with direct speech - as proposed by Searle (1969) - where interlocutors say things the way they are supposed to be said without 'beating about the bush. Grice's (1975) conversational analysis is observed in saying things the way they really are supposed to be said; interlocutors cooperated very well in their conversation in this scenario as it meant that all the maxims were followed and not flouted.

4.3.4.6   Local radio stations

Several community radio stations are found in Venḓa which include public and private radio stations. FM1 is the only custodian of the Tshivenḓa language in Venḓa. FM2 and FM3 are privately owned radio stations that broadcast in English. For this study, the data collected was based on the broadcasts from FM1 radio station. Although this radio station is based in an urban area which is populated by people of various cultures, it broadcasts using a proper high level of the Tshivenḓa language; all the programmes that are broadcast are filled with figures of speech, including euphemisms. Listeners are continuously informed by one of the announcers that FM1 is a radio station that broadcasts in an indigenous language. In the programme that deals with death announcements, euphemisms are used which are associated with death. As human beings have traditionally felt reluctant to deal with the subject of death using straightforward terms, on radio - when broadcasting death announcements - euphemisms are used to soften the effect of

what is really being communicated. The following euphemisms dominate this programme which is broadcasts for thirty minutes:

- *"U ṱuwa shangoni* (to go away from the earth) as opposed to *"u fa"* (to die)
- *"U fhira fhano shangoni* (to leave from the earth) as opposed to *"u fa"* (to die)
- *"A vha tshee ho"* (he/she no more) as opposed to *"u fa"* (to die)
- *Ro siiwa fhano shangoni* (we have been left in the earth) as opposed to *"u fa"* (to die)
- *"Vha ḓo ladzwa"* (to be laid down) as opposed to *"u bwelwa"* (to be laid underground)
- *"Vha ḓo awedzwa"* (to be laid to rest) as opposed to *"u bwelwa"* (to be laid underground).

The same radio station (FM1) also has a current affairs programme where officials from local, provincial and national government are invited to comment on a variety of issues. Some of euphemisms used in the conversation with the radio FM1 announcer and the chairperson of the LRC included the following:

- *"U ima hoṱhehoṱhe"* (literally meaning to stand everywhere), a euphemism that is a substitute for the ordinary Venḓa expression *"u runda hoṱhe hoṱhe* (to urinate everywhere).
- *"U ṱambuluwa hoṱhehoṱhe"* (to urinate) is a euphemism which replaces the ordinary Tshivenḓa expression *"u runda".*
- *U ḓithusa tshihulwane"* (to help oneself in an elderly way). This euphemism replaces the harsh and embarrassing Tshivenḓa expression *"u nya"* (to deficate). Another euphemism that has been used which has the similar meaning of "deficate" is *"u bva". Matshudeni vha bvela khagala* (Students deficate in an open place).
- *"Ri tshi amba navho a vha ri ṋei nḓevhe"* (When we talk to them they do not give us their ears) is an idiomatic expression which serves as a euphemism. It is a substitute for *"Ri tshi amba navho a vha pfi"* (When we talk to them they do not listen) which is unacceptable to use it when you talk to elderly people.

- *"Nyimele ya mabunga a si yavhuḓi"* (the condition of toilets is no good) as opposed to *"tshiimo tsha mabunga tshi a nengisa."* (the state of the toilets is disgusting).

FM1 also hosts an adult programme which discusses very sensitive family issues through the night, like divorce and matters related to sex. Euphemisms used include those related to sexual intercourse. Some of the euphemisms are the following:

- *"U lalana"* (sleeping with each other) as opposed to *"u nyovhana"* (sexual intercourse or making love)
- *"U ṱangana tshihulwane"* (meeting in an elderly manner) as opposed to *"u nyovhana"* (making love)
- *"U itana"* (doing each other) as opposed to *"u nyovhana"* (making love)
- *"Tseramisiamelo"* as opposed to *phombwe* (act of being a prostitute).

4.3.4.7   School domain

In order to establish whether Tshivenḓa Euphemisms were used by, and known to, learners, the researcher conducted passive participant observation while conducting class visits for teaching observation in Tshivenḓa lessons as part of his Grade 8 and 9 duties. The researcher discovered that during literature lessons which required teachers and pupils to discuss and give views on what they were being taught many euphemisms were used. Most learners seemed to understand their meanings but a few seemed confused. The researcher managed to obtain access to the class exercise which was based on euphemisms where learners were given fifteen ordinary Tshivenḓa words and asked to suggest their euphemistic equivalents and also to construct meaningful sentences to check whether they really knew the meaning of those euphemisms. From the five class exercise books supplied by the educator to the researcher to check whether he was assessing and controlling learners' books, in the exercise based on euphemisms no learner managed to obtain full marks. Most learners struggled to give equivalent euphemisms for the ordinary Tshivenḓa word or expressions. The ordinary words for which pupils were expected to supply euphemisms are given in the following table, Table 4.37.

Table 4.37: Ordinary Words/Expressions for which Learners were to Provide Euphemisms

Ordinary Tshivenḓa word	Euphemisms	English Translation
U fa	U lovha, U ri sia etc	To die
U tswa	U doba, u dzhia	To steal
U penga	U ṱangana ṱhoho, U vha na havhia, U pandamedza zwisusu	To be mad
U kambiwa	U dzelelwa U wela mativhani	To be drunk
U wa ha ṅwana	U bata nzie	To fall down
U vha na mihumbulo ya ṅwana	Hu tshe vhusiku	To have little mind
U sula	U bva muya U ponyokwa	To fart
U bwelwa mavuni	U vhulungwa U swiṱiwa	To be buried
U ṱanza	U kovhola	To vomit
U lwala	U sa takala U sa vha wavhuḓi	To be ill
Bogisi	Vhulalo	Coffin
U sa ambara	U tou ṱhuruu	To be naked
Maraho	Pfuralelo	Buttocks
U runda	U ḓithusa U ṱambuluwa	To urinate

It was evident that the euphemisms in this domain applied the Speech Act Theory of Searle (1969) because there was an aspect of indirectly saying things rather than using language in an exact way due to avoiding mentioning words which sounded impolite when mentioned in an exact way; euphemism is regarded as a polite way of conversing (Chebanne, 2003:23). The researcher observed that through the

exercise given pupils were taught to be polite in their conversation and to avoid *"loss of face"*.

4.3.5 Different uses of euphemisms in relation to socio-pragmatic factors, such as age, gender, status and occupation

According to most of the research participants children and adults use euphemisms depending on whether or not they know the particular euphemisms. The use of euphemisms, however, differed in terms of who was using them and with whom they were being used. Hornberger (2008), as cited by Mwanambuyu (2012:91), believes that both children and adults learn appropriate social interaction routines which are indexed by interactional styles of conformity, attentive listening and indirectness. She maintaiins that the two parties experience pragmatic socialisation throughout their lives and even enter new socio-cultural contexts to enable them to fit in with their environments.

Elderly Man B suggested: *"Vhunzhi ha thangana ya murole matatathino a vha a koni u a shumisa kha nyambedzano dzavho"* (Most of children do not know how to use euphemisms in their conversations); he explained that if they happen to use them, in most cases they would be used incorrectly and it is for that

reason that people continuously hear adults correcting them. To illustrate that children do not know how to use euphemisms, Elderly Woman E gave the following examples that she often heard at school when pupils were playing and talking to each other:

- *"No zwi pfa zwauri mme awe vho fela sibadela madekwe?* (Did you hear that his/her mother died at the hospital last night) as opposed to *"no zwi pfa uri mme awe vho ri sia sibadela madekwe"* (did you hear that his/her mother passed away at the hospital last night)
- *"O ḓirundela kiḽasini"* (He/she urinated himself/herself in class) instead of saying *"o ḓishishela kiḽasini"* (he/she mistakenly helped himself/herself in class)
- *"Malume awe vha a penga"* (His/her uncle is mad) as opposed to *"malume awe vho ṱangana ṱhoho, vha pandemedza zwisusu"* (his/her uncle is mentally deranged or mentally challenged)

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- *"O tou sula kiḽasini ndi ngazwo ro mu sea"* (He/she farted in class; that was the reason we laughed at him) as opposed to "*o ponyokwa, o bvisa muya kiḽasini ndi ngazwo ro mu sea"* (he/she relieved himself or herself; that was the reason we laughed at him).
- *"U ri mme anga vha a lowa"* (he/she says his/her mother is a witch) as opposed to *"u ri mme awe vha a silinga, vha a buba"* (he/she says his/her mother performs magical powers).

In Tshivenḓa there are euphemisms that are used specifically to refer to children's activities only. For instance, the following were cited by the participants:

- *"U shela" (diarrhoea)* is used to explain a children's illness in which the body's solid waste is more liquid than usual and comes out of the body more often. Adults also suffer from this illness but when they suffer from it, in Tshivenḓa the euphemism "u shela" is not used but rather the expression *"u huda"* or *"u vha na dangani"*. Both euphemisms mean to suffer from diarrhoea.
- *"U kovhola"* (to vomit), is the euphemism which is substituted for an ordinary and disgusting Tshivenḓa expression *"u ṱanza"* (vomiting). In Tshivenḓa, *"u kovhola"* is only used in reference to a child - actually an infant child - as opposed to *"u humisa zwiḽiwa"* (to return contents of a stomach through the mouth) which can be used as euphemism for *"u ṱanza"* vomiting in reference to an adult person.
- *"U vhurelwa"* (child's constipation) as opposed to *"u vhofhea dangani"* (constipation) is an instance where a child or an adult would struggle to deficate and is often characterised by farting which is also embarrassing. It is not acceptable to use the euphemism *"u vhurelwa"* (child's constipation) when referring to an adult person as this euphemism is specifically used when one is referring to a child. For an adult person *"u vhofhea dangani"* is used as a substitute for the ordinary expression "u *zwimbelwa"* (constipated).
- *"U fhambuwa"* (to deficate) is a euphemism which is acceptable when used to refer to a child. It sounds polite whenever it is used to refer to the defication of a child but not proper when referring to adult person in Tshivenḓa. For an adult person the euphemism *"u ḓithusa"* (to help oneself) is used for the harsh and disgusting expression *"u nya"* (to deficate).

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- *"U bata nzie"* literally means to catch locusts and in Tshivenḓa this expression refers toa child or young person falling. For an adult person the idiomatic expression *"u doba dzhasi"* is used as a euphemism for falling down.

Adults use these euphemisms when talking to children or young people if they appear not to be serious about what they are expected to do. Adults may say to a young person or a child, "*a thi khou tamba ndode", "a thi khou tamba bune"* or *"a thi khou tamba mahundwane",* when they want them to see that they are serious about what they are doing. Those euphemisms cannot be used when talking to an adult. Traditional Healer A confirmed that *"Hu na maṅwe matatathino ane a tshi shumiswa a sedza mbeu ya muthu kha Tshivenḓa"* (there are some euphemisms that are gender based in Tshivenḓa). *"Tshitungulo"* (male penis) is a euphemism that replaces *"nnyo"* (penis) and in Tshivenḓa; this euphemism is used to refer to the penis of a male not a female. Traditional Healer A added: *"Munna u tou vha tsindi ngeno musadzi a tshi tou vha na maṱo malapfu"* (literally meaning that man walks with his underpants out whereas woman has long eyes). These are euphemisms that differentiate the fondness for sex of different genders.

"U kombodza mbevha" as opposed to *"u runda"* (to urinate) is a euphemism which is used specifically for the process of male urination. When females urinate in Tshivenḓa such process is not referred to as *"u kombodza mbevha"*; when men want to urinate they stand and the can spray their urine all over the place whereas women urinate squatting.

Most participants agreed that adults are more prone to use euphemisms, especially when they are conversing amongst themselves. With regard to the use of euphemisms between children and adults, the participants were of the opinion that there is a lot of use of euphemisms by adults because they try by all means to avoid "*losing face*"; at times euphemisms are used as a way of avoiding taboo words or as a way of exhibiting politeness (Brown and Levinson, 1987 cited by Mwanambuyu, 2012:92). In terms of politeness "*face saving*" keeps communication going. Elderly Man C extended the discussion by saying: *"Matatathino a shumiswa u thivhela uri vhaṅwe vha si pfe zwine zwa khou ambiwa"* (Euphemisms can be used to prevent other people from grasping what other would be talking about, especially children if the conversation touches sensitive issues).

Elderly Man C added: *"Musi hu na makole ri a fhumula kana ra shumisa matatathino,"* (When there is someone who is misfit to comprehend our conversation we keep quiet or use euphemisms). In this instance, the aspect of belonging to a context and sharing the same background knowledge enables interlocutors to understand each other very well.

In this domain social status, occupation and the use of euphemisms is not equitable; it all depends on how knowledgeable one is of this phenomenon. Status or occupation is not an issue; it all depends on how conversant with Tshivenḓa euphemisms one is. People may have attained a high educational qualification but could be ignorant of this phenomenon because of where they grew up. Under normal circumstances, those who are highly ranked in society may not be aware of this phenomenon and are, therefore, taught this by their elders. Others may hold high occupational positions but may not be conversant with euphemisms. However, Tshivenḓa males and females both use them at the required times.

4.4   CONCLUSION

Chapter 4 was concerned with the presentation, interpretation and analysis of the data related to euphemisms which were identified and collected in terms of both the theoretical framework and a review of the relevant available literature. The presentation was arranged according to the research objectives and questions - given in Chapter 1 of the study. The most commonly euphemized topics in Tshivenḓa were identified and described in detail, strategies used to create euphemisms in Tshivenḓa were outlined and the motives behind using euphemism in Tshivenḓa were given. The chapter also identified various social domains where Tshivenḓa euphemisms are used. The researcher initially generated and listed some euphemisms in Tshivenḓa; the rest were collected from the twenty-five participants.

Chapter 5 will provide a summary of the chapters and outline the research findings. It will make recommendations and it will conclude with suggestions for future study.

CHAPTER FIVE

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1   INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter, **Chapter Four**, described the collected data and its analysis. This final chapter focuses on conclusions reached related to the entire study and makes recommendations. It provides a succinct summary of the chapters; reach conclusions and make recommendations.

5.2   SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study was to examine the semantic and socio-pragmatic value of euphemism in Tshivenḓa.

5.2.1 Chapter One: Outline of the Study

Chapter One introduced the study by outlining the background; the research problem in terms of a literature review; its aims and objectives; as well as the research questions, theoretical framework and the significance of the study. In terms of the background to the study, a short description was given on how language users often avoid using words and expressions which are unpleasant, inappropriate or embarrassing to both themselves and the people to whom they are speaking. It is an avoidance that occurs unconsciously by using euphemistic expressions. It was suggested that the use of euphemisms in all languages was to maintain safe interpersonal interaction.

5.2.2 Chapter Two: Literature Review

The relevant literature related to the research problem was reviewed in **Chapter Two**. The areas that were identified as being particularly relevant to the study included motives for using euphemisms in the Tshivenḓa language and the positive and negative aspects involved in using them. In terms of the negatives, euphemisms are dishonest expressions that could lead to some miscommunication between interlocutors, while the positives for using euphemisms seemed to be that speaking the truth it is less painful because it is done indirectly.

5.2.3 Chapter Three: Methodology and Data Gathering

Chapter Three described the methods that were used to collect the relevant data for the study. Both quantitative and qualitative approaches were used. However, the qualitative approach was used more extensively than the quantitative approach as it enabled the researcher to delve more deeply into how euphemisms are used in day-to-day communication amongst interlocutors in the various social domains of the Tshivenḓa language.

A purposeful sampling technique was chosen by the researcher to obtain the required information from a distinct group of participants who were knowledgeable about, and had relevant information and experience of, how euphemisms are used in Tshivenḓa. The method used for collecting data was through structured interviews where questions were asked that had been prepared beforehand. The interviewees in this study included traditional healers, pastors, elderly men and women, chiefs and their information was supplemented and supported by a document study. In this qualitative study, the data collected was recorded in writing and observations were also noted in order to properly analyse the collected data.

5.2.4 Chapter Four: Presentation and Discussion of Data

Chapter Four focused on how the data was analysed. In the research, the analysis of the data was guided by the research questions. The researcher reduced the data to make it more manageable to analyse and to draw conclusions. In order to get the sense of the whole picture and to familiarise himself with the data, the researcher engaged in a careful continuous reading of all the transcripts. As he reads through the data, topics where identified and labelled (McMillan & Schumatcher, 1993:388).

In the process of collecting data the interviewed participants were requested to suggest appropriate and inappropriate times for using euphemisms; categories of Tshivenḓa euphemisms; the negatives and positives for using euphemisms; as well as give evidence of their use in the various Tshivenḓa domains, such as the courts, churches, girls in seclusion, homes, hospitals and on local radio stations, and their different uses in relation to age, gender, status and occupation. Data was analysed and discussed in detail.

5.2.5 Chapter Five: Conclusion

The final chapter focuses on conclusions reached concerning the entire study and makes recommendations. A succinct summary of the chapters is provided; conclusions are reached and recommendations are made from the findings of the study. It concludes with a suggestion for future study.

5.3 FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The specific findings, conclusions and recommendations are given in terms of appropriate times for using euphemisms in Tshivenḓa; inappropriate times for using euphemism in Tshivenḓa; main catergories of Tshivenḓa euphemisms; the positive effects of using euphemisms in Tshivenḓa; the negative effects of using euphemisms the use of Tshivenḓa euphemisms in various domains, such as the court, church, girls in seclusion, home, hospital and on local radio stations; and evidence of whether euphemisms are related to socio-pragmatic factors, such as age, gender, status and occupation as well as their different uses in relation to age, gender, status and occupation.

5.3.1 Appropriate times for using euphemism in Tshivenḓa

The study has revealed that Tshivenḓa-speaking people use euphemisms when discussing topics that cause social discomfort, such as death; disgusting and embarrassing topics which include human body effluvia, like menstruation blood, defecation (shitting), urination (pissing) and ejaculation; sex; and other human bodily functions that are generally used as expletives. Euphemisms are also used to enrich and decorate a language; to give factual statements; to deceive people by hiding reality; to name professions of a lower status; and to discuss issues related to addictions. It is recommended that euphemisms should be used appropriately in Tshivenḓa; children should be taught how to use them at an early age in order to avoid harm and their use by adults may protect them from being labelled people who lack respect and morals. Embarrassment and social discomfort may be prevented in open discussions of sensitive topics by using euphemisms.

5.3.2 Inappropriate times for using euphemism in Tshivenḓa

The study indicated that it is inappropriate to use euphemisms when talking to young children and talking to audiences of non-speakers of Tshivenḓa who do not know the basics of language because the euphemisms will confuse them and prevent them from grasping the meaning of what is being said. It is recommended that that young people should be made more aware of the different uses of words that could be regarded as harsh and unpleasant. This awareness may help them improve their communication and speaking skills. It could be achieved by having lessons and exercises that target euphemisms during their school education. It is also recommended that language teachers should be prepared to cope with the many complexities of language-teaching - including those dealing with euphemisms - in a rapidly changing world and within a changing language landscape.

According to the findings of this study, euphemisms are avoided when speakers want to be clearly understood; when they want to deliver an important message to audience; when people are angry; and in places like the courts. It is recommended that in instances, as listed above, euphemisms should not be used if listeners are expected to clearly understand what is being said.

5.3.3 Main categories of Tshivenḓa euphemisms

Euphemisms may be classified in various categories according to different criteria, rules and principles; they could also be divided into time periods, such as the Middle Ages, Victorian, twentieth century and contemporary euphemisms. There is no apparent uniform classification standard or categories for euphemisms; the motive for the different classification that emerged was to discover and understand the characteristics of euphemism from different perspectives. The findings of this study emphasise euphemisms related to death, body parts and sex, general or common euphemisms, political euphemisms and diseases related euphemisms as the main categories of Tshivenḓa euphemisms. These categories should not be seen as prescriptive and the only categories of Tshivenḓa euphemisms; other acceptable categories of Tshivenḓa euphemisms can be developed depending on the nature of any other study. This study recommends that these categories of Tshivenḓa euphemisms be should be known by those who speak the Tshivenḓa language because it enables them to be polite and show respect for others which is important in terms of promoting healthy communication.

5.3.4 The positive effects of using euphemisms inTshivenḓa

The findings show that there are positive effects to using euphemisms in Tshivenḓa which include an ability to avoid directly naming unpleasant things; they make the language sound more literary; and they allow people to discuss touchy or taboo subjects with ease. Other positive effects of euphemisms are that they beautify the language and that low status professions are easily addressed. Children need to be taught euphemisms at school and at home as they are important in daily communication and they preserve the Tshivenḓa language. Children need to be trained in using and producing good euphemisms that entirely fulfill the purpose for which they are intended and which are comprehensible to the majority of language speakers within their speech communities.

5.3.5 The negative effects of using euphemisms in Tshivenḓa

The findings show that there are various disadvantages in using euphemisms in Tshivenḓa: they may be considered to be disrespectful; they could hinder clear communication; and they are deceptive. They may also lead to miscommunication and general confusion and they seem to perform a cheating function. It is, therefore, important that people should have a thorough knowledge of euphemisms as figures of speech as this will enable them to properly understand and analyse exactly what is implied by any euphemism used during the communication process and, thereby, minimize conflict and any misunderstanding of communication.

5.3.6 The use of Tshivenḓa euphemisms in various domains, such as the courts, churches, girls in seclusion, homes, hospitals and on local radio stations

The study findings give evidence of the use of Tshivenḓa euphemisms in various domains, such as the courts, churches, girls in seclusion, homes, hospitals and on local radio stations. However, the court domain seems not to use many of them due to the fact that clear communication is required; there is need for the two parties in the case to understand what is being said during the proceedings so the use of roundabout indirect language is avoided - the courts believe in calling 'a spade, a spade'. Therefore, euphemisms in this category are rarely used - as can be seen in the findings discussed in **Chapter Four**. In the other domains euphemisms are used

to reinforce politeness as they are associated with social norms which help to maintain and preserve the Tshivenḓa language as has been done for some time. The study recommend that the use of euphemisms in Tshivenḓa language should be reinforced in all social domains in order to enhance politeness, preserve the public self-image of the participants in communicative exchanges and facilitate harmonious interpersonal relationships.

5.3.7 Evidence of whether euphemisms are related to socio-pragmatic factors, such as age, gender, status and occupation as well as their different uses in relation to each category

The findings of the study revealed that as far as age is concerned, children are not very conversant with euphemisms; mostly they need to be corrected by adults in their use., Adults, on the other hand, are more prone to using euphemisms, especially when they are conversing amongst themselves because they are not concerned that other people do not understand what they are talking about. With regard to the use of euphemisms between children and adults, adults use many euphemisms in an attempt to avoid taboos and as a way of exhibiting politeness.

It has also been shown that the use of euphemisms is not dependent on occupation and status; their use depends on how knowledgeable and conversant people are with the phenomenon, Tshivenḓa euphemisms. People may have attained a high educational qualification but they could be ignorant of this phenomenon because of where they grew up. It is, therefore, recommended that euphemisms should be widely taught to children in their schools so that they are able to converse appropriately with their elders and amongst themselves in their age groups when they do not want outsiders to grasp what they are talking about or if they want to sound polite.

