

**THE IMPACT OF PHONETICS AND PHONOLOGY ON  
THE XITSONGA ORTHOGRAPHY**

by

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**DECLARATION**

I, **RIVALANI MALULEKE**, declare that the dissertation “THE IMPACT OF PHONETICS AND PHONOLOGY ON THE XITSONGA ORTHOGRAPHY” is my own work and that all the sources I have used have been acknowledged by making use of complete references.

.....  
R. Maluleke (Ms)



.....  
Date

## **DEDICATION**

**I am dedicating this dissertation to my supportive people:**

My dear parents : Mkatoko Catherine and Obed Maluleke

My second parents : Johanna Maluleke and the late Dusky Maluleke

My beloved sisters : Rhulani, Nunu, Miyelani and Ciskey

My younger brother : Matimu Maluleke

My late brother : Percy Cedric Maluleke

My pillar of strength : Dr A.K. Msimeki

My cousins : Nