

**THE ROLE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF HONORIFICS WITH SPECIAL
REFERENCE TO XITSONGA DISCOURSE**

By

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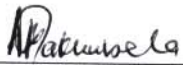
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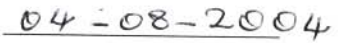
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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that *The Role and Significance of Honorifics with Special Reference to Xitsonga Discourse* is my own original work. This work has not been submitted previously to this University or any educational institution.



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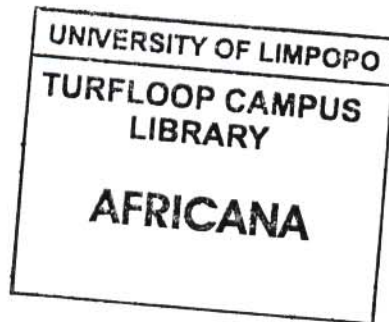
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DEDICATION

To the following people:

- My mother : Angelinah Mbangini Makhubela.
- My husband : Victor Ngwato Matsane.
- My beloved son : Lawrence Lehumo.
- My beloved daughters : Millicent Bathabile and Priscilla Salome.



ABSTRACT

Chapter 1 serves as the introductory section of the study. It deals with the problem statement, aim, rationale, significance, methodology, literature review, and definitions of terms.

Chapter 2 focuses on the noun classes that denote respect and those that denote respect in Xitsonga.

Chapter 3 deals with greetings and euphemisms and focuses on the definition of greetings euphemisms.

Chapter 4 shows the form of address of honorifics. It deals with the interjectives which denotes respect and disrespect as well and highlights the various types of interjectives.

Chapter 5 gives the conclusion of the study by summarising the previous chapters and making recommendations.

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Anania Hazel makhubela Madlhophe Mpunzi, Mgwena, Wa Marindzanhlanga a ku i mavele.

Above all, I give thanks to God The Almighty who gave me strength to complete this study.
FOR WITH HIM NOTHING IS IMPOSSIBLE.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1

| | | |
|-------|---------------------------------|----|
| 1.1 | BACKGROUND TO THE PROBLEM | 1 |
| 1.2 | AIM OF THE STUDY | 3 |
| 1.3 | RATIONALE OF THE STUDY | 3 |
| 1.4 | SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY | 4 |
| 1.5 | METHODOLOGY | 4 |
| 1.5.1 | Collection of information | 4 |
| 1.6 | LITERATURE REVIEW | 5 |
| 1.6.1 | Nxumalo (1989) | 5 |
| 1.6.2 | Zungu (1974) | 6 |
| 1.6.3 | Ndlovu (1997) | 7 |
| 1.6.4 | De Kadt (1992, 1994) | 8 |
| 1.7 | CONCLUSION | 9 |
| 1.8 | DEFINITIONS OF CONCEPTS | 9 |
| 1.8.1 | Honorifics | 9 |
| 1.8.2 | Nouns | 11 |
| 1.8.3 | Prefix | 14 |
| 1.8.4 | Suffix | 15 |
| 1.8.5 | Greetings | 16 |
| 1.8.6 | Request | 17 |
| 1.8.7 | Interjectives | 19 |
| 1.8.8 | Euphemism | 20 |
| 1.9 | ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY | 21 |

CHAPTER 2

| | | |
|-----|---------------------------|----|
| 2. | NOUNS AS HONORIFICS | 22 |
| 2.1 | Introduction | 22 |
| 2.2 | Noun Class 1 and 2 | 23 |
| 2.3 | Summary | 47 |

CHAPTER 3

THE USE OF GREETINGS AND EUPHEMISMS AS HONORIFICS

| | | |
|-------|---|----|
| 3. | GREETINGS | 49 |
| 3.1 | Introduction | 49 |
| 3.2 | Definition and Structure of Greetings | 49 |
| 3.3 | TYPES OF GREETINGS | 54 |
| 3.3.1 | Greetings which are determined by time of the day | 54 |
| 3.3.2 | Greetings between friends and relatives | 55 |
| 3.3.3 | Greetings at the workplace | 58 |
| 3.3.4 | Greetings during the time of bereavement | 59 |
| 3.3.5 | Of parting | 60 |
| 3.3.6 | Greetings in a school situation | 60 |
| 3.3.7 | Greetings at chief's kraal | 61 |
| 3.3.8 | Greetings on a wedding day | 65 |
| 3.4 | EUPHEMISM | 65 |
| 3.4.1 | Introduction | 65 |
| 3.5 | SUMMARY | 73 |

CHAPTER 4

| | | |
|-------|--|-----|
| 4. | THE USE OF TITLES OR FORM OF ADDRESS AS HONORIFICS | 75 |
| 4.1 | INTRODUCTION | 75 |
| 4.2 | DEFINITION OF FORMS OF ADDRESS | 76 |
| 4.3 | CULTURAL TERMS OF ADDRESS | 77 |
| 4.3.1 | Japanese Titles | 78 |
| 4.3.2 | Xitsonga Titles | 78 |
| 4.3.3 | Kinship terms or relationship titles | 83 |
| 4.3.4 | Marital status | 90 |
| 4.3.5 | Job titles/occupational status | 92 |
| 4.4 | CONCLUSION | 102 |
| 4.4.1 | Initiation Schools | 102 |
| 4.5 | INTERJECTIVES | 105 |
| 4.5.1 | Introduction | 105 |
| 4.5.2 | Definition of interjectives | 105 |
| 4.5.3 | Types of interjectives | 106 |
| 4.6 | SUMMARY | 115 |

CHAPTER 5

| | | |
|-----|-----------------------|-----|
| 5.1 | CONCLUSION | 117 |
| 5.2 | RECOMMENDATIONS | 124 |
| | BIBLIOGRAPHY | 125 |

CHAPTER 1

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE PROBLEM

Youth of these days, it would seem they do not show respect to elders. Perhaps this seems to be the case as Nemukula (2002:2) observes: “Youth people view respect in a totally different manner, yet society expects them to show respect at all times”.

One of the causes of this state of affairs is that young people and even adults do not know which honorifics to apply in a discourse situation. In other words, they hardly know where and when to use an appropriate honorific.

Moreover it would seem the Vatsonga people in general these days do no longer adhere to the traditional ways of showing respect. A contributory factor in this regard would be the recent political changes in south Africa. The advent of democracy in South Africa seems to have been misconstrued by several people. To such people the human rights embodied in the constitution is perceived to mean the following:

- Lack of respect for each other;
- Lack of respect for one’s culture;
- Lack of respect for the country’s laws (modern and traditional laws).

It is therefore not surprising that the Government of South Africa has come up with a strategy to address the above problems (The Moral Degeneration Strategy, under Deputy President J. Zuma).

Deputy President Zuma (2003:5) said:

I Zuma, said after a lot of deliberations, it was felt that the country needed a charter containing commonly agreed core values and principles, which will serve as broad guidelines for ethical behaviour and Ubuntu.

Deputy President Jacob Zuma had invited all South Africans to participate in the drafting of Moral charter that should give the country a set of common guidelines for ethical behaviour.

Xitsonga and other languages, have honorifics that can help somewhat in resolving the moral degeneration currently consuming our country like cancer. For instance, when a youngster addresses an elderly person in Xitsonga, he is supposed to say:

- (1) (a) **Tatana** Mageza.
(Father Mageza.)
- (b) **Manana** Mageza.
(Mother Mageza.)
- (c) **Hahani** Rose.
(Aunt Rose.)
- (d) **Malume** John.
(Uncle John.)

The word **tatana**, **manana**, **hahani**, **malume** as employed in the above case, are honorifics (relational social honorifics). They are important in this case as they accord the addressees respect that is due to them. Should such honorifics be discarded, the addressees would feel highly insulted and belittled.

Due to the influence of human rights as embodied in the Constitution, the Vatsonga people seem to have lost respect among themselves. For instance, Vatsonga wives do not respect their husbands as they used to. They call their husbands by names, which is a taboo to the Vatsonga culture.

Honorifics are of vital importance in a discourse or communicative situation. Their significance is demonstrated by Brown and Levinson (1996) when they contend that positive communication can only take place when the participants understand each other's social status. An individual is viewed in the light of his social background, that is, he is one of a group of relatives, friends and tribesmen. To divorce him from this group is to degrade him.

Respect in the broader sense of morality, should be maintained by the human race in all walks of life. It is the only yardstick which separates mankind from animal kingdom. It should be noted that words affect human behaviour, hence the need to balance our spoken words with daily actions is needed.

In view of the above exposition, it is therefore necessary to conduct research on this topic.

1.2 AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to determine the role, significance and impact of honorifics in Xitsonga discourse. This aim may be achieved by posing the following questions:

- What are honorifics?
- Are honorifics of any value in modern days in South Africa?
- When, where and how should honorifics be used?

1.3 RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

These study of honorifics will help the Vatsonga people to respect one another. The use of honorifics will help the youth and elders to adhere to their culture.

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study will assist readers to differentiate between honorifics meant for men and those that are meant for women.

This study will also help the Xitsonga-speaking people in particular to be familiar with honorifics that are important in engendering respect and politeness amongst themselves.

The study will also be valuable as a reference for future studies on honorifics.

1.5 METHODOLOGY

The method that will be employed in this study is qualitative. This method is appropriate as it enables the researcher to have a proper insight of the issues under analysis.

1.5.1 Collection of information

Two methods that will be utilised for collecting information are the primary and secondary methods:

1.5.1.1 Primary research method

The researcher will employ the primary research method whereby information on honorifics will be gathered from chiefs, elderly people and the youth. This will be achieved by using unstructured questions in the form of interviews.

1.5.1.2 Secondary research method

It will also be necessary to use the secondary research method. This is the method whereby information will be collected from library books, theses, articles and the internet.

1.6 LITERATURE REVIEW

There are several scholars who have examined honorifics in African languages, such as the following:

1.6.1 Nxumalo (1989)

Nxumalo's study shows the use of honorifics in Xitsonga. Here are a few of the examples he used, where he shows honorifics denoting respect to elderly people:

- (2) (a) **N'wina** tatana.
(You father (meaning one father))
- (b) Mhani **va** kwihi?
(Where is my mother?)
- (c) **Ma** hoxisa tatana.
(You are making mistake father.)
- (d) Tatana **va** xurhe.
(Our father have eaten enough.)

Sentences as used in example (2)(a-d) above denote respect to elderly people. This is possible because **n'wina** in sentence 2(a) indicates the plural but in this case it is referring to a single person. The same also occurs in 2(c) when **va** is a subjectival concord indicating the plural, but in this instance, it is used to refer to a single person out of respect. When a person is drunk in Xitsonga it is a taboo to say so and so is drunk or is under the influence of liquor, one should use on Euphanism as a show of respect and this is evident in (2iv).

The above discussion notwithstanding Nxumalo left out many issues pertaining to respect in Xitsonga. For example, the issue of using euphemism to indicate pregnancy has not received any attention:

- (3) (a) Manana, **ndzi bihile emirini.**
(Mother, my tummy is ugly.)

- (b) Nsati wa mina a **nga yimangi kahle.**
(My wife does not have a good structure.)

Sentences 3(a) and (b) show or indicate that someone is pregnant. Sentences of this kind need to be studied in detail.

1.6.2 Zungu (1974)

Although Zungu's study is on Zulu honorifics, his study is pertinent to this topic. Zungu states that the great-grand father (umkhulu) in the family must be given the greatest respect. The language that is used to refer to him must be full of respect.

Zungu adds that the father (ubaba) is also respected and feared, and his commands are obeyed. His wife does not call him by his name whether it be the Zulu personal name or his Western name, instead she calls him:

- (4) **Ubaba** ka Bongani.
(Bongani's father.)

He too does not call his wife by her personal name instead he would call:

- (5) **Umama** ka Bongani.
(Bongani's mother.)

The above examples are honorifics that indicate respect.

Similarly in Xitsonga the wife does not call her husband by his personal name, and the husband does not call his wife by her name. In Xitsonga the husband or any person use the prefix: **N'wa-Jack**, **N'wa-Brown**. **N'wa-Jack** means that her father's name is Jack; **N'wa-Brown** means that her father's name is Brown. A study of this phenomenon has not as yet been undertaken and it will therefore be appropriate to do it in this study.

1.6.3 Nyembezi (1983)

The issue of honorifics also received attention in the work of Ndlovu Victor when he analysed Paton's (1966) novel entitled "*Cry, the beloved country*". Rev. Khumalo and his wife never address each other by name as sometimes happens in *Cry, the beloved country* (Paton, 1966) because that would be regarded as a transgression of Zulu custom. It would imply disrespect and impoliteness if the reverend and his wife had been made to address each other by their first names. In Zulu the way adults address one another is also marked by politeness. Both Reverend Khumalo and his wife address a child as:

- (6) **Mntanami** (my child)
- Ndodana** (my son)
- Ntombi** (girl)

Children address Reverend Khumalo as:

- (7) **Baba** (father) or both.
- Baba** and **mfundisi** (father or Reverend)

Reverend Khumalo shows respect when addressing a white boy as:

- (8) **Nkosana** (lit. Little master) and not a **Ndodana** (Lit. My son.)

The above indicated issues have not as yet received scrutiny in Xitsonga. It is therefore pivotal to examine whether they occur in Xitsonga.

1.6.4 De Kadt (1992, 1994)

De Kadt is another scholar who has undertaken a scholar on honorifics. His study was however on Zulu honorifics. According to De Kadt the most frequently used requests are imperatives toned down to subjunctives, as well explicit performatives:

- (9) (a) Ul'ande i bhola lakho kusasa.
(Subjective imperatives.)
Bring your ball tomorrow.
- (b) **Ngicela** (ukuba) u hambe manje.
(Performatively)
I ask that you leave now.

As seen from the second example sentence the form **ngicela** ... (I ask) is normally followed by subjunctive, one could perhaps argue that addition of **ngicela** ... increases the politeness value of request in subjunctive mood. A few of the request used down graders include the potential morpheme - nga -, the auxiliary verb - be -, and the use of hortative morpheme (m) a -,::

- (10) (a) U **ngangisiza na?**
(Can you help me?)
- (b) **Bengicela** (ukuba) usebenze kahle.
(I ask that you work well.)
- (c) **Mawungiboleke**; buku lakho.
(Please lend me your book.)

The above examples show that De Kadt found that factors such as the age and social status of the participants play a role in the kind of requests that are used. Direct request are used between equals, as well as in cases where persons of a higher status masses a requests. When a person of a lower special status makes a request the strategy used vary, from avoidance of an actual request to very direct request.

Issues as raised by Kadt, have not as yet received attention in Xitsonga. This study will determine whether they are applicable or not in Xitsonga.

1.7 CONCLUSION

From the afore-going exposition, it is evident that various scholars of other African languages have worked hard to treat honorifics, but little work in Xitsonga has been done, therefore it is of an utmost important to treat such study.

1.8 DEFINITIONS OF CONCEPTS

The aim of this chapter is to define the following concepts: *honorifics, nouns, greetings, requests, interjectives, euphemisms, prefixes, and suffixes*. The works of different scholars who outlined the above concepts will be discussed. These include Crystal (1941), Bussmann (1996), Doke (1954), Hornby (1998), Stayt (1986), and Brown (1997).

1.8.1 Honorifics

Crystal (1992:167) defines the term *honorific* as:

A term used in the GRAMMATICAL analysis of some LANGUAGES (e.g. Japanese) to refer to SYNTACTIC or MORPHOLOGICAL distinctions used to express LEVEL of politeness or respect, especially in relation to the compared social status of the participants.

Crystal thus states that several languages make use of a special set of grammatical sentences, in which different levels of politeness or respect are expressed, according to the mutual status of the participants.

The above explanation as given by Crystal is also supported by Bussman (1996:211) when he defines *an honorific* as:

Grammatical encoding of the social position and level of intimacy between the speaker, the hearer and others, more specifically, honorifics grammatically encode a higher social status.

This definition stresses the concept that when one speaks to others, one should respect them, by taking into account their social status.

- (11) a. **Tatana** Hlungwana.
(Father Hlungwana.)
- b. **Manana** Khoza.
(Mother Khoza.)
- c. **Vatatana** Hlungwana.
(Fathers Hlungwana.)
- d. **Vamanana** Khoza.
(Mothers Khoza.)

In the same vein, *The American Heritage Dictionary of English Language* (2000:259) defines honorific as: “A title, phrase, or grammatical form conveying respect used especially when addressing a social superior”.

The definition as supplied by *The American Heritage Dictionary of English Language* (ibid.) is echoed in Japanese:

... honorific language, called Keigo, that is used to show a speaker's respect for the person being spoken to ...
([http://www.j.papan.org/access language/hono.ht](http://www.j.papan.org/access/language/hono.ht). Ml. 1999 :1).

When addressing a social superior, he or she should be accorded respect, as evinced in the following samples:

- (12) a. **Hosi** yanga yi fikile.
(My Lord has arrived.)
- b. **Muchaviseki** Risenga u ya e Polokwane mundzuku.
(Sir Risenga is going to Polokwane tomorrow.)

Zuccarelli (2003:2) echoes the above examples by saying:

Pohnpeiaas use honorific language in specific social and ceremonial situations, particularly when dealing with the paramount chiefs or other high titled people.

People of higher social status thus have to be honoured.

1.8.2 Nouns

Nouns are important in this study as most of them are invoked as honorifics in Xitsonga. It is therefore important to define a noun in order to avoid confusion with other word categories.

Doke (1954:37) defines a *noun* as follows:

A noun is a word which signifies the name of anything concrete or abstract.

For example:

- (13) a. **Tatana** wa tirha.
(Father is working.)
- b. **Manana** wa sweka.
(Mother is cooking.)
- c. **Ntshava** leyi yi lehile.
(This mountain is too high.)
- d. **Moya** wa hunga.
(The wind is blowing.)

The *Oxford School Dictionary* (1988:197) defines a *noun* as:

Word used as a name of a person, or thing.

A noun can be a name of a person, place or a name of a thing.

- (14) a. Gezani (a person.)
b. Rose (a person or flower.)
c. Polokwane (town.)
d. Xitulu (a chair.)

Crystal (1941:237) concurs with the above definition because he defines a *noun* as:

A term used in the GRAMMATICAL classification of WORDS traditionally defined as the name of a person, place or thing, but the vagueness associated with the notions of 'name' and 'thing' (e.g. is beauty a thing) has led linguistic descriptions to analyse this class in terms of the FORMAL and FUNCTIONAL criteria of SYNTAX and MORPHOLOGY.

Doke (1954) expatiates on the noun by stating that there are noun classes, which indicate phenomena and things such as human beings, growing things, body parts, liquids, inanimate objects, animals, kinship names, and abstract ideas.

(15) (i) Human beings

a. **Nhwanyana** wa dya.

(A girl is eating.)

b. **Malume** wa cina.

(Uncle is dancing.)

(ii) Growing things

(16) a. **Tinyawa** ti aka miri.

(Beans build the body.)

b. **Kwembe** leri ra nandziha.

(This pumpkin is sweet.)

(iii) Body parts

(17) a. **Voko** ra mina ra vava.

(My hand is painful.)

- b. **Tino** leri ra pandza.
(My tooth is itching.)

All languages of the world possess nouns as is confirmed by Trask (1993:188) in this definition of a *noun* as:

One of the principal lexical categories. This category appears to be universally present in languages.

1.8.3 Prefix

Doke (1954:36) defines a *prefix* as follows:

Affixes attached to the beginning of words, are used compounded with noun stems to form nouns, and vary with the eight classes.

Affixes are added to the root or stem.

- (18) a. Mufana > **X**ifanyetana
(boy) (little boy).
- b. Mbyana > **X**imbyanyana
(dog) (puppy)

The above-mentioned words have utilised the prefix **Xi** in order to indicate the diminutive.

Crystal (1941:274) supports Doke's definition of the prefix by referring to it as:

A term used in morphology referring to an affix which is added initially to a ROOT or STEM.

What has been described in the above definition (Crystal, *ibid.*) may be illustrated as follows:

- (19) a. Hahani > **vahahani** (aunt)
b. Malume > **vamalume** (uncle).

Va has been affixed to nouns to form the plural form that in turn shows honour.

The *Oxford School Dictionary* (1988:229) gives the following more embracive definition of prefix:

Particle, preposition, adverb, or combining form of word placed at the beginning of word to qualify meaning.

1.8.4 Suffix

Several scholars have given a variety of descriptions of the suffix. One of them is Crystal (1941:336) who defines the *suffix* as:

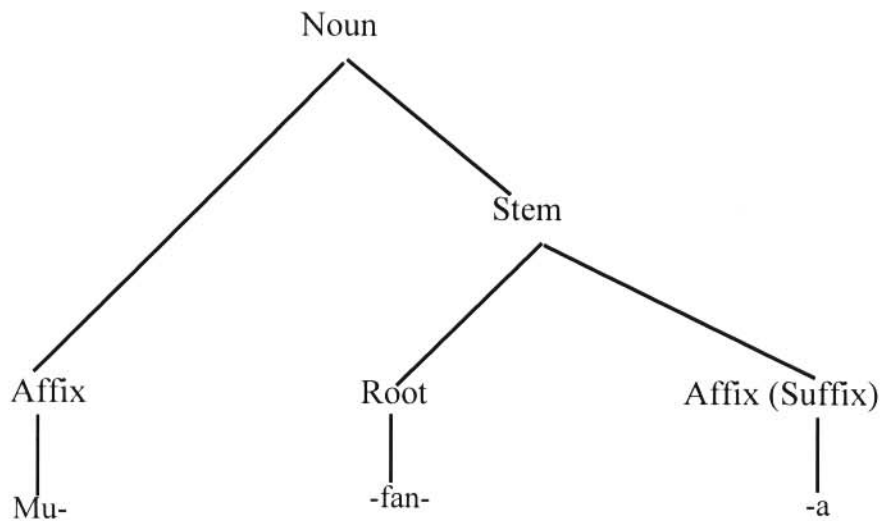
A term used in morphology referring to an affix which is added following a ROOT or STEM. The process of suffixation or suffixing is common in English, both for the DERIVATIONAL FORMATION of a new lexical items (e.g. **-ise**, **-ition**) and for expressing GRAMMATICAL relationships (inflectional ending such as **-s**, **-ed**, **-ing**).

For example:

- (20) a. Ximov**hana** (a small car)
b. Mov**a** (sugar cane)
c. Mun**hu** (a person).

In the above examples **-ana**, **-g** and **-y** have been used as suffixes. From the surface, it may not be apparent how suffixes link with honorifics. The link is however there because some suffixes may be employed to express impoliteness as exemplified in (20a) above. In other words, honorifics in Xitsonga can also be understood by examining their antonyms such as impoliteness.

Prefixes and suffixes can be illustrated as indicated in the tree structure below:



1.8.5 Greetings

Greetings occur between two persons, who are visible to each other even if one person has to make a detour to accomplish it. When two people meet, they must reach a tacit agreement about their relative status.

Hornby (1998:522) defines a greeting as follows:

A greeting is a noun derived from a verb greet which means to give a sign or a word of welcome or pleasure when meeting somebody or receiving a guest.

For example:

- (21) a. A vuxeni.
(Greetings to you.)
- b. Inhlekanhi.
(Good day)

Stayt (1936:157) echoes Hornby's definition when he defines a greeting as follows:

A greeting means to salute or honour someone.

Other common greetings in Xitsonga are the following:

- (22) a. Ri perile (Good evening).
b. I ndzhenga (Good afternoon)
c. Vaxumi (I greet you workers)
- d. I madyambu.
(Evening)

1.8.6 Request

Brown (1997:1249) regards a request as:

An expression of desire or act of something to be granted or done.

Examples:

- (23) a. **Ndzi kombela** ku famba na wena.
(May I go with you.)
- b. **Ndzi kombela** ku ya ehandle.
(May I go out?)

Kombela is important in this case as it shows respect to the addressee. The speaker is not commanding or demanding to go with the addressee.

Hornby's (1997:996) definition of request emphasises politeness:

An act of politely asking for something.

For example:

- (24) a. **Xana** ndzi nga famba?
(Can I go?)
- b. **Xana** ndzi nga ku pfuna?
(Can I help you?)

The word **xana** denotes politeness in the above examples.

Crowley (1994:7) echoes the above definition by saying:

Secondly, the rhetor may use honorific or pejorative language to generate emotional appeal.

When one appeals for something, he or she shows honour by requesting a thing in a polite way.

Simpson and Weiner (1989:679) define *request* as:

The expression of one's desire or wish directly addressed to the person or persons able to gratify it.

For example:

- (25) a. Swi nga koteka ku ri ndzi famba?
(Could it be possible that I can go?)
- b. Ndzi pfumeleleni ndzi famba.
(Allow me to go.)

1.8.7 Interjectives

An interjective is a vital category in Xitsonga as it is deployed to express a variety of meanings, as Doke (1954:88) mentions:

The interjective in the Southern Bantu languages may be described as a word of an exclamatory nature, used to express various emotions, or to convey assent or negation, a call or command.

For example:

- (26) a. Ina (Yes)
b. Yo! (Alas)
c. Ehe! (O my!)
d. Mawaku (if only)

Crystal (1992:180) agrees with Doke's definition because he defines an interjective as follows:

A term used in the TRADITIONAL CLASSIFICATION OF PARTS OF SPEECH, referring to a CLASS OF WORDS which are UNPRODUCTIVE, do not enter into SYNTACTIC relationships with other classes, and whose FUNCTION IS PURELY EMOTIVE, e.g. Juk!, Stewth! Blast! Tut tu! Where some REFERENTIAL MEANING may be involved and where there may be more than one word, e.g. Excellent! Lucky devil! Cheers! Well well.

For example:

- (27) a. Hi swona (Well Well!)
- b. Swi sasekile (excellent!)
- c. Ee! (No).

1.8.8 Euphemism

Euphemism plays an important role in many languages. Since Xitsonga is also included in this regard Ntsanwisi (1985:37) states:

In spoken and written Tsonga certain idioms are based on Euphemism. Euphemism or discourse speech is a softened and indirect expression in place of the ordinary term when it might be supposed to have the effect of grating on or harrowing the feelings. For example, we say 'pass away' or 'fell-asleep' instead of 'hal-wilted', plain 'for ugly' 'the old gentleman himself' for 'satan'.

Bussman (1996:23) agrees with Ntsanwisi's definition because he defines *euphemism* as:

Use of words of good omen, Rhetorical trope! A pleasant replacement for an objectionable word that has pejorative. Connotations e.g. to pass on for 'to die', to pass water.

For example:

- (28) a. To die, to pass on.
(Ku fa, ku lova, ku handza emisaveni, ku etlela.)
- b. To pass water.
(Ku halata mati.)

1.9 ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY

Chapter One is an introductory chapter. This chapter includes the background to the problem, aim, rationale, significance, methodology, and literature review while definitions of various concepts are given.

Chapter Two deals with noun classes that denote respect and disrespect.

Chapter Three focuses on the use of greetings and euphemisms as honorifics in Xitsonga.

Chapter Four concentrates on the use of forms of address as honorifics and interjectives.

Chapter Five summarises the main findings of the previous chapters.

CHAPTER 2

2. NOUNS AS HONORIFICS

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the role that noun classes play in honorifics. All the noun classes in Xitsonga will be examined.

According to Ziervogel *et al.* (1979:2), noun classes are internationally numbered. The following are noun classes which occur in Xitsonga:

| (1) | Noun class | Noun Prefix | Example |
|-----|------------|-------------|--------------------------|
| | 1 | Mu- | Munhu (person) |
| | 2 | Va- | Vanhu (persons) |
| | 1a | - | Kokwana (grandparent) |
| | 2a | Va- | Vakokwana (grandparents) |
| | 3 | Mu- | Murhi (tree) |
| | 4 | Mi- | Mirhi (trees) |
| | 5 | Ri- | Ribye (stone) |
| | 6 | Ma- | Maribye (stones) |
| | 7 | Xi- | Xikolo (school) |
| | 8 | Swi- | Swikolo (schools) |
| | 9 | Yin- | Yindlu (house) |
| | 10 | Tin- | Tindlu (houses) |
| | 11 | Ri- | Rihlelo (wooden tray) |
| | 14 | Vu- | Vuputsu (beer) |
| | 15 | Ku- | Ku dya (to eat) |
| | 16 | Ha- | Hansi (down) |
| | 17 | Ku- | Kule (far) |
| | 18 | Mu- | Ndzhaku (behind) |
| | 21 | Dyi- | Dyimunhu (big person) |

The above table encapsulates what Poulos (1990:13) says about noun classes when he suggests that noun classes are miscellaneous in semantic content; certain generalizations can be made about the significance of the classes; and noun classes are different because of their respective features.

2.2 Noun Classes 1 and 2

The prefixes of classes 1 and 2 are **mu-** and **va-** respectively. Class 2 is the normal plural form of nouns in class 1. These noun classes contain nouns which indicate persons:

- (2) a. (i) Munhu (person)
(ii) Vanhu (persons)

- b. (i) Wanuna (man)
(ii) Vavanuna (men)

- c. (i) Mufana (boy)
(ii) Vafana (boys)

- d. (i) Mukhalabye (old man)
(ii) Vakhalabye (old men)

- e. (i) Muchaviseki (honourable)
(ii) Vachaviseki (honourable)

The above examples, i.e. **munhu**, **mufana**, **wanuna**, **mukhalabye**, and **muchaviseki** have the same prefix **mu-** while the nouns in noun classes 1 and 2 that are formed by affixation of prefix **mu-** show respect. This is evident when they appear in sentences:

Single prefix

- (3) a. **Munhu** loyi wa tirha.
(This person is working.)
- b. **Mufana** wa tsutsuma.
(The boy is running.)
- c. **Wanuna** wa rima.
(The man is ploughing)
- d. **Muchaviseki** Hlungwana wa hi pfuna.
(Honourable Hlungwana is helping us.)

Plural prefix

- a. **Vanhu** lava va tirha.
(These people are working.)
- b. **Vafana** va tsutsuma.
(Boys are running.)
- c. **Vavanuna** va rima.
(Men are ploughing.)
- d. **Vachaviseki** Hlungwana va hi pfuna.
(Honourable Hlungwana is helping us.)

The nouns in the above sentences show respect due to the prefix **va-**. Morphologically, the prefix **va-** in (3d) is in the plural form but in this case it refers to a single person honorifically.

These noun classes are regarded as subclasses because they do not reflect the regular singular and plural prefix (i.e. **mu - va**). Noun classes 1 and 2 have subclasses, i.e. 1a and 2a while class prefix **va-** may express plurality of class prefix 1a.

| (4) Singular | Plural |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| (i) Tatana (father) | Vatatana (fathers) |
| (ii) Hahani (aunt) | Vahahani (aunts) |
| (iii) Manana (mother) | Vamanana (mothers) |
| (iv) Malume (uncle) | Vamalume (uncles) |
| (v) Kokwana (grandparent) | Vakokwana (grandparents) |
| (vi) Mukhegula (old woman) | Vakhegula (old women) |
| (vii) Muchaviseki (Honourable) | Vamuchaviseki (Honourable) |

Although **va** is normally used to indicate the plural, it is sometimes employed to denote respect and honour when used in the form of titles:

Vaholobye (President)

Vamuchaviseki (Honourable)

Vamanana (mothers)

Vatatana (fathers)

Context also plays a major role in determining whether the use of a specific noun expresses respect or not.

The use of the pronoun **wena** (you) denote impoliteness. When used under normal circumstances, the pronoun **wena** indicates a single person, but when used to refer to an older or senior person, it suggests impoliteness.

- (5) (i) **Wena** kokwana wa vabya.
(You grandparent, you are sick.)
- (ii) **Wena** sesi wa hembra.
(You sister, you are lying.)
- (iii) **Wena** mudyondzisi wa tirha.
(You teacher, you are working.)
- (iv) **Wena** buti a wu twi.
(You brother, you don't listen.)

The above sentences do not show honour to the addressee due to the use of the pronoun **wena** (you). Instead of using the pronoun **wena**, one can use the pronoun **n'wina** (which normally indicates the plural) but it can be used to refer to one person to show honour. Let us look at the following examples:

- (6) (i) **N'wina** mi ta vuya rini?
(When will you be back?)
- (ii) **N'wina** hahani mi ta famba rini?
(When will you go, aunt?)
- (iii) **N'wina** manana mi ta rima rini?
(When will you plough, mother?)

The use of the pronoun **n'wina** in the above sentences undeniably indicate that the addressees are being accorded the respect due to them. This is the case because **hahani** (aunt) and **manana** (mother) are senior people.

This type of phenomenon is not peculiar to Xitsonga, but is also prevalent in Japanese:

... status is determined by a complex combination of factors, such as social status, rank, age, gender, ...

(http://www.jinjapan.org/access/language_hono.html 1999:1)

Va- in Xitsonga shows the plural while at the same time, the prefix **va-** can be used to express honour.

| | Plural | | Honorific |
|---------------|---------------|----|------------------|
| Vandhabezitha | (chiefs) | or | (Chief) |
| Vafundhisi | (Pastors) | or | (Pastor) |

It is also possible to indicate honour by means of appreciation.

- (7) (i) Loyi i munhu wa mina.
(This is my lover.)
- (ii) Loyi i mukhalabye wa mina.
(This is my husband.)
- (iii) Loyi i mukhegula wa mina.
(This is my wife.)
- (iv) Leri i jaha ra mina.
(This is my boyfriend.)

- (v) Loyi i ntombi ya mina.
(This is my girlfriend.)

Classes 1a and 2a, like Classes 1 and 2, also refer to people. Classes 1a and 2a refer to people in a restricted manner. They are restricted to kinship terms, proper names, people with special characteristics, personified animals, and birds as well as place names. Noun class 1a has a zero prefix, but 2a has the prefix **va-**.

(8) **Kinship terms**

Singular

- (i) Tatana (father)
- (ii) Manana (mother)
- (iii) Kokwana (grandparent)
- (vi) Hahani (aunt)
- (v) Malume (Maternal uncle)

Plural

- (i) Vatatana (fathers)
- (ii) Vamanana (mothers)
- (iii) Vakokwana (grandparents)
- (iv) Vahahani (aunts)
- (v) Vamalume (uncles)

Proper names

- (9) (i) Magezi : VaMagezi (Magezi and friends)
(ii) Nyeleti : VaNyeleti (Nyeleti and her friends.)

- (iii) VaMagezi va cina : Magezi and friends are dancing.
- (iv) VaNyeleti va tirha : (Nyeleti and her friends are working)

(10) **People with special characteristics**

Singular

Plural

- (i) Nakulorhi (my friend) : Vanakulorhi (my friend.)
- (ii) Nakuloni (your friend) : Vanakuloni (your friend.)
- (iii) Nakulobye (his/her friends): Vanakulobye (their friend.)

The above examples show honour.

Poulos (1990:4) states that the prefix **mu-** and **vha-** may refer to certain tribes. Fortune (1955:61) concurs with the above statement when he states that, in this category the class 1 noun indicates a member of the tribe or people. Where the tribe is a small and familiar grouping the plural in class 2 indicates the speaker regards the people spoken of, members of the tribe, in a friendly manner.

(11) **Singular**

- (i) Muvhenda (Venda)
- (ii) Mutsonga (Tsonga)
- (iii) Musuthu (Sotho)

Plural

- (i) VaVhenda (Venda people)
- (iii) Vatsonga (Tsonga people)
- (iii) Vasuthu (Sotho people)

The above examples express respect to the tribes concerned because **mu-** and **va-** are used to refer mainly to the people.

Noun Classes 3 and 4

These noun classes are characterised by the use of the singular prefix **mu-** and the plural prefix **mi-**. These classes denote trees, rivers, plants, supernatural phenomena such as wind, spirit, illness as well as parts of the body.

(12) (a) **Trees**

Singular

- (i) Nkanyi (marula tree)
- (ii) Mutwa (thorn tree)
- (iii) Munga (boabab tree)

Plural

- (i) Minkanyi (marula trees)
 - (ii) Mitwa (thorns)
 - (iii) **Minga** (boabab trees)
-
- (i) **Nkanyi** lowu wa tsokombela.
(This marula tree is sweet.)
 - (ii) **Munga** lowu wukulu.
(This boabab tree is big.)

- (i) **Minkanyi** leyi ya tsokombela.
(These marula trees are sweet.)
 - (ii) **Minga** leyi yikulu.
(These baobab trees are big.)
- (b) **Parts of the body**

Singular

- (i) Nomu (mouth)
- (ii) Nenge (leg)
- (iii) Nkondzo (footprint)
- (iv) N'wala (fingernail)

Plural

- (i) Milomu (mouths)
- (ii) Milenge (legs)
- (iii) Minkondzo (footprints)
- (iv) Min'wala (fingernails).

Singular

- (i) Nomu wa nga wu pfimbile.
(My lip is swollen.)
- (ii) **Nenge** lowu wu kulu.
(This leg is big.)

(iii) Ndzi n'wi landze hi **nkondzo**.
(I recognise him by his footprint)

(iv) N'wala wa mina wa vava.
(My fingernail is painful.)

Plural

(i) **Milomu** ya nga yi pfimbile.
(My lips are swollen.)

(ii) **Milenge** leyi yikulu.
(These legs are big.)

(iii) Ndzi n'wi landze hi **minkondzo**.
(I have recognised him by his footprints.)

(iv) **Min'wala** ya mina ya vava.
(My fingernails are painful.)

From the foregoing discussion, it is clear that Classes 3 and 4 cannot denote respect as such as they do not refer to people.

Noun Classes 5 and 6

These noun classes are characterised by the class prefix **Ri-** of class 5 and class prefix **Ma-** of Class 6 and refer to a variety of things. They can refer to animals and natural phenomena while many abstract nouns as well as loan words fall into these classes.

(a) **Animals**

(14) Singular

- (i) Chela (frog)
- (ii) Rigava (riding ox)
- (iii) Rhole (calf)

Plural

- (i) Machela (frogs)
- (ii) Magava (riding oxen)
- (iii) Marhole (calves)

(b) **Parts of the body**

(15) Singular

- (i) Tihlo (eye)
- (ii) Tino (tooth)
- (iii) Voko (hand)

Plural

- (i) Matihlo (eyes)
- (ii) Matino (teeth)
- (iii) Mavoko (hands)

(c) **Fruits and vegetables**

(16) Singular

- (i) Nkanyi (marula tree)
- (ii) Riwa (precipice)
- (iii) Kwembe (pumpkin)

Plural

- (i) Minkanyi (marula trees)
- (ii) Mariwa (precipices)
- (iii) Makwembe (pumpkins)

Class 6 prefix morpheme **ma-** can also serve as plural for the Class 21 prefix **dyi-**.

(17) Plural

- (i) Madyiribye (huge stones)
- (ii) Madyihomu (big oxen)

Singular

- (i) Dyiribye (huge stone)
- (ii) Dyihomu (big ox)

- (i) **Madyiribye** ledyi dyikulu.
(These huge stones are too big.)

- (ii) **Madyihomu** ledyi dyi sasekile.
(This big oxen is beautiful.)

Classes 5 and 6 do not indicate honour or respect at all. They are highly pejorative when invoked in Xitsonga. In fact, such words disparage the addressee, ridicule and downplay the significance of the addressee. For example:

(18) **Singular**

Plural

- | | |
|------------------|--|
| (i) Riburantana | (i) Maburantana (a derogative term for Malawi citizens.) |
| (ii) Bunu (Boer) | (ii) Mabunu (a derogative term for Afrikaans speaking people.) |

Noun Classes 7 and 8

The prefixes of class 7 and 8 are **xi-** and **swi-** respectively. Class prefix **xi-** expresses singularity whereas class prefix **swi-** denotes plurality.

Singular

- (19) a. **Xinsatana** xa mina xi tirha ngopfu.
(My little wife works very hard.)
- b. **Xinunana** xa mina xa rima.
(My little husband is ploughing.)

- c. **Xifanyetana** xa wena xi sasekile.
(Your little boy is beautiful.)
- d. **Xinhwanyetana** xa wena xi tlharihile.
(Her little girl is clever.)

Plural

- a. **Swinsatana** swa mina swa tirha ngopfu.
(My little wives work very hard.)
- b. **Swinunana** swa mina swa rima.
(My little husbands are ploughing.)
- c. **Swifanyetana** swa mina swi sasekile.
(Your little boys are beautiful.)
- d. **Swinhwanyetana** swa wena swi tlharihile.
(Her little girls are clever.)

In the above examples, the nouns **xinsatana**, **xinunana**, **xifanyetana**, **xinhwanyetana**, **swinsatana**, **swinunana**, **swifanyetana**, **swinhwanyetana** have been used in the context which expresses love and appreciation. The speaker is very proud of the referent's specified abilities and skills. In these circumstances prefixes **xi-** and **swi-** signify positive politeness while **xi-** can also be employed to denote honour.

- (a) Noun classes 7 and 8 also include domestic utensils and this can be illustrated by the following examples:

(20) a. **Singular**

(i) **Xihloka** (axe)

(ii) **Xikomu** (hoe)

Plural

(i) **Swihloka** (axes)

(ii) **Swikomu** (hoes)

Class 7 and 8 can also refer to languages for example:

b. **Singular**

(i) Xikula (Indian custom or language)

(ii) Xizulu (the Zulu language)

(iii) Xixhosa (the Xhosa language)

(iv) Xiswazi (the Swazi language)

Plural

(i) Swikula (Indian custom or languages)

(ii) Swizulu (the Zulu languages)

(iii) Swixhosa (the Xhosa languages)

(iv) Swiswazi (the Swazi languages)

Even though these prefixes are used for **diminution** purposes they indicate respect and appreciation when used together with the suffix **-ana**.

(21) **Singular**

- (i) Ximutana (small beautiful village)
- (ii) Xintirwana (small profitable job)
- (iii) Ximovhana (little decent car)

Plural

- (i) Swimutana (small beautiful village)
- (ii) Swintirwana (small profitable jobs)
- (iii) Swimovhana (little decent cars)

Classes 7 and 8 include loan words also imbued with a sense of appreciation:

(22) **Singular**

- (i) Xitofu (stove)
- (ii) Xitimela (steamer)
- (iii) Xitulu (chair)

Plural

- (i) Switofu (stoves)
- (ii) Switimela (steamers)
- (iii) Switulu (chairs)

Noun classes 9 and 10

Classes 9 and 10 are characterised by the class prefixes **Yin-** and **Tin-**. **Yin-** indicates the singular whereas prefix **tin-** indicates the plural. Both of these prefixes can refer to things such as houses, wild animals, insects, and people.

Singular

- (23) (i) Hosi (chief)
(ii) Hosi (God)
(iii) Ndhuna (headman)

Plural

- (i) Tihosi (chiefs)
(ii) Tindhuna (headmen)

(24) **Singular**

- (i) **Hosi** yi hlayisa vanhu va yona.
(The chief looks after his people.)
- (ii) **Hosi** yi tumbuluxile tilo na misava.
(God created Heaven and Earth.)

Plural

- (i) **Tihosi** ti hlayisa vanhu va tona.
(The chiefs look after their people.)
- (ii) **Hosi** yi tumbuluxile tilo na misava.
(God created Heaven and Earth.)

The above nouns show respect when referring to people:

- (i) Hi chava n'wina **tihosi**.
(We respect you, Chiefs.)
- (ii) Hi chava n'wina **ndhavezitha**.
(We honour you, Chief.)
- (iii) Hi wena **Hosi** ntsena.
(You are the Great-great one, who created the nation.)
- (iv) **Vandhuna-nkulu** va hundzile.
(The headman has passed by.)

At the same time, it must be noted that not all the nouns belonging to these classes reflect respect and honour. The following examples may be used to prove this contention:

- (i) Ndhuna-nkulu wa chava.
(The headman is afraid.)
- (ii) Ndhuna yi hlundzukile.
(An indhuna is angry.)

The above sentences show disrespect due to the use of the nouns **ndhunankulu** and **indhuna** together with words such as **chava** (afraid) and **hlundzukile** (angry) which are loaded with negative connotation.

- (a) Noun classes 9 and 10 can also refer to wild animals but in this case they hardly have anything to do with honorific language.

Noun class 11 and 14

Noun classes 11 and 14 are characterised by the class prefix **Ri-** and **Vu-** respectively. Both of these prefixes indicate singular.

For example:

(25) Singular

- (i) Rinhi (stick)
- (ii) Rihlelo (wooden tray)
- (iii) Rivanti (door)
- (iv) Ritiho (finger)

Plural

- (i) Tinhi (sticks)
- (ii) Tinhlelo (wooden trays)
- (iii) Timbati (doors)
- (iv) Tintiho (fingers)

Noun classes 11 with prefix **ri-** is always present before its noun stems.

- (a) Noun classes 11 can be used to refer to utensils.

(26) Singular

- (i) Rihlelo (wooden trays)
- (ii) Rikoka (dragnet)
- (iii) Rifetho (twister)

Plural

- (i) Tinhlelo (wooden trays)
- (ii) Tinkoka (dragnets)
- (iii) Tinfetho (twisters)

(b) Noun class 11 can be used to indicate abstract things or abstract nouns:

- (27)
- a. Rihuhu (slight madness)
 - b. Rivilo (exceptional speed, movement)
 - c. Ritukulu (trembling hands)

(c) Collective nouns

- (28)
- a. Rimenyo (species of biting ants)
 - b. Rivungu (mealie stalkborers)
 - c. Rikulu (batch of eggs)

(d) **Parts of the body**

- (29)
- a. Ritiho (finger)
 - b. Rikohe (eyebrow)
 - c. Rimbambu (rib)

Noun class 14 **vu-** indicates liquids and abstract things.

(30) a. **Abstract nouns**

- (i) Vulolo (laziness)
- (ii) Vutoya (cowardice)

(iii) Vusopfa (carelessness)

b. Substances and liquids

- (31) (i) Vulombe (honey)
(ii) Vurimba (birdlime)
(iii) Vutswulu (arrow poison)
(iv) Vucema (palm wine)

c. Collective nouns

- (32) a. Vuhlalu (beads)
b. Vutsatsa (fowl lice)
c. Vumenyo (species of biting red ants)

Classes 11 and 14 are not used to indicate honour or respect.

Noun class 15

Noun class 15 is characterised by class prefix **ku-**. The prefix **ku-** works hand in hand with the verb stem. This noun class does not show honour as it cannot be used to denote people. In Xitsonga, the class 15 morpheme prefix **ku-** is equivalent to the English particle 'to'.

For example:

- (33) a. Ku vona (to see.)
b. Ku tirha (to work.)
c. Ku cina (to dance.)
d. Ku dya (to eat.)
e. Ku sweka (to cook.)

This class has no plural form.

Noun classes 16, 17, 18

These noun classes are distinguished by the class prefixes **ha-**, **ku-**, and **mu-** respectively. The above-mentioned prefixes do not show respect or honour as they are used to indicate location:

- (34) a. Handle (outside)
b. Hansi (below)
c. Haxawa (next year)
d. Hase (across)
e. Hala (this side)

This is a locative prefix indicating ‘at’ or ‘by’.

- (35) a. Handle ka muti.
(Outside the house.)

b. Hansi ka tafula.
(Below the table.)

c. Hase ka nambu.
(Across the river.)

Noun class 17 is characterised by the prefix **ku-**, that is a locative prefix indicating ‘to’.

- (36) Kule (far away)
Kusuhi (near here)

Noun class 18 is characterised by class prefix **mu-**. This class prefix indicates that one thing is inside another. It signifies the meaning expressed by the English ‘**into**’.

Noun class 21

Noun class 21 is characterised by the class prefix **dyi-**. Prefix **dyi-** carries a derogative meaning especially where it shows criticism, disapproval. Prefix **dyi-** does not reflect honour in Xitsonga. In a nutshell, the nouns of class 21 express a negative attitude towards the topic under scrutiny. The following sentences illustrate this point clearly:

- (37) a. Dyi + nenge > dyinenge (huge leg.)
b. dyi + munhu > dyimunhu (huge ugly person.)
c. dyi + murhi > dyimurhi (abnormally big tree.)
d. dyi + nambu > dyinambu (abnormally big river.)

The pejorative sense is revealed clearly when nouns belonging to class 21 appear in sentences:

- (38) a. Vonani dyinenge dya kona.
(Look at this huge leg.)
b. Dyimunhu ledyi dyi bihile.
(This abnormally big person is ugly.)
c. Dyimurhi ledyi dyi kulu.
(This abnormally big tree is very big.)
d. Dyinambu ledyi dyi anamile.
(This abnormally big river is very wide.)

- e. Languta dyi voko dya kona.
(Look at these abnormally big hands.)

The plurals of this noun class are derived from noun class 6 and are formed by prefixing the class 6 prefix **ma-** to the noun stem which will ultimately become the allomorph **madyi-**.

Plural

- (39) a. Vonani **madyinenge** dya kona.
(Look at this abnormally big legs.)
- b. **Madyimunhu** ledyi dyi bihile.
(This abnormally big person is ugly.)
- c. **Madyimurhi** ledyi dyi kulu.
(These abnormally big trees are very big.)
- d. **Madyinambu** ledyi dyi anamile.
(These abnormally big rivers are very wide.)
- e. Languta **madyivoko** dya kona.
(Look at these abnormally big hands.)

The noun class prefix **dyi-** conveys a derogative meaning which suggests contempt, criticism, disrespect, and disapproval.

2.3 Summary

This chapter has portrayed the exposition of noun classes in Xitsonga that show honorifics by showing that there are some class prefixes that denote honour or respect, such as prefixes of sub-classes 1a and 2a, and class prefixes **yin-** and **tin-** of noun class 9 and 10 respectively. It has also shown that Classes 11, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18 and 21 which are characterised by prefixes **ri-**, **vu-**, **ku-**, **ha-**, **ku-**, **mu-**, **dya-** respectively, do not denote respect.

The above noun classes contain concrete nouns and abstract nouns. Concrete nouns are represented by such words as man, country, liquids, and crowd, whereas abstract nouns are represented by words such as happiness, beauty and healthy. Collective nouns are also included.

In addition, diminutives of noun classes 7 and 8 with the prefixes **xi-** and **swi-** signify positive politeness while prefix **xi-** can be employed too to denote honour.

The following table gives a summary of the noun classes that express respect, disrespect, appreciation, locative, relationship, criticism, disapproval, and plural.

| Noun Class | Respect/Honour | Appreciation | Locative | Relationship | Disrespect | Criticism | Dis-approval | Plural |
|------------|----------------|--------------|----------|--------------|------------|-----------|--------------|--------|
| 1 | + | + | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 2 | + | + | - | - | - | - | - | + |
| 1a | + | - | - | + | - | - | - | - |
| 2a | + | - | - | + | - | - | - | + |
| 3 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 4 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | + |
| 5 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 6 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | + |
| 7 | - | + | - | + | + | + | + | - |
| 8 | - | - | - | - | + | + | + | + |
| 9 | + | - | - | + | - | - | - | - |
| 10 | + | - | - | + | - | - | - | + |
| 11 | - | - | + | - | - | - | - | - |
| 14 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | + |
| 15 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 16 | - | - | + | - | - | - | - | - |
| 17 | - | - | + | - | - | - | - | - |
| 18 | - | - | + | - | - | - | - | - |
| 19 | - | - | - | - | + | + | + | - |

CHAPTER 3

THE USE OF GREETINGS AND EUPHEMISMS AS HONORIFICS

3. GREETINGS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to examine the role that greetings play in expressing honour in the activities of the Vatsonga. It seems as if greetings form part and parcel of every culture in the world. Each culture, however, has its own peculiar ways of greeting. The following questions seem pertinent in this respect:

- * Which types of greetings are utilised among Vatsonga communities?
- * Do greetings play a role in denoting respect and honour in Xitsonga?
- * For which people are greetings meant?

Vatsonga have their peculiar way of greetings which is different from those of other languages such as Tshivenda, Sesotho sa Leboa, isiZulu, Siswati, and IsiNdebele, to mention but a few. Greetings can be expressed by means of physical contact of individuals such as hand-shaking, kissing, and hugging as well. Therefore, this chapter will focus on face to face greetings which reveal honour.

3.2 DEFINITION AND STRUCTURE OF GREETINGS

Greeting is a formal gesture of welcome. People should greet one another to show honour while a lack of greeting between speakers may cause misunderstandings between them.

According to Stayt (1986:157) greetings are described as follows:

A greeting means to salute or honour someone.

The phenomenon of passing a greeting from one place to another takes place between individuals and among groups, sometimes regardless of place and time, but also at any time at work, home and other places.

Greeting a person is one of the ways of according honour and respect to him/her as a human being. When greetings are extended to a person it means that he/she is recognised and acknowledged as a fully-fledged human being. As greetings are usually accompanied by corresponding appropriate gestures, the failure to have words of greeting accompanied by relevant gestures usually leads to greetings that do not show honour. In Xitsonga the phenomenon of greeting is known as **ku pfluxela**.

According to Hornby (1998:522), a greeting is a noun derived from the verb **greet** which means to give a sign or a word of welcome or pleasure when meeting somebody or receiving a guest. In similar vein, the word **ku xeweta/ku pfluxela** (greeting) in Xitsonga has been derived from the verb **xeweta/pfluxela**.

- (1) a. Ndza mi pfluxela.
(I greet you.)
- b. A vuxeni.
(Greetings to you.)
- c. Mi kwihi?
(Literal translation: Where are you?)
(Communicative translation: How are you?)

- d. Hi kona.
(Literal translation: We are there.)
(Communicative translation: I am fine.)

- e. Ha ha pfukile.
(Literal translation: We are still awake.)
(Communicative translation: I am fine/We are fine.)

Greetings as such are imbued with positive connotations. That is why greetings are regarded as an expression of kindness or joy.

Plurality is also used in the form of greeting although one person may be addressed to show honour.

Furthermore, the use of plural prefixes, concords, etc., in African culture in general, and in Xitsonga in particular, refers to the members of the family at home.

The above greetings show honour. They are employed in order to seek information on the health of a person and his or her family.

In Xitsonga the word **avuxeni** is used to greet someone whom you have never seen before; but thereafter, if one were to meet him/her again, one would use the greeting term suitable at that time such as:

- (2) a. I nhlekani.
(Good day.)

- b. I ndzhenga.
(Good evening.)

Who is supposed to greet the other person first? This depends on the specific culture and context. For instance in Swahili the following situation as espoused by Bakari (1981:41) is common practice:

If a young man met a chief or a person senior to himself, he said, *chelewa*, meaning, “Have you had a good night?” And he answered, *aaye*, meaning “Thank you” or “Well”.

A young person must always show honour when greeting a chief or elderly people in the community. This is also applicable to Xitsonga.

Bakari continues to say that a person giving the greeting should utter the words “*Mwinyi Wangu sayyidi*”, taking off his cap and shoes, whether indoors or outside. When young men greet each other, they do so without taking off their caps.

Akindele (1990:03) supports this when he says:

The younger person typically initiates greetings, whenever the occasion arises. This is considered as a mark of difference to the older person. However, older persons sometimes initiate greetings, for example, when the younger has not caught sight of the older, or when the older does so out of respect for the achievement of the younger.

A Xitsonga woman is expected to greet anybody who is older than she is, male or female. When she greets, she usually kneels down with hands on top of each other or clapping them together as a symbol of honour.

Stayt’s (1968:157) description of the Tshivenda woman form of greeting is also relevant to Xitsonga:

A woman kneels with buttocks on heels and body bending forward, head bent and eyes on the ground, she places her

hands together in the same way as the man, but instead of clapping them, lifts the two forefingers up and down.

According to Nemukula (2001:41), this type of greeting is no longer practised by most women, especially educated women and those who have moved from rural to urban areas. They think that this degrades them and lowers their status.

Greeting as a way of showing respect between younger and older people seems to be going out of fashion. It is not uncommon to observe younger people passing older people without greeting them. Modernity with its promotion of equality between all people, encourages this type of behaviour because young people argue that if they are equal to everybody else, why should they be the ones to initiate the greeting process? Moreover, due to crime ravaging South Africa, children are taught to be cautious at all times.

- (3) Mi nga pfluxeli swifambi.
(Do not greet a stranger.)

People are sometimes rude when greeted and this in a way discourages the ones who would like to initiate greetings. The following example illustrates this situation succinctly:

- (4) a. Xana mi njhani?
(How do you do?)

b. Kwihi?
(Where?)

The answer provided in example (3(b)) does not encourage the continuation of the conversation. According to Nemukula (2001:43) the above greeting shows nothing but disrespect.

3.3 TYPES OF GREETINGS

3.3.1 Greetings which are determined by time of the day

In Xitsonga culture, greetings are often determined by the time of the day. Greetings in this case are, among others, aimed at wishing people good luck and determining the status of their health.

- (5)
- a. I mixo.
(Morning.)
 - b. I nhlikanhi.
(Afternoon.)
 - c. I ndzhenga.
(Good afternoon.)
 - d. I madyambu/riperile.
(Good evening.)
 - e. I mahlanga.
(Good evening/good night.)

The above-mentioned forms of greetings are applied according to the respective appropriate times of the day. Given the briefness of their nature, these forms are precise and time-saving. However, these forms vary according to the cultures in which they are used.

But the constant variable among them, irrespective of culture, is that these forms are either used as a way of opening and ice-breaking or as a way of desiring further detailed information on the other's health.

It is a given fact that every human being demands and is worthy of respect. Therefore, exchanging greetings satisfies this natural desire for respect. It becomes disrespectful and dehumanizing to pass someone by without greeting since this robs the other person of his/her deserved honour.

3.3.2 Greetings between friends and relatives

Given that friends and relatives are a community of people having much in common, they usually exchange positive greetings as a form of honoring each other.

The above information is supported by Bakari (1981:41) when he says:

If people know each other, they ask the news of the house:
“How have you slept at home?”
“All is well, thank God”. “The ladies and children are well?”
“They are well, except that your father-in-law did not sleep well.”

Bakari (1981:42) continues to state:

If a person sees a familiar friend, he says; “Are you all right?”
and is answered “I am all right”. “Like a pearl?”

This is to be used between familiar friends only or between children, because it is a sign of friendship, but nowadays these greetings are rare.

Let us look at the following greetings, between friends or relatives among the Vatsonga people.

- a. Avuxeni munghana.
(Good morning, Friend.)

- b. I nhlekanhi hahani.
(Good day, Aunt.)
- c. Ri perile manana.
(Good evening, Mother.)
- d. I mahlanga sesi.
(Good night, Sister.)

Akindele (1990) as quoted by Nemukula (2001:48) is in agreement with the above statement.

Nemukula (ibid.) further states that in traditional societies, one might even be accused of practising witchcraft if one passes people without greeting them. Witchcraft is a sensitive issue among Vatsonga. Being accused of practising witchcraft, is akin to a death sentence. It is, therefore, understandable that no one would like to be accused of being a witch or wizard. Witchcraft as a topic would not however, receive focus in this study.

The following greetings may take place when one is a visitor at his/her relative's home:

- (6) a. Minjhani?
(How are you?)
- b. Xana mi pfukile?
(Are you well?)
- c. Hi pfukile.
(I am well.)

In this case, the person who greets enquires after the health status of the one who is being greeted. The former thus expresses interest in the welfare of the latter. In the above example, the person who greets portrays joy at the arrival of the one who is greeted.

Exchange of greetings also takes place between friends or within the circle of related members of a family who happen to be back from a prolonged absence from home. By way of showing appreciation for the safe return of another, one can use any of the following forms of greetings:

- (7) a. Va fambi.
(Travellers.)
- b. Hi va fambi.
(We are travellers.)
- c. Mi fambe njhani?
(How did you travel?)
- d. Hi fambe kahle.
(We travelled safely.)

The greetings cited above bestow honour on the receiver of greetings and this becomes an acknowledgement of the oneness and unity between the person who greets and the one who is greeted. On the one hand this shows appreciation of what has been achieved so far and on the other appreciation for the safe return and good health of the other.

The following forms of greetings are used for purposes of encouragement:

- (8) a. Mi famba kahle.
(Travel safely.)
- b. Ndzi ta famba kahle.
(I will travel safely.)
- c. Mi va rungula.
(Pass my regards to them.)

The family members wish thus him/her good luck in life.

According to Swahili (Bakari, 1981:42) greetings, in the morning a child greets its father or mother or any elder with:

“Have you slept well?” and is answered. “Well”. Then it asks, “Is all well with you?” and the answer is “All is well”.

Children’s greetings are generally still the same as in the past. Children should show honour to any elderly person and should not bypass any person without greeting him/her. In this regard, Bakari (1981:43) says:

If people are sitting on the verandah and someone passes by, he says to the people sitting down “Peace with you”, and they reply “And with you, come in”.

Never ever bypass a person without greeting him or her. This adage is not only applicable to Swahili, but to Xitsonga as well.

3.3.3 Greetings at the workplace

Just like any other community, the Vatsonga people are also involved in various communal tasks such as fetching wood, shepherding flocks, land cultivation, and doing laundry, among

others. It is during such times when work is performed in public that it becomes a great honour, among African communities, to acknowledge the team of workers by greetings.

Akindele (1990:03) thus states that “greeting persons at work is regarded as a matter of respect in one’s occupation”. Passing greetings to someone who is busy at work seems to be a way of acknowledging the efforts of the worker and also appreciating and encouraging the continuation of the good work. Below are forms of feelings that denote encouragement:

- (9) a. Vaxumi.
(I greet you workers.)

- b. A hi va voni.
(We are indeed workers, we are cultivators.)

Bakari (1981:43) mentions if a man passes people at work of any kind, he says, “Skilled work?” and they say, “God first”. After this they exchange the usual greetings.

3.3.4 Greetings during the time of bereavement

When helping a bereaved family, one can utter the following words to encourage or to comfort people who are helping the bereaved family:

- a. Vakhandli va nhlonge.
(Greetings to you who are dealing with death issues.)

When greeting people at the graveyard Xitsonga speaking people often say:

- a. Ku fa.
(Death.)

This is the only type of greeting that is acceptable under the circumstances. During times of death women show respect by means of kneeling and also by putting their hands together while young men show respect by taking off their hats and bereaved family members show honour by looking down and putting their hands behind their backs.

3.3.5 **Of parting**

According to Bakari (1981:43), as far as Swahili is concerned - and one may contend that this also applicable to Xitsonga - in the past after talking one took his leave saying, **I take my leave**. Then if he was an important person he would say: "Sir" currently they normally part with the words:

- (10) a. Minkateko leyinene.
(Good luck.)
- b. Minkateko leyinene, hi tlhela hi hlangana.
(Good luck, till we meet again.)
- c. Mi famba mi tlhela mi vuya.
(Go and come back.)

The listener will be filled with happiness when hearing words wishing him or her good things in life. He or she will go peacefully with the love shown by his/ her family members.

3.3.6 **Greetings in a school situation**

A school is an institution for instruction and learning. When an educator gets into the classroom the learners are expected to stand up whereafter the educator will say:

- (11) a. Avuxeni, vadyondzi.
(Good morning, Pupils.)
- b. Avuxeni, mudyondzisi.
(Good morning, Teacher.)

Learners have to stand when greeting because standing when speaking in a school environment is a symbol of respect and honour to the educator. It is different from the traditional way of greeting. If learners remain seated when the educator gets into the classroom, it would be interpreted as a sign of disrespect.

Standing up as a sign of respect also prevails mostly in churches that are Western in character. Even if the sermon is about to start at the church, the congregation has to stand up so as to show respect to the pastor. The pastor in turn greets the congregation by saying:

“Allelujah”.

The congregation responds by saying:

“Amen”.

When the sermon is over, the pastor concludes by saying:

- (12) a. Hosi yi mi katekisa.
(May the Lord God, bless you.)

3.3.7 Greetings at chief's kraal

According to Vatsonga culture, when the chief enters his kraal, he is praised by his people to show honour and deference for him.

Hornby (1995:192) defines a chief as a leader of a tribe or clan.

In the Limpopo Province where the majority of the Vatsonga reside, chiefs and headmen still play a significant role. When ordinary people meet a chief, they are expected to kneel down, with heads facing downward start praising him even if the chief is still far away from them. This is evidenced by the following examples:

- (13) a. Hosi yanga.
(My Lord/my majesty.)

- b. Bayethe.
(To salute.)

When the chief enters the kraal, all commoners have to stand up and sing the above words in unison as a sign of respect and honour for him.

When one enters a chief's kraal, one has to say:

- (14) a. Ndabezitha.
(Young Majesty.)

- b. Muchaviseki.
(The honourable.)

- c. Mhlonipheki.
(The honourable.)

- d. Nkulukumba.
(Sir.)

- e. Wena nghonyama.
(Lion.)
- f. Wena ndlhompfu.
(You are an elephant.)
- g. Muhluri.
(Defeater.)
- h. Wena wa tiko.
(You are chief of the nation.)

Praises are mainly used by a bard (mphati). Any old man of the homestead is the one who praises the chief.

Baloyi (n.d. 78) thus renders one of the chief's (Xaka) clan names in a praising manner as:

- (15) Wena wa ka Phunga,
Wena Xaka wo ka a nga beki
Wena wa ka Mjokwana,
Wena u nga kula ha ha rivele,
Ha ku losa Ndabezitha.

(You of Phunga
You Xaka, who does not take a look
You of Mjokwana
You who grew up while still young
We greet you Ndabezitha.)

In bringing about cordial relationships between commoners and royalty, the importance of praises cannot be over-emphasised. The above information is supported by Raum (1973:75):

A bard's task was to recite the praises of the ancestors of his master at public occasions, also those of important visitors.

In Xitsonga culture, chiefs are honoured in several ways. The bard can continue to recite or praise the chief by saying:

(16) Wena wa Maboxa Ndleve
Wena ntukulu wa Nghunghunyana
Wena wa Gwambe na Dzavana
Machava ku tsongola xa munhu
Bayethe!

(You of holes in the ears
You the nephew of Nghunghunyana
You the descendant of Gwambe and Dzavana
You who do not steal someone's property
Bayethe.)

At the court, the chief is the one who talks together with his indunas, while the other people have to keep quiet. No man should enter the court without a jacket and shawl or a scarf on the head in case of a woman. This of course is a modern invention as traditional Vatsonga people did not use jackets or shawls as clothing. Nevertheless, it has become part of Vatsonga tradition and chiefs expect people to adhere to it.

3.3.8 Greetings on a wedding day

According to Hornby (1989:1446), a wedding is a marriage ceremony where the guests wish two people who are getting married, the best of luck for their marriage. The following words of appreciation are common in Xitsonga:

- (17) a. Hi vuyisa mati.
(Literal translation: We are bringing back water.)
(Communicative translation: We welcome you, bride.)
- b. A ri ya riya.
(Congratulations.)
- c. Nhlomi.
(Bride.)
- d. Hi vuyisa nhlomi.
(We welcome you, bride.)

3.4 EUPHEMISM

3.4.1 Introduction

Although scholars have tried to define euphemisms in different ways, an euphemism can be regarded as a softened, indirect expression used instead of one that seems harsh and direct. It is also used to hide unpleasant ideas, even when the term is not necessarily offensive. Like many other languages, Xitsonga has certain verbal taboos which cannot be used in ordinary discourse.

Mokgokong (1975) defines euphemism thus:

An euphemism is a softened, indirect expression used instead of the one that seems too harsh and direct.

Hornby (1995) echoes the above definition by defining euphemism as:

An expression that is gentler or less direct than the one normally used to refer to unpleasant or embarrassing. 'Pass away' is a euphemism for 'die'.

A very large group of euphemism is formed by expressions intended to put something in a way that shall not wound the feelings of the hearer.

The *Collins Dictionary of the English Language* (1984:504) augments the above definitions by describing euphemism as follows:

An inoffensive word or phrase substituted for one considered offensive or hurtful, especially one concerned with religion, sex, death, or excreta. Examples of euphemisms are sleep with for have sexual intercourse with, departed for dead, relieve oneself for urinate.

Wikipedia (<http://en2.Wikipedia.Org/Wiki/Euphemism> (1:12/05/2003) defines euphemism as:

A word or phrase that is used in place of a disagreeable offensive term. Euphemisms are used to hide unpleasant ideas, even when the term for them is not necessarily offensive. This kind of euphemism is used extensively in fields of public relations and politics.

As euphemism is used, among others, to show respect to the addressee, it means it is related to honorifics in the sense that honorifics's main function is to accord people the respect that is due to them.

Here again the extent to which pleasantness or unpleasantness, vulgarity or politeness is applicable will differ from culture to culture or from language to language.

In Xitsonga the first group of verbal taboos are words dealing with **excretion**. It is culturally indelicate to say: **Wanuna u ye ku babeni kumbe u ye eku nyeni** (the man has gone to defecate) but polite to use any of the following:

- (18) a. U ti rhumile.
(He has sent himself.)
- b. U ye handle.
(He has gone outside.)
- c. U ye ku ti pfuneni.
(He has gone to help himself.)
- d. Wa ha hambukile.
(He is deviating.)

Additional euphemisms connected with **excretion** are:

- (19) a. Ku halata mati.
(To take out water.)
- b. Ku tsakamisa.
(To wetten.)

The above words in examples (18a-d, 19a-b) are polite. The impolite words are **ku xixita/ku rhundza, ku baba/ku nya**. The word **ku tamba/ku fucha** (fart) would be regarded as impolite and would thus be denoted by the following words:

- (20) a. Ku humesa moya.
(To take out air.)
- b. Ku faya nsikiti.
(To break bedbug.)

Pregnancy among the Vatsonga can be expressed politely as follows:

- (21) a. U tshoveke nenge.
(She is crippled.)
- b. U tirhwele.
(Carry oneself.)
- c. U onhakile.
(She has been spoilt.)
- d. U bihile emirini.
(Ugly in the body.)
- e. Tsakani u tikile.
(H/she is heavy.)

It is disrespectful to use the words **una nyimba, kumbe una khwiri** (to have a tummy) as this will be regarded as offensive language to the addressee.

The fear of death often carries over into fear or the words connected with death. People, therefore, instead of saying **munhu u file** (the person is dead) would prefer to say:

- (22) a. U etlele.
(He is asleep.)
- b. Kokwana u hundzile emisaveni.
(Grandparent has passed away.)
- c. Risenga u wisile.
(Risenga has rest.)
- d. Gavaza u lovile.
(Gavaza is lost.)
- e. U miyerile.
(He is just quiet.)
- f. A nga ha ri kona.
(He is not there.)
- g. U hi siyile.
(He has left us.)

The usage of such euphemistic language or discourse is understandable in Xitsonga. Breal (1964:100) for instance, remarks that it is human nature to disguise ideas which are disagreeable, wounding or repulsive.

Euphemism has to do with the lessening of degree of offensiveness without adding appreciative connotations. Let us look at the following examples which are from the *South African Journal of African languages* (1999:235):

- (23) a. U nyoko (impolite) versus
b. Umama wakho (polite)
(Your mother.)

The verb **kaka** (Afrikaans ‘kak’) and **inya** (Zulu) both seem to be offensive. To avoid their being offensive **u kuthoyiletha** (from ‘toilet’) is used. So, avoidance of offensive words is of the utmost importance in everyday life in many cultures.

Another group of euphemisms includes indirect expressions used instead of those that appear too harsh and direct. If an elderly person is not telling the truth one cannot say **Tatana una mavunwa/Tatana wa hembra** (Father is lying). The following euphemisms may be used instead:

- (24) a. Tatana wa hoxisa.
(Father is mistaken.)
b. Miendla xihoxo tatana.
(You are making mistake, father.)

There are several euphemisms connected with drunkenness, a fact that shows that drunkenness itself is not regarded with respect. Instead of saying **wanuna u dakwile**, it is more respectful to use the following examples:

- (25) a. Wanuna u xurhe.
(The man has eaten to the full.)
b. Wanuna u fikile hi minkolo.
(The man has been submerged up to the throat.)

- c. Wanuna u risa tinyimpfu/timbuti.
(The man is driving sheep/goats.)
- d. Wanuna u karhele.
(The man is tired.)
- e. Wanuna u byi twile.
(The man has heard.)

Madness (ku hlanya/ku penga) in Xitsonga is regarded as an undesirable condition. Hence **ku hlanya/ku penga** is softened as:

- (26)
- a. Ku ka ti nga helelenga.
(Be incomplete.)
 - b. Ku ka u nga tsakangi.
(Not to be happy.)
 - c. Ku nga teki kahle.
(Be unwell.)
 - d. Ku hlangana nhloko.
(Be mixed up in the head.)
 - e. Ku ka ti nga vuyanga kahle entshangeni.
(Not to be all back in the kraal.)

In Xitsonga one is not encouraged to use certain words for bodily parts such as **marhaku** (buttocks). Instead of using **marhaku** (buttocks), one can use the following words respectively:

- (27) a. Switshamo.
(Chairs)
- b. Swisuti.
(Buttocks)

Euphemism is often used in vague in present-day English as well. For example:

Retarded people are referred to as **mentally challenged people**. More examples:

- a. reek > stink > smell > odor > fragrance.
- b. crippled > handicapped > disabled.

A word or phrase is thus used in the place of a disagreeable offensive term. A very large group of euphemisms is formed by expressions intended to say something in a way that shall not wound the feelings of the hearer.

There is necessarily a lot of subjectivity involved because connotations easily change over time.

- (28) **Madomu** (madabadaba) ya twisisa hi ku nonoheriwa.
(An **idiot** understands very seldom.)

The word **domu/dabadaba** (idiot) is an offensive word or term. **Idiot** was once a neutral term, and **moron** an euphemism for it, so the word **retarded** is being used to replace **moron**.

The word **ku yiva** (steal) can be indicated by several euphemisms in Xitsonga.

- (29) a. Ku va na rintiho.
(To have finger.)
- b. Ku va na rintiho ro leha.
(To have long finger.)
- c. Ku va na voko.
(To have hand.)

Since the word **prostitute** (gwavava/dlakuta) is also an offensive word or term, the euphemism for this term is:

- (30) a. Ku va na vutlhome mahlo.
(To look around.)

The term **mhika/nyumba** (barren woman) is also not imbued with positive meaning, hence the preference of an euphemism for it such as:

- (31) a. Wanuna yoloye hi loye.
(There comes the man.)

As long as people still adhere to norms that are regarded as decent, euphemism will exist for a long time to come.

3.5 SUMMARY

In this chapter greetings have been defined as something that one says or does as a symbol of showing respect the elderly or one's peer group. Among the Vatsonga, there are several types of greetings that are determined by the time of the day, greetings between friends and

relatives, greetings at the work place, greetings in the school environment, for parting, greetings at church, greetings at the chief's kraal and greetings on a wedding day. In rural areas, a greeting occurs between any two persons who are visible to each other. In crowded areas, every one close to the speaker must be greeted. The most senior people present are greeted before those of lower rank who must speak first.

This chapter has also shown that euphemism is defined as a word or phrase that is used in the place of a disagreeable or offensive terms. Like many other languages, Xitsonga has certain verbal taboos which cannot be used in ordinary discourse.

In addition, the chapter has treated euphemism in respect of words dealing with excretion, pregnancy, the fear of death, lies, drunkenness, and bodily organs and that euphemism is usually used when one is showing honour and respect to the addressee. When people are at loggerheads, such civilized language is thrown overboard and vulgar words would be uttered directly as they are.

CHAPTER 4

4. THE USE OF TITLES OR FORM OF ADDRESS AS HONORIFICS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines the role played by the use of forms of address as honorifics. Every culture has its own way of using words that show respect to the community in which one is found. This chapter will, therefore, focus on words that assist in denoting honour to the addressee and in this regard, only titles and interjectives will be scrutinized. The following questions seem important:

- * Which types of titles are used among the Vatsonga?
- * Do titles play a role in denoting respect and honour in Xitsonga?
- * For which people are titles meant?

Vatsonga have their own distinguishing way of using titles which is different from other African languages. In addition, titles can differ from one situation to another. All people, no matter of status, show respect by being addressed by their appropriate titles. Respect plays a major role in everyday situations. Addressing a person by name is regarded as disrespectful according to the Vatsonga culture. Titles can be bestowed due to service, deeds or even purchase. Vatsonga too use a honorific language in specific and ceremonial situations, particularly when addressing very important chiefs or other dignified people. Socially people differ according to the status they achieve in society, as Raum (1973:1, 509) states that it is in society where positional status is emphasised:

4.2 DEFINITION OF FORMS OF ADDRESS

Terms or forms of address are used to respect someone. Braun (1988:7) defines terms or forms of address as follows:

Terms or forms of address are words and phrases used for addressing one another in spoken or written communication. Depending on the structure of the language, such words comprise pronouns, verbs and nouns.