5.4   CONCLUSION

In terms of the purpose of this study, the findings seem to suggest that euphemisms are used in most domains and in most areas of the Vhembe District. Tshivenḓa is a prominent language in the Vhembe District with a large number of speakers who appear to be happy and proud of it. The Tshivenḓa-speaking people use

euphemisms in their language to such an extent that various local radio programmes are filled with figures of speeches that include euphemisms.

Many Tshivenḓa speakers ensure that they use the language effectively both at home and in the community; the elders do not tolerate people who want to talk to them in a language other than English or Tshivenḓa. Reference to various theories, such as the Speech Act Theory and Politeness Theory with its face threatening acts and cooperative principle, which have been proposed in terms of the English language show that they are equally applicable to people's daily conversations in Tshivenḓa - as evidenced in **Chapter Four**.

As discussed above, speakers of the Tshivenḓa language have a great interest in, and love of, their language as seen from the cited examples. It is a widely spoken language in the Vhembe district and its use in various domains demands that it should be seriously recognised. The participants were happy with their use of euphemisms in Tshivenḓa as their knowledge of these allowed them to actively participate in conversations in their various domains without any problems.

This study has made a specific contribution to socio-pragmatic theory by using other theories, such as the Speech Act Theory with conversational implicature and Politeness theory dealing with 'face'; interlocutors in the process of avoiding taboo words use words which do not embarrass them and maintain 'face' - euphemisms that are not 'face threatening'.

By means of a careful analysis of euphemisms, the outcome of the study show that there is social distance in terms of status, age, occupation, gender and even the powers of speakers and listeners which determine the strategies applied in using euphemisms. Some euphemisms are better understood and appreciated by people who share a context and have the same social cultural background. It is recommended that further study be undertaken to identify other factors that may affect the use of euphemisms in Tshivenḓa from other dimensions.

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ANNEXTURE 1 (a)   **Participant Consent Letter - English Version**

Department of Languages

University of Limpopo

Private Bag X 1106

Sovenga

0727

19 December 2014

Dear Participant

This letter is an invitation to consider participating in a study I, **MUDAU M.L.** am conducting as part of my research as a doctoral student entitled *Euphemism in Tshivenḓa: A Socio-Pragmatic Analysis,* at the University of Limpopo (Department of Languages, School of Languages and Communication Studies, Faculty of Humanities). I have purposefully identified you as a possible participant because of your valuable experience and expertise related to my research topic.

I would like to provide you with more information about this project and what your involvement would entail if you should agree to take part. Your participation in this study is voluntary. It will involve an interview of approximately thirty (30*)* minutes in length to take place in a mutually agreed upon location at a time convenient to you. You may decline to answer any of the interview questions if you so wish. Furthermore, you may decide to withdraw from this study at any time without any negative consequences.

With your kind permission, the interview will be audio-recorded to facilitate collection of accurate information and later transcribed for analysis. Shortly after the transcription has been completed, I will send you a copy of the transcript to give you an opportunity to confirm the accuracy of our conversation and to add or to clarify any points. All information you provide is considered completely confidential. Your name will not appear in any publication resulting from this study and any identifying information will be omitted from the report. However, with your permission, anonymous quotations may be used. Data collected during this study will be retained

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on a password protected computer for 12 monthsin my locked office. There are no known or anticipated risks to you as a participant in this study.

If you have any questions regarding this study, or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please contact me at **0765817382** or by e-mail at **mmbulahenilawrence@gmail.com.**

I look forward to speaking with you very much and thank you in advance for your assistance in this project. If you accept my invitation to participate, I will request you to sign the consent form.

Yours sincerely

……………………….   ………………………………
Mudau, M.L.   Date
Doctoral Student

………………………………….   …………………………………
Prof. R. N. Maḓadzhe   Date
Supervisor

Department of Languages

University of Limpopo

Private Bag X 1106

Sovenga

0727

19 Nyendavhusiku 2014

Ndaa

Thambo iyi ya u dzhenelela kha ngudo i livhiswa khavho uri vha ḓo i dzhiela nṱha. Nṋe **MUDAU M.L**, mutshudeni wa Yunivesithi ya Limpopo, sa tshipiḓa tsha ṱhoḓisiso kha ngudo dza **PhD** ndi khou ita ṱhoḓisiso nga ṱhoho ine ya ri: ***Euphemism in Tshivenḓa: A Socio-Pragmatic Analysis*** (Department of Languages, School of Languages and Communication Studies, Faculty of Humanities)*.* Ndo no wana thendelo ya u ita ṱhoḓisiso iyi u bva kha Muhashowa dzinyambo na kha Komiti ya zwa maitele ya Yunivesithi ya Limpopo. Ndo vha topola uri vha vhe tshipiḓa tsha ṱhoḓisiso iyi ndo sedza tshenzhemo na vhukoni havho zwi tshi kwama ṱhoḓisio iyi.

Ndi tama u vha ḓivhadza zwinzhi zwi kwamaho ṱhoḓisiso iyi na zwine zwa angaredza u dzhenelela havho arali vho tama u dzhenelela. U dzhenelela havho hu ḓo vha nga tshiimo tsha nyambedzano (ithaviyu) ya vhulapfu ha minete ya furaru fhethu hune ra ḓo tendelana hone nga tshifhinga tshi fushaho vhone. Vhana pfanelo ya u hana u fhindula mbudziso dzine vha pfa vha sa tami u dzi fhindula. Vha dovha hafhu vha vha na pfanelo ya u ḓibvisa kha ṱhoḓisiso iyi nga tshifhinga tshine vha funa zwi sa vhe na masiandaitwa mavhi khavho.

Nga thendelo yavho, nyambedzano i ḓo rekhodiwa u itela uri hu vhe na u kuvhanganya na u ṋea ṱhalutshedzo ya mafhungo o teaho nga murahu. Nga murahu ha ṱhalutshedzelo ya mafhungo o kuvhanganywaho mafhungo ayo a ḓo rumelwa khavho u itela khwaṱhisedzo ya vhungoho ha mafhungo o rekhodiwaho na u bvisela na khagala ho teaho kha zwo rekhodiwaho. Mafhungo oṱhe ane vha ḓo bvisela khagala a ḓo dzhiiwa sa a tshidzumbe, madzina avho na zwoṱhe zwine zwa

nga vha baḓekanya na ṱhoḓisiso iyi a zwi nga bviselwi khagala. Nga thendelo yavho dziṅwe dza dzikhothesheni dzi bvaho khavho dzi ḓo shumiswa. Mafhungo oṱhe ane a ḓo kuvhanganywa a ḓo vhewa fhethu ho tsireledzea. A hu na u sa tsireledzea havho hu lavhelelwaho kha ṱhoḓisiso iyi.

Arali vha nga vha na dzimbudziso malugana na ṱhoḓisiso iyi kana zwiṅwe zwine vha tama u zwi ḓivha zwine zwa nga ṱuṱuwedza kha u dzhia tsheo ya u dzhenelela kha ṱhoḓisiso iyi, vha humbelwa uri vha nkwame kha **076 5817 382** kana vha e-meile kha ***mmbulahenilawrence@gmail.com***

Ndi ḓo livhuwa thuso yavho kha mushumo uyu. Arali vha nga takalela thambo iyi ndi ḓo vha humbela u saina fomo ya thendelano.

Ndi nṋe wavho

………………………….   ……………………………….
Mudau M.L.   Datumu
Mutshudeniwa PhD

……………………………………   ……………………………….
Prof. R. N. Maḓadzhe   Datumu
Mugudisi

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ANNEXTURE 2 (a):   PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM - English Version

I have read the information presented in the information letter about the study entitled *Euphemism in Tshivenḓa: A Socio-Pragmatic Analysis,*in Languages. I have had the opportunity to ask any questions related to this study, to receive satisfactory answers to my questions, and add any additional details I wanted. I am aware that I have the option of allowing my interview to be audio recorded to ensure an accurate recording of my responses. I am also aware that excerpts from the interview may be included in publications to come from this research, with the understanding that the quotations will be anonymous. I was informed that I may withdraw my consent at any time without penalty by advising the researcher. With full knowledge of alltheforegoing, I agree, of my own free will, to participate in this study.

Participant's Name (Please print):   ……………………………………….

Participant Signature: ……………………………………….

Researcher Name: (Please print)   **MUDAU, M.L.**

Researcher Signature: ……………………………………

Date: ………………………….....................

ANNEXTURE 2 (b):   PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM -Tshivenḓa Version

Ndo vhala mafhungo oṱhe o bviselwa ho khagala kha luṅwalo lwa thambo i kwamaho ngudo i vhidzwaho *Euphemism in Tshivenḓa: A Socio-Pragmatic Analysis.* Ndo vha na tshikhala tsha u vhudzisa mbudziso malugana na ngudo iyi nda wana phindulo dzi fushaho na u kona u engedza vho zwiṅwe zwe nda vha ndi khou zwi ṱoḓa. Ndi a zwi ḓivha uri ndi na tshikhala tsha u tendela uri nyambedzano dza ngudo iyi dzi rekhodiwe u itela u wana phindulo na mafhungo one a vhukuma, ndi a zwi ḓivha uri zwiṅwe zwa zwipiḓa zwa nyambedzano zwi ḓo vha tshipiḓa tsha khanḓiso ya ngudo iyi na hone khothesheni dzine dza ḓo shumiswa a dzi nga bviseli khagala vhuṋe hadzo. Ndo vhudzwa uri ndi nga ḓibvisa kha ṱhoḓisiso iyi tshifhinga tshiṅwe na tshiṅwe ha sa vhe na ndaṱiso khazwo tenda nda tsivhudza muṱoḓisisi.