Brown and Levinson (1978:182) elaborate on forms of address thus:

Probably all languages encode difference in generalized forms of address for strangers, ... These may be borrowed from kinship terms as in *Tamil appaa* or *ayao* ('father') and in *Tzeltal tat* or *ta* ('father'), *me'nin* ('elderly woman deriving from mother') and *bankilal* ('elder brother'). In English, they originally had aristocratic connotations: Sir, Madam, Lady.

Kinship terms are also included in terms of address that denote honour and are classified as polite. Addressing a person by name is a form of disrespect, according to the Vatsonga culture, especially if the addressor is a young person while the addressee is an older person. In order to avoid such an embarrassing situation, the use of surnames is recommended. That is why Du Preez (1997/02:67) states:

Addressing a person by his name is a form of acknowledgement and African people in particular are proud of their surnames ... By frequently referring to, for example, Mr Mabazo or Miss Kunene by name during your conversation, you can only create a positive climate.

The following examples will, therefore, be especially preferable in Xitsonga:

- (1) (a) Nkulukumba Nkuna.
(Mr Nkuna.)
- (b) Nkulukumba Hlungwana.
(Mr Hlungwana.)
- (c) N'wa Moyane.
(Miss Moyane.)

Using a surname to address an adult is undeniably another way of showing respect rather than addressing him/her by name as far as African languages are concerned. The significance of names and titles in denoting honour cannot be overemphasised. This point is buttressed by what Evans-Pritchard (1948:166) says:

The study of names and titles of address has some importance because ... they symbolize a man's social position in relation to the people around him, so that, by the use of one or the other of them, the status of the speaker to the person addressed is readily recognised.

4.3 CULTURAL TERMS OF ADDRESS

It would seem that titles are used all over the world. As this study's main focus is on Xitsonga, little attention will be given to the use of titles in other languages. Suffice to say that a universal perspective is, however, necessary and this would be in referring to the form of Japanese ways of address as Japanese is regarded as a good example of an honorific language.

4.3.1 Japanese Titles

The Japanese have their own distinguishing way of addressing each other to show honour. In Japanese honorific terms are found in various parts of speech: nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs. When addressing another person it is common to use **San** - the equivalent of Mr or Mrs (Ms) - after the family name. The suffix **Chan** is often attached to children's names and given names of close friends. Other titles, such as **Sensei** for "teacher" or "doctor" are also attached as suffixes after the family name. **Chan** is the title used by children and friends who are very close or who have grown up together. When a child addresses an older woman he/she may use the word **Obaa-San**. When addressing their siblings or children, the Japanese start with the first name followed by an honorific title (-San). Using no honorific title at all is considered very familiar and casual while using a family name alone is considered extremely rude, and should be avoided as this shows disrespect. (<http://www.sg.emb-japan.go.jp!> Japan access/Language.htm).

4.3.2 Xitsonga Titles

In Xitsonga, titles are mostly considered as a form of showing respect to elderly people. The most important titles in Xitsonga may be listed as follows:

Nkulukumba (Sir)

The word 'Nkulukumba' (Sir) may refer to the respectful or polite form of address for a man. It is a title that shows honour and it is placed before a name. It indicates superiority in rank. *Readers' Digest* (1984) defines the word 'Sir' as a form of address used with a noun indicating a man's profession or rank:

- (2) a. **Nkulukumba Benjamini** ari murhangeri wa le Kapa hi lembe ra 1820.
(Sir Benjamini was a ruler of the Cape in 1820.)

- b. **Nkulukumba Ntsan’wisi** ari holobye wa khale ka Gazankulu.
(Sir Ntsan’wisi was a former Minister of Gazankulu.)

Hosi (Lord/lord)

Hosi has several meanings. **Hosi** (lord) may mean a husband or a man of renowned power. Or as a title given to a king while the words **hosi** yanga (my lord) are used in addressing a judge in a court of Law. In the Bible Sarah addresses her husband as my lord which indicates respect for her husband. When used with a capital L, i.e. **Lord (Hosi)** it refers to God or Jesus. Examples of different meanings of **hosi** are given below:

- (3) a. Hi chava n’wina **hosi** (lord).
(We honour you king/chief.)
- b. Miyelani **hosi** ya ta.
(Keep quiet, the king/chief is coming.)
- c. **Hosi** I mutumbuluxi wa swilo hinkwaswo.
(God is the Creator of everything.)
- d. **Hosi** ya vuya.
(Jesus Christ is coming very soon.)

Munghana (Comrade)

The title **munghana** (comrade) denotes a mate or fellow. Politically it refers to a fellow member of a communist or socialist party. This form of address is often used in political gatherings or political speeches:

- (4) a. Munghana Thabo Mbeki xiteji i xa n'wina.
(Comrade Thabo Mbeki, the stage is yours.)
- b. Munghana Nelson Mandela ha mi xixima.
(Comrade Nelson Mandela, we honour you.)
- c. Ngoako Ramatlhodi i munghana wa hina.
(Ngoako Ramatlhodi is our comrade.)

The examples in (4) above notwithstanding, **munghana** may be used to refer to **a friend**. What **munghana** denotes is therefore contingent on context.

Ndabezitha

The word **Ndabezitha** in Xitsonga or Zulu is used to show respect when addressing a traditional leader of a particular clan. It is used in the royal kraal and can be used together with a clan name:

- (5) a. Ndabezitha Nkuna.
(Nkuna clan.)
- b. Ndabezitha Nxumalo.
(Nxumalo clan.)

Murhangeri (Gangsters)

Readers' Digest (1984) defines “gangsters” as a particular group of people who are involved in any form of crime and refers to a group of people who work under a certain supervisor.

The Oxford School Dictionary (1988:124) concurs with the above definition, by regarding gangsters as members of gang of criminals.

They address the most senior member of the group as the “boss”, meaning that the most senior member of the group is the one who takes decisions and whose word is final. The “gangster” is addressed by this title to accord him respect. The term **murhangeri** is used as an equivalent term of “gangster”. Under normal circumstances, **murhangeri** means **a leader**.

Muchaviseki/Holoby (Honourable)

Muchaviseki (honourable) is an official or courtesy title. *The Encyclopaedic Britannica* (1990:506) defines honourable as a title of respect given because of a high professional or social position.

- (7) a. **Muchaviseki** Thabo Mbeki u fikile.
(Honourable Thabo Mbeki has arrived.)
- b. Nelson Mandela i **holoby** loyi a faneleke ku fundziwa.
(Nelson Mandela is our honourable person who had to be honoured.)

Nkosikazi (Mrs, Ms)

Nkosikazi means a learned or rich married woman and is used together with the man’s surname. One can say Mrs so and so as it is disrespectful to address a married person by her personal name:

- (8) a. **Nkosikazi** Zungueni wa cinca.
(Mrs Zungueni is dancing.)

- b. **Nkosikazi** Moyani wa sweka.

(Ms Moyani is cooking.)

Nkulukumba (Mr/Mister)

The Oxford School Dictionary (1988:187) defines the title Mr/Mister as a title prefixed to the surname of a man (always written Mr). The man can thus be addressed as Mr so and so ... The word **nkulukumba** can only be used with surnames:

- (9) a. **Nkulukumba Madlhophe** i nhloko ya muti.

(Mr Madlhophe is the head of the family.)

- b. Byela **Nkulukumba Mathebula** a ta Mundzuku.

(Tell Mr Mathebula to come tomorrow.)

Wansati wo ka a nga tekiwanga (Miss)

The title **Miss** is used to refer to an unmarried woman. *The Oxford School Dictionary* (1988:187) supports the above statement by defining the title Miss as unmarried woman or girl. As an unmarried woman also deserves respect, addressing an unmarried woman by name is disrespectful in Xitsonga but nowadays people prefer the term Sesi.

Murhandziwa (honey)

The word **honey** is used to address a person you love dearly. People who have love affairs can address each other by using terms such as lovey, sweetie, baby, honey, and sugar,. Although explicit love behaviour is not encouraged, it is common to hear expressions such as these ones nowadays.

4.3.3 Kinship terms or relationship titles

Kinship terms are used as a form of address and kinship terms have to do with family relationships. They denote relationships that can be traced through marriage or by birth. Nanda (1987:234) defines kinship as follows:

Kinship includes relationships through blood and relationships through marriage.

Frowley (1992:105) regards kinship as the familial relations among humans.

The above ideas indicate the relationship that exists through marriage or by birth. Kinship terms are nouns which show the relationship between people. Xitsonga uses the following kinship terms:

Manana

According to Vatsonga culture, the word **manana** (mother) may be used to even address those who are not his or her biological mother as every female who is old enough, to be one's mother is addressed as such. A husband may address his wife as **manana** (mother). It may mean ego's parents. EGO's brother's wife can be addressed as **manana** (mother) too. In this regard, Mönnig (1967:105) states:

Although a new mother does not officially receive a new name, she is known as mother so ... and so ...

The word **manana** (mother) is used together with the surname. The members of the church may for instance, address the reverend's wife as **manana** (mother) as a form of respect.

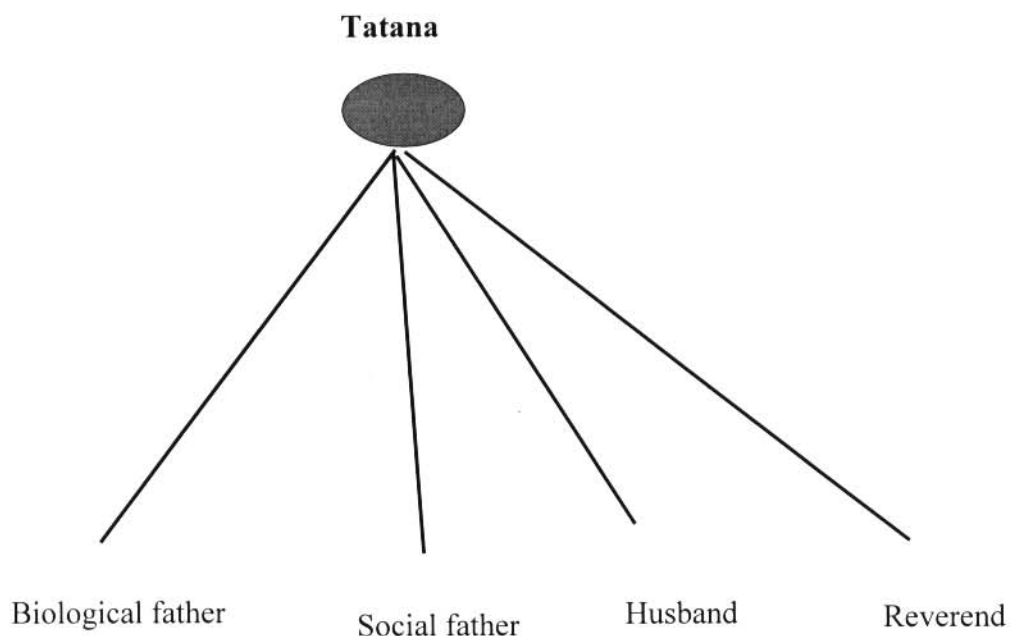
- (11) a. Manana u vuyile entirhweni.
(My mother is back from work.)

- b. Manana hi yena a hi hlayisaka laha kaya.
(Mother, take care of us here at home.)
- c. Manana Mfundhisi wa khongela.
(The Reverend's wife is praying.)

There is no doubt that the word **manana** (mother) is multireferential but always shows respect.

Tatana (father)

Tatana (father) may be used to address a male who is in fact older than the speaker. Wives address their husbands as **tatana** (father). The word **tatana** (father) may not necessarily mean a biological father, but it refers to every male old enough to be one's father. It may refer to ego's biological father as well. EGO's elder brother may be addressed as father. The elder child is used in this case. The congregation addresses the Reverend as **tatana** (father) due to the fact that the Roman Catholic Church addresses its reverends as Fathers. The following diagram and sentences illustrate all the above points well:



- (12) a. Nhloko ya muti lowu i tatana Matsane.
(The head of this family is father Matsane.)
- b. Tatana Mfundhisi Shabangu wa chumayela swinene.
(Reverend Shabangu preaches very well.)
- c. Ndza khensa rirhandzu ra n'wina tatana.
(Thank you, father, for your love.)

Kokwana (Grandparent)

The term **kokwana** (grandparent) in Xitsonga refers to both male or female parents to ego. This term is in fact multireferential because it denotes a variety of meanings. **Kokwana** (grandparent) may refer to ego's mother's brother, i.e. **Malume** (uncle). The various meanings denoted by **kokwana** (grand parent) may be illustrated in the following examples:

- (13) a. Kokwana wa rima.
(Grandmother is ploughing.)
- b. Kokwana Risenga i rikitse ra a va manana.
(Grandfather Risenga is the last born of my mother.)
- c. Kokwana u bebule ntukulu wa yena.
(Grandmother has carried her grandchild on her back.)
- d. Kokwana Nkhwashu u fambisa movha.
(Grandfather Nkhwashu is driving a car.)

Sesi (Sister)

The title **sesi** (sister) may refer to ego's sister, i.e. ego's biological sister as well as to any female old enough to be one's sister, with the aim of showing respect. Two wives who have been married to the same husband address each other as **sesi** (sister). The *Oxford School Dictionary* (1988:274) defines sister as:

Daughter of the same parents as another person.

This is the way of addressing a person who is your senior or someone whom you respect. It is disrespectful in Xitsonga to address your sister by her name. Therefore, it is preferable to use the term **sesi** (sister) on its own or at least together with a name:

- (14) a. Loyi i sesi wa Jamela.
(This is a sister to Jamela.)
- b. Nuna wa sesi N'wa-Magezi na N'wa-Rikhotso i John.
(The husband of Miss Magezi and Miss Rikhotso is John.)

Younger children address their elder sisters by using the term **makwerhu** (sister).

- c. Makwerhu Rhulani u kurile.
(My sister Rhulani is now a grown up.)

Buti (brother)

The *Oxford School Dictionary* (1988:38) defines brother as:

Son of the same parents as another person (sometimes with pl. Brethren), member of religious order, fellow member of church, order, trade union.

This title refers to a person who is your senior and whom you respect. It can refer to ego's biological brother too. It is disrespectful to call your brother by name in Xitsonga. Younger children do not address their brothers by their names, but address them as brothers. Politically and even socially it is used as a form of address by fellow blacks to express solidarity. It can also mean a friend.

(15) a. Loyi i buti wa Jan.

(This one is a brother to Jan.)

b. Buti Nkuna, i swinene ku va hi teke eka muti un'we.

(Brother Nkuna, it is good to have married into the same family.)

Just like in the case of **sesi** (sister), the term **makwerhu** can be used to refer to an elder brother:

c. Makwerhu John i makwerhu e hosini.

(Brother John is my brother in Christ.)

The English speakers address their brothers by their names, since this does not show disrespect to them.

Malume (uncle)

Ego's mother's brother and his wife are addressed as **malume** (uncle) in Xitsonga as Doke (1945:374) mentions:

The mother's brother and his wife, and also her cousin of all types, are indicated by the possessive terms Umalume, Unyokolume, and Uninalume.

The word **malume** (uncle) is the title given to any mother's brothers and can also refer to any person to show respect. Fathers' or mothers' brothers or brother-in-laws are called uncle (malume). The word **malume** (uncle) is thus multireferential.

- (16) a. Malume John i makwerhu wa manana.
(Uncle John is my mother's brother.)
- b. Malume u basisa xirhapa.
(Uncle is cleaning the garden.)

Hahani (aunt)

Ego's father's sister is addressed as **hahani** (aunt). Her brother's children may address her as **hahani** (aunt). The *Oxford School Dictionary* (1988:20) concurs with the above statement by defining the word aunt as:

Father's or mother's sister or sister-in-law.

Younger children are not allowed to call their aunts by name as this shows disrespect. Aunt may also refer to any adult woman who is of the same age as your aunt to indicate respect. Among Vatsonga, the term **hahani** (aunt) has also acquired an economic connotation in the sense that the woman who works in the kitchen is given the title of **hahani** (aunt) by her employers.

- (17) a. Hahani Sarah i makwenu wa tatana.
(Aunt Sarah is my father's sister.)

- b. Hahani Margareth wa sweka.
(Aunt Margareth is cooking.)

N'wananga (my child)

The term **n'wananga** (my child) is multireferential, as it may refer to your biological child or any child. Any adult person may address any child as **n'wananga** (my child) as a way of showing respect and appreciation. If a parent or an adult does not want to indicate respect to a child as a fellow human being, he may choose to omit **n'wananga** from the sentence.

This is also common in isiZulu where Nyembezi (1983:56) remark:

When addressing children who are not part of their family, including strangers, the Reverend and his wife in Lafa Elinhle kakhulu usually address a child as Mntanami (my child), but they may address children according to their sex as Mfana wami (my boy) or Ntombazane yani (my girl).

The word **n'wananga** (my child) expresses the following meanings:

Biological child: The word **n'wananga** (my child) may refer to any younger person to someone you love and it may also be used to show appreciation.

The following examples illustrate this point:

- (18) a. N'wananga, u pase kahle.
(My child, you have passed well.)
- b. Tana haleno n'wananga.
(Come here, my child.)
- c. Ximovhana xa wena xi sasekile n'wananga.
(You have a decent car, my child.)

- d. N'wananga, a wu ndzi khomisanga tingana laha kerekeni.
(You have never disappointed me in the church, my child.)

4.3.4 Marital status

Marital status in this case refers to a situation where one is either married or unmarried. As far as this study is concerned, emphasis will be on titles that are used to address or refer to married people.

4.3.4.1 *N'wa + Maiden clan-name*

Bryant (1949:209) describes this practice among the Zulu as follows:

... after marriage, a woman was referred to, conversationally by the father and mother of her husband simply by her father's name (not by her own.)

Married women in Xitsonga are commonly addressed by their maiden clan-name. Their maiden clan-name is prefixed with **n'wa-** (daughter of) to signify female gender. **N'wa-** is a prefix which is mostly used for married women, to show respect or to avoid calling them by their real names. **N'wa-** can be added to the name of the father or to the surname of the married woman. If a married woman is a daughter of **Gezani Moyani**, she will be called **N'wa-Gezani**. This practice is also common among the Zulu.

| (19) First name | Surname |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| a. N'wa-Gezani. (Daughter of Gezani.) | N'wa-Moyani. (Daughter of Moyani.) |

- | | | |
|----|---|---|
| b. | N'wa-Risenga. (Daughter of Risenga) | N'wa-Makhubela. (Daughter of Makhubela) |
| c. | N'wa-Mdungazi. (Daughter of Mdungazi.) | N'wa-Mathebula. (Daughter of Mathebula.) |
| d. | N'wa-Muzamani. (Daughter of Muzamani.) | N'wa-Nkuna. (Daughter of Nkuna.) |
| e. | N'wa-Victor. (Daughter of Victor.) | N'wa-Ngoato. (Daughter of Ngoato.) |

A man who owns shops and has a lot of money may be called **N'wa-Mabindzu** (businessman) or **N'wa-timali** (millionaire). Apart from this, **n'wa** may also be used to refer to animals as characters in tales:

- (20) a. N'wa-mpfundla.
(Mr or Miss hare.)
- b. N'wa-mfenhe.
(Mr or Miss baboon.)

4.3.4.2 *Double-barrel surnames*

In Xitsonga culture, women are bound to change their maiden names and adopt their husbands' surname. According to Durant (1944:56), where a person gives his own name to another, it signifies the joining of the two in a very close unity. Women are most often designated simply by the family names of their husbands. Durant argues that naming is used as a bond of joining two families. If the woman's maiden name is **Madlhophe**, she is

bound to change and adopt her husband's surname, although such practice is contrary to the constitution of the New South Africa. Women, nowadays, have the right to choose whether to use their husbands' surname or to use both of them. Hence the proliferation of double-barrel surnames.

- (21) a. Madikizela-Mandela i murhangeri wa vamanana va ANC.
(Madikizela-Mandela is the leader of the ANC Women's League.)
- b. Tshabalala-Msimango i wansati wa mingingiriko.
(Tshabalala-Msimango is a hard worker.)
- c. Dlamini-Zuma u ye e Nigeria.
(Dlamini-Zuma has gone to Nigeria.)

It would seem that the reason for this state of affairs is that the women do not want surnames of their former royal status to be diminished at the expense of using their husbands' surnames. The idea that a marriage is conducted on a 50/50 basis has also contributed on this issue.

4.3.5 Job titles/occupational status

There are different titles that are given to people according to their jobs and differ from one job to another. These job titles can be due to factors such as deeds and service. Some titles can be forfeited if the standard of performance is not of an acceptable standard or if he or she resigns or through death. Here are some examples of this nature:

Educational titles

- (22) a. Mufambisi wa ndzawulo.
(Circuit Manager.)

- b. Mukamberi-nkulu wa ndzawulo.
(Senior District Manager.)
- c. Nhloko ya xikolo.
(Principal/Manager.)
- d. Museketeri wa nhloko ya xikolo.
(Deputy Principal.)
- e. Nhloko ya tindzawulo.
(Head of Department.)
- f. Vadyondzisi.
(Educators.)

Correctional services titles

- (23) a. Khomixinara.
(Commissioner.)
- b. Dayirekitara.
(Director.)
- c. Xandla xa dayirekitara.
(Deputy-Director.)
- d. Museketeri wa dayirekitara.
(Assistant-Director.)

- e. Mululamisi nkulu wa hofisi wa khotso.
(Senior Correctional Officer.)
- f. Mululamisi wo sungula wa hofisi wa khotso.
(Correctional Officer Grade 1.)
- g. Mululamisi wa vumbirhi wa hofisi.
(Correctional Officer Grade 2)
- h. Mululamisi wa vunharhu wa hofisi.
(Correctional Officer Grade 3.)

South African Police Services titles

- (24) a. Khomixinari.
(Commissioner.)
- b. Dayirekitara.
(Director.)
- c. Xandla xa Dayirekitara.
(Deputy Director.)
- d. Museketeri wa Dayirekitara.
(Assistant Director.)
- e. Suparitendeti.
(Superintendent.)

- f. Kaputeni.
(Captain.)
- g. Mukamberi.
(Inspector.)
- h. Sayijeni.
(Sergeant.)
- i. Phorisa.
(Constable.)

Military titles/ranks

- (25) a. Ayidimirala.
(Admiral.)
- b. Xandla xa ayidimirala.
(Vice-Admiral.)
- c. Muhahisi.
(Airman.)
- d. Kaputeni.
(Captain.)
- e. Muofisiri lonkulu wa timali.
(Chief Petty Officer.)

- f. Muofisiri lonkulu wa nawu.
(Chief Warrant Officer.)
- g. Koloneli.
(Colonel.)
- h. Mukhomadata.
(Commander.)
- i. Koporala.
(Corporal.)
- j. Mukhomixinara ntsongo wa masocha.
(Ensign.)
- k. Lefuthenete wo sungula.
(First Lieutenant.)
- l. Lefuthenete wa le Xikarhi.
(Lieutenant Junior Grade.)
- m. Majoro.
(Major.)
- n. Muswikoti wa muofisiri nkulu wa timali.
(Master Chief Petty Officer.)
- o. Muofisiri wa lehenhla.
(Petty Officer First Class.)

- p. Purayivhete.
(Private.)
- q. Mutluti.
(Seaman.)
- r. Lefuthenete wa Vumbirhi.
(Second Lieutenant.)
- s. Muofisiri nkulu wa timali.
(Senior Chief Petty Officer.)
- t. Sayijeni.
(Sergeant.)
- u. Sayijeni Majoro.
(Sergeant Major.)
- v. Muofisiri wa Nawu.
(Warrant Officer.)

College and University faculty and officials' titles

- (26) a. Khanselara.
(Chancellor.)
- b. Mufambisi wa Ndzawulo.
(Dean.)

- c. Puresidente/holobye.
(President/Priest.)
- d. Purofesa.
(Professor, Assistant.)
- e. Rekitara.
(Rector.)
- f. Muleteri.
(Lecturer.)

Hospital titles

- (27) a. Dayirekitara.
(Director.)
- b. Matironi.
(Matron.)
- c. Mufambisi wa xibhedlele.
(Superintendent.)
- d. Dokodela.
(Doctor.)
- e. Muongorinkulu.
(Sister.)

- f. Muongori.
(Nurse.)

Some titles such as **doctors** and **directors** are also used at Colleges and Universities. The context would therefore be the determining factor as to where the said titles are applicable.

Religious titles in Xitsonga

- (28) a. Mufundhisi.
(Reverend/Pastor.)

- b. Munghameli.
(President.)

- c. Mukhokheli
(Pastor's wife.)

- d. Muporofeta.
(Prophet.)

- e. Mudiyakoni.
(Diakonos.)

Titles given to Jesus

- (29) a. The Son of Man.
(N'wana wa Xikwembu.)

- b. "The Word".
(Rito.)

- c. The Branch.
(Rhavi.)
- d. The Alpha and the Omega.
(Musunguri na Muheteleri.)

The traditional leaders titles

- (30) a. Hosi nkulu.
(King.)
- b. Hosi.
(Chief.)
- c. Ndhuna.
(A Ndhuna.)
- d. Mutsundzuxi.
(Advisors.)
- e. Mukhanselara.
(Councillors.)

Church leaders and the use of honorific titles

- (31) a. Bixopo nkulu.
(Archbishop.)

This is the title given to a chief bishop. His status is superior to that of a bishop.

- b. Bixopo.
(Bishop.)

The *Oxford School Dictionary* (1988:30) defines **Bishop** as follows:

Bishop is a clergyman of high rank who is governor of a diocese, a chessman.

- c. Mufundhisi nkulu.
(Senior Pastor)

The Internet([http:// home ... earthlink.net/n dd cerkell honorific titles.html](http://home...earthlink.net/n dd cerkell honorific titles.html): (7) defines Senior Pastor as:

Many churches in our day refer to their most gifted or experienced leader as “Senior Pastor.”

- d. Mufundhisi.
(Pastor.)

A pastor is a minister in charge of a congregation. Some pastors are rather offended when their congregational members address them by their first name or call them “brother” while it is also disrespectful to address a Christian theologian by name rather than as “Pastor” or “Doctor”.

- e. Mufundhisi.
(Reverend and his siblings.)

Vatsonga use the word **mufundhisi** (reverend) with great respect so that the title of reverend is honoured by every member of the community. African children address the

Reverend by his title as **mufundhisi** (lit. the reverend) and are not allowed to address the reverend by his name. They have to address him as:

- (32) a. Tatana mufundhisi.
(Father Reverend.)
- b. Minjhani tatana?
(How are you, father?)

The congregation, together with the Reverend's family address him as **tatana** (father) to show respect for the title and office that he holds and occupies respectively.

4.4 CONCLUSION

Titles differ from one culture to another. The Vatsonga have different ways of using titles which are different from those in other African languages. In addition, the youth are encouraged to respect their elders, irrespective of gender or the position/rank they hold. Everyone needs to be respected and seniors should be addressed by their titles. Even young children deserve to be respected. However, titles can be forfeited if the standard of performance is not up to standard, or if someone resigns or through death. Therefore, one can say titles play a vital role in everyday situations.

4.4.1 Initiation Schools

Initiation schools are a Vatsonga custom and indicate that a boy or girl has become a man or a woman after he is circumcised or after she has undergone initiation. There are two initiation schools; one for boys and one for girls. After circumcision there is a ceremony to celebrate the rite of having moved into the ranks of the adults.

At the initiation school boys and girls are taught how to address people with respect. The language used is secretive and it is for the initiates only.

Du Preez (1997/02:121) further says:

In fact, the saying “manners maketh the man” is essentially true in African tribal society. To call him “boy”, although not meaning anything negative, may not be acceptable to him.

After circumcision, the boy is given another name to that indicate that he is now admitted to the status of manhood.

Mandela (1994:5) concurs with the above statement by saying:

It is Xhosa custom that a boy only becomes a man after he is circumcised.

Vadzhabi (instructors) who are the guardians explain the rules of entering manhood.

There are two initiation schools among the Vatsonga people, the one for boys, and the one for girls. The initiation school for boys is called **matlala** and those for girls “**Musevetho**” and “**ku khomba**”.

4.4.1.1 **Matlala**

Only boys who are of a certain age can be taken to the initiation school whose instructors are addressed as **Vadzhabi** (trainers). The initiation schools for boys lasts for approximately three months. They stay in the veld in temporary houses made of grass. The temporary house is known as “**mphato**” while the initiates are called **Vukwerha** (initiates). It is believed that if they fail to show respect by not adhering to the initiation vocabulary, their

circumcision wounds will not heal or some misfortune might befall them. Men of the local area are allowed to visit the boy initiates.

The owner of the initiation school is the one who gives new names to their trainings. The following names can be used by the initiates as an honorific symbol and to indicate that they have reached manhood.

- (33) a. Mbhazima.
b. Magezi
c. Gezani
d. Khazamula
e. Mdungwazi
f. Risimati.

The trained initiates (boys) will be addressed as **swigwamatshuku** (initiators). The untrained or uncircumcised boys are addressed as **maxuvurhu**. This form of address shows disrespect for the untrained boys and are meant to encourage them to go for initiation as well.

4.4.1.2 **Musevetho**

The initiation schools for girls are called **musevetho** and **ku khomba**. **Musevetho** is the initiation school for young girls who are not yet ready for marriage and here the young girl initiate is addressed as **xikhombana** (young initiate).

4.4.1.3 **Vukhomba**

Vukhomba is another school for girls and are ready for marriage. The trainers are called **vadzhabi** (instructors) to honour them. The matured girls are taught the women language

of respect by **vadzhabi** (instructors) who teach them forms of respect. The training for girls takes about three to six weeks. Girls live with their parents, but they are kept in the hut. Language of respect for girls is much more complicated than that for boys. When the girls have completed their training, the owner of the initiation school gives them new names. They can be addressed by the following names:

- (34) a. Ximbhazimani.
b. Mamayila.
c. Mijaji.
d. Ximamayilani.
e. Mthavini.
f. Mphephu.

Both the boys and girls are instructed by Mudzhabi (instructor). Every boy and girl who is ready for adulthood has to be taken to the initiation school where the instructors encourage the initiates to adhere to the forms of respect that are taught at such schools.

4.5 INTERJECTIVES

4.5.1 Introduction

The aim of this section is to show the role that interjectives play in showing respect to the addressee. In this section interjectives that show respect and disrespect in Xitsonga will be examined.