Ndo pfesesa zwoṱhe zwo bulwaho afho nṱha, ndi khou tenda u dzhenelela kha ngudo iyi nga lutamo lwanga

Madzina a muvhudziswa	……………………………………
Tsaino ya muvhudziswa:	…………………………………..
Madzina a muṱoḓisisi	**MUDAU, M.L.**
Tsaino ya muṱoḓisisi:	………………………………….
Datumu:	…………………………………..

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ANNEXTURE 3 (a):   Interview Guide - English version

For the researcher to elicit meaningful information from the twenty-five proposed participants, it will be necessary to ask the following semi-structured questions:

1. What do you understand by the term euphemism?
2. Does euphemism occur in Tshivenḓa? Substantiate your answer.
3. Is it easy to identify Tshivenḓa euphemisms in people's conversations? Substantiate your answer.
4. What are the motives behind using euphemisms in Tshivenḓa?
5. When is it appropriate or inappropriate to use euphemisms in Tshivenḓa?
6. How could one categorise Tshivenḓa euphemisms?
7. What are the negative and positive aspects of Tshivenḓa euphemisms?
8. Is there any evidence of use of euphemisms in the various Tshivenḓa domains, such as court, church, and girls in seclusion, home, hospital and local radio stations? Substantiate your answer?
9. Is the use of Tshivenḓa euphemisms in any way related to socio-pragmatic factors, such as age, gender, status and occupation? Substantiate your view.
10. In terms of the above answer, can it be said that there are different uses of euphemisms in relation to age, gender, status and occupation in Tshivenḓa euphemisms? Motivate your answer.

ANNEXTURE 3 (b): Interview Guide - Tshivenḓa version

U itela uri muṱoḓisisi a kone u wana mafhungo a kwamaho ṱhoḓisiso iyi kha vhavhudziswa vha fumbiliṱhanu, mutevhe wa dzimbudziso u tevhelaho ndi une wa ḓo shumiswa.

1. Ṱalutshedzani uri figara ya muambo ya ḽivhuvhisi ndi mini?

2. Ḽivhuvhisi kha luambo lwaTshivenḓa ḽi hone? Ṱalutshedzani phindulo yaṋu ni ṋee khwaṱhisedzo yayo.

3. Zwi a leluwa u topola mavhuvhisi a Tshivenḓa musi vhathu vha tshi khou amba naa? Tikedzani phindulo yaṋu.

4. Ndi tshini tshi itisaho uri hu shumiswe mavhuvhisi khaTshivenḓa?

5. Ndi lini hune zwa vha zwo fanela u shumisa mavhuvhisi na hune zwa vha zwi songo fanela u a shumisa?

6. Muthu a nga khethekanya mavhuvhisi a Tshivenḓa hani?

7. Hu na vhuvhi ḓe na vhuḓi vhufhio kha u shumisa mavhuvhisi khaTshivenḓa?

8. Hu na vhuṱanzi vhu khwaṱhisedzaho u shumiswa ha mavhuvhisi kha masia manzhi a Tshivenḓa a fanaho na kha dzikhothe, dzikereke, musi vhasidzana vhe nga tshavho, mahayani, zwi badela na kha dziradio dzapo naa? Khwaṱhisedzani phindulo yaṋu.

9. Ni vhona u nga mushumo wa ḽivhuvhisi kha Tshivenḓa u na vhushaka na nḓila ine ra amba ngayo ho sedzwa miṅwaha, mbeu, vhuimo ha muthu na zwine a shuma zwone naa? Tikedzani phindulo yaṋu.

10. No ḓisendeka nga phindulo ya zwe na bula afho nṱha, zwi nga ambwa uri mavhuvhisi a na mishumo yo fhambanaho no sedza miṅwaha, mbeu, maimo a muthu na zwine a shuma zwone naa? Tikedzani phindulo yaṋu.

ANNEXTURE 4: Ethical Clearance Certificate

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| TURFLOOP RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE |
| CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE |

MEETING: 05 March 2015

PROJECT NUMBER: TREC/22/2015: PG

PROJECT:

Title:	Euphemism in Tshivenda: A socio-pragmatic analysis
Researcher:	Mr ML Mudau
Supervisor:	Prof RN Madadzhe
Co-Supervisor:	N/A
Department:	Tshivenda
School:	Languages and Communication Studies
Degree:	PhD in Tshivenda

PROF TAB MASHEGO
CHAIRPERSON: TURFLOOP RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

The Turfloop Research Ethics Committee (TREC) is registered with the National Health Research Ethics Council, Registration Number: **REC-0310111-031**.

Note:
i)   Should any departure be contemplated from the research procedure as approved, the researcher(s) must re-submit the protocol to the committee.
ii)   The budget for the research will be considered separately from the protocol.
        PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER IN ALL ENQUIRIES.

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