4.5.2 Definition of interjectives

Different scholars define interjectives in various ways. Eckersley (1970:315) for instance, defines an interjective as:

A word or sound used to express some sudden feeling or emotion.

Fortune (1955:431) supports the above statement by defining interjectives as follows:

Interjectives are exclamations used to express various emotions, to convey assent or denial, or a call or command.

According to Doke (1954:285) an interjective is defined as follows:

An interjective is an emotional word, often ejaculatory, which conveys a complete concept without the implication of any subject.

Sinclair (n.d:157) defines interjection as follows:

An interjection is a word or expression expressing a feeling of surprise, pain or horror.

All the above definitions thus regard interjectives as words or expressions expressing a feeling of surprise, pain or horror.

4.5.3 Types of interjectives

Poulos (1990:435) indicates that the emotion expressed may be one of surprise, joy, sorrow, mockery, disappointment, fear, doubt, affection, disapproval or satisfaction. The above types of interjectives will thus be discussed.

4.5.3.1 Interjectives of sorrow

There are certain things that bring about sorrow to people such as poverty, death and sickness.

Sinclair (n.d: 286) defines sorrow as:

feeling of deep sadness.

The *Oxford School Dictionary* (1988:280) defines sorrow as:

Distress of mind caused by loss, suffering, disappointment, etc.

Examples of this type of interjectives abound in Xitsonga:

- (35) a. **Yoo!** Ndzi a ya kwihi?
(With an exclamation of sorrow, where will I go?)
- b. **Mbuyangwana!** Va ta dya yini?
(With an exclamation of sorrow, what are they going to eat?)
- c. **Manano!** Ndzi pfuneni.
(With an exclamation of sorrow, please help me.)

This are the interjectives that show sorrow.

4.5.3.2 **Interjectives of joy**

Joy means happiness or gladness and joy makes a person to be happy. It is often brought about by good news and examples of such interjectives are many and varied:

- (36) a. **Halala!** Vana va mina va pasile.
(With an exclamation of joy, her children have passed the examination.)

- b. **Ahaa!** U xave movha wo saseka swinene.
(With an exclamation of joy, she has bought a decent car.)
- c. **Aha!** Ndzi humile ekhotsweni.
(With an exclamation of joy, he is now free.)
- d. **Mawaku!** Va ku xavele wachi yo saseka.
(With an exclamation of joy, they bought you a beautiful watch.)
- e. **Ariyariya!** N'wananga wa tekiwa namuntlha.
(With an exclamation of joy, my child or daughter is getting married today.)
- f. **Khanimambo!** Ndzi tsakile hikuva mi fikile.
(With an exclamation of joy, I am happy because you have arrived.)

The interjectives above show respect and appreciation.

4.5.3.3 **Interjectives of disappointment**

According to Sinclair (n.d: 80), disappointment is caused:

... when something has not happened or because something is not as good as you hoped it would be.

There are many things that can disappoint someone in life; interjectives of this nature also occur in Xitsonga:

- (37) a. **Aa!** A nga korhangi.
(With an exclamation of disappointment, he failed to score the goal.)

- b. **Haa!** Va yivile movha wa mina.
(With an exclamation of disappointment, they have stolen my car.)
- c. **Ehee!** Va n'wi khomile.
(With an exclamation of disappointment, they have arrested him.)
- d. **Hee!** U vavisekile.
(With an exclamation of disappointment, he is injured.)

4.5.3.4 Interjectives of surprise

Surprise is an expected event that took place unexpectedly and elicits emotions in the addressee.

The *Little Oxford Dictionary* (1998:663) defines surprise as an unexpected or astonishing thing.

Examples in Xitsonga:

- (38) a. **Yhu!** U vuya kwihhi?
(With an exclamation of surprise, where do you come from?)
- b. **Ee!** I yindlu ya n'wina leyi?
(With an exclamation of surprise, is this your house?)
- c. **Hawu!** A wu endla yini?
(With an exclamation of surprise, what have you done?)

- d. **Hi!** Swa hi chavisa leswi.
(With an exclamation of surprise, it frightens us.)

The above interjectives show respect.

4.5.3.5 **Interjectives of satisfaction**

Satisfaction is when one has a feeling of pleasure because one has achieved something.

Sinclair (n/d: 264) describes satisfaction as:

... pleasure you feel when you do something that you wanted or needed to do.

Satisfaction is accompanied by appreciation and happiness.

- (39) a. **Hiswona!** Ndzi ta fika m undzuku.
(With an exclamation of satisfaction, I will arrive tomorrow.)
- b. **Xewee!** Ndza ta.
(With an exclamation of satisfaction, I am coming.)
- c. **Ina!** Ndzi ta pasa.
(With an exclamation of satisfaction, I will pass.)
- d. **Eyaa!** Va fikile hinkwavo.
(With an exclamation of satisfaction, they have arrived.)

The above examples denote respect and honour.

The following examples of interjectives show disrespect.

- (40) a. **Hayi!** A nga kona.
(With an exclamation of disrespectful satisfaction, he is not available.)
- b. **E-e!** U nga swi endli sweswo.
(With an exclamation of disrespect satisfaction, do not do that.)
- c. **Ebo!** Leswi a hi swona.
(With an exclamation of disrespect satisfaction, this is not good.)
- d. **Ahiswona!** U nga yivi.
(With an exclamation of disrespect satisfaction, do not steal.)

4.5.3.6 **Interjectives of mockery**

According to Sinclair (n/d: 191) mockery is defined as:

An interjective that indicates unsuccessful and worthless.

Sinclair defines mockery as:

words, behaviour, or opinion, that are unkind and scornful.

As such, mockery shows that examples in Xitsonga reveal lack of success as the following::

- (41) a. **Kote!** a wu ku u endla yini?
(With an exclamation of mockery, what were you trying to do?)

- b. **Swona!** A wu ya kwihi?
(With an exclamation of mockery, where were you going?)
- c. **Khone!** Va n'wi kumile.
(With an exclamation of mockery, they got him/her.)
- d. **Malokotswana!** Va dlaye mbyana ya mina.
(With an exclamation of mockery, they have killed my dog.)

The above interjectives of mockery show disrespect.

4.5.3.7 **Interjectives of fear**

To fear something or someone can make you feel nervous or worried.

Sinclair (n/d: 107) concurs with the above statement by defining fear as follows:

An unpleasant feeling caused by the possibility of danger, pain,
a threat.

Xitsonga examples:

- (42) a. **Yoo!** Ndzi lamuleleni.
(With an exclamation of fear, he pleaded for help.)
- b. **Manano!** Ndzi ta ya kwihi minoo!
(With an exclamation of fear, where shall I go.)

- c. **Hayi!** Ndza chava ku nghena.
(With an exclamation of fear, I am afraid to get inside.)
- d. **Heyi!** Ndzi le khombyeni.
(With an exclamation of fear, I am in trouble.)

The interjectives above do neither show respect nor disrespect.

4.5.3.8 **Interjectives of disapproval**

These interjectives indicate that you do not like it or that you think it is wrong. There is sadness in this interjective.

- (43) a. **Yha!** Va kwihi?
(With an exclamation of disapproval, where are they.)
- b. **Hawu!** U vuya kwihi?
(With an exclamation of disapproval, where do you come from?)
- c. **E-e!** A ndzi lavi?
(With an exclamation of disapproval, I don't want.)
- d. **Ebo!** Ndza ala mina.
(With an exclamation of disapproval, I denied.)

The above interjectives shows disrespect to the addressee.

4.5.3.9 **Interjectives of affection**

According to Sinclair (n/d: 6), affection is defined as follows:

Affection is a feeling of fondness and caring that you have for another person.

Hornby (1995:20) supports the above statement by defining affection as:

A warm gentle feeling of caring for or loving.

Examples in Xitsonga:

(44) a. **Mawaku!** Ximovhana xa n'wina xi sasekile.

(With an exclamation of affection, you have bought a decent car.)

b. **Ahaa!** Jabu Pule u korile.

(With an exclamation of affection, Jabu Pule has scored the goal.)

These interjectives expose respect or honour and appreciation.

4.5.3.10 **Interjectives of doubt**

Hornby (1995:348) defines doubt as:

... a feeling of not being certain or not believing.

Feelings of doubt bring uncertainty as the following examples in Xitsonga indicates:

- (45) a. **N'wina!** Mi nga pona lahaya.
(With an exclamation of doubt, can you escape there.)
- b. **Aa!** Manana a nga ya e Amerika?
(With an exclamation of doubt, can mother go to America?)
- c. **Haa!** U nga xava yindlu edorobeni.
(With an exclamation of doubt, can you buy a house in the town?)
- d. **Ha!** A va nge feyili hinkwavo vadyondzi va Gireyidi 12.
(With an exclamation of doubt, Grade 12 learners cannot fail.)
- e. **E-e!** U nga tshungula HIV and AIDS?
(With an exclamation of doubt, can you cure HIV and AIDS?)

The interjectives in (45a-e) show disrespect.

4.6 SUMMARY

This chapter has examined the role played by the use of titles as honorifics and has revealed that titles differ from one situation to another and that addressing a person by his or her name is regarded as disrespectful according to Vatsonga culture and other African cultures.

In order to show respect to their wives, husbands address them as “mother of so and so ...”, while the wives in turn address their husbands as “father of so and so ...” by his surname or clan name.

Married women can use double-barrel surnames or they are addressed by their father’s surname where **N’wa-** (daughter of) is used as a form of address to the married woman.

This is different from forms of address in Western culture where Whites address each other by name as it does not indicate disrespect to them..

In addition, job titles play an important role, because titles are given to people according to factors such as performance, deeds, and service rendered.

Naming at initiation schools has been discussed as well. There are two initiation schools among the Vatsonga. The one is for girls and the other for boys. The initiates are called the **vukwerha** while the instructors are addressed as **vadzhabi**. The initiation schools for girls are known as **musevetho** and **vukhomba** and that for boys initiation as **matlala**. New names are given during the ceremony, as a way of indicating honour and respect.

The chapter has finally revealed that interjectives express the emotional feelings of the addressee in the form of surprise, joy, satisfaction, mockery, disappointment, fear, doubt and affection, and also indicate respect and disrespect when used in a specific context.

CHAPTER 5

5.1 CONCLUSION

The aim of this chapter is to give the conclusion of the study. This will be achieved by giving a summary of the whole study as well as suggesting recommendations regarding the use of honorifics in Xitsonga.

Chapter 1 deals with the background of the problem where it included the use of honorifics in Xitsonga discourse and includes definitions of concepts such as honorifics, nouns, greetings, requests, interjectives, euphemism, prefixes, and suffixes. The works of different scholars pertinent to honorifics have also been analysed and in this regard, one may mention scholars such as Crystal (1941), Bussmann (1996), Doke (1954), Hornby (1998), Stayt (1986), and Brown (1997).

In **Chapter 2** noun classes that occur in Xitsonga are discussed as well as noun classes that show disrespect and those that show respect or honour to elderly people.

The following noun classes have been described as those that show respect and honour in Xitsonga:

| (1) Noun class | Class Prefix |
|----------------|--------------|
| 1 | Mu- |
| 2 | Va- |
| 1a | O- |
| 2a | Va- |
| 9 | Yin- |
| 10 | Tin- |

Noun classes that show appreciation are as follows:

| (2) Noun class | Class prefix |
|----------------|--------------|
| 1 | O |
| 2a | Va- |
| 7 | Xi- |

Noun classes that show disrespect, criticism and disapproval may be listed thus:

| (3) Noun class | Class prefix |
|----------------|--------------|
| 7 | Xi- |
| 8 | Swi- |
| 18 | Mu- |

Chapter 3 concentrates on the role that greetings play in expressing honour in the activities of the Vatsonga. The following types of greetings received scrutiny:

Greetings which are determined by the time of the day

(4) I mixo.
(Morning.)

Inhlikanhi.
(Afternoon.)

Greetings between friends and relatives

- (5) Avuxeni Munghana.
(Good morning, friend.)

Greetings between relatives

- (6) Xana mi pfukile?
(Are you well?)

Hi pfukile.
(I am well.)

Greetings that show appreciation for the safe return of another

- (7) Va fambi.
(Travellers.)

Hi va fambi.
(We are travellers.)

Greetings that are used for purposes of showing encouragement

- (8) Mi famba kahle.
(Travel safely.)

Ndzi ta famba kahle.
(I will travel safely.)

Greetings at the workplace

- (9) Vaxumi.
(I greet you, workers.)

A hi va voni.
(We are indeed workers.)

Greetings during the time of bereavement

- (10) Vakhandli va nhlonge.
(Greetings to you who are dealing with death issues.)

Greetings of parting

- (11) Minkateko leyinene.
(Good luck.)

Greetings at school situation

- (12) Avuxeni, vadyondzi.
(Good morning, pupils.)

Avuxeni, mudyondzisi.
(Good morning, teacher.)

Greetings at chief's kraal

- (13) Hosi yanga.
(My lord/my majesty.)

Bayethe.

(To salute.)

Greetings on a wedding day

(14) Hi vuyisa mati.

(We are bringing back water.)

A ri ya ri ya.

(Congratulations.)

This chapter also includes euphemisms used in Xitsonga. Definitions of euphemism have been given.

Euphemism dealing with excretion

(15) U ti rhumile.

(He has sent himself.)

U ye handle.

(He has gone outside.)

Pregnancy can be expressed politely as follows:

(16) U tshoveke nenge.

(She is crippled.)

U tirhwele.

(Carry oneself.)

The fear of death

(17) U etlele.

(He is asleep.)

Kokwana u hundzile emisaveni.

(Grandparent has passed away.)

Euphemism connected with drunkenness

(18) Wanuna u xurhe.

(The man has eaten to the full.)

Madness can be shown as follows:

(19) Ku ka ti nga helelanga.

(Be incomplete.)

The use of forms of address as honorifics and interjectives that show respect and disrespect are treated in **Chapter 4**.

Xitsonga titles

The study has indicated that titles are mostly considered as a form of showing respect to elderly people as they are usually used to address chiefs and seniors. The common titles in Xitsonga are **hosi** (lord), **Ndabezitha** (clan), **Muchaviseki** (honourable), **Nkosikazi** (Mrs or Ms), and **Nkulukumba** (Mr).

Chapter 4 again proves that kinship terms abound in Xitsonga. The following examples are mentioned in this chapter:

- (20) Manana (Mother)
- Tatana (Father)
- Kokwana (Grandparent)
- Sesi (Sister)
- Buti (Brother)
- Malume (Uncle)
- Hahani (Aunt)
- N'wananga (My child).

Finally, this chapter deals with the way in which interjectives are used as honorifics. Some of the meanings that are associated with interjectives are as follows:

- Sorrow
- Joy
- Disappointment
- Surprise
- Satisfaction
- Mockery
- Fear
- Disapproval
- Affection
- Doubt.

The study as a whole has clearly indicated that honorifics play an important role in the everyday life of Vatsonga-speaking people by emphasising that both young people and adults should respect one another. A lack of respect for each other, for one's culture and

or for the country's laws should be avoided if harmonious relationships are to be established among various sections of the population.

5.2 **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The study suggests the following recommendations:

- * Honorifics should be taught as a school subject.
- * Honorifics should be discussed and broadcast on radio and TV.
- * Parents should teach their children honorifics from an early age.
- * Pastors should teach the congregation to respect one another.

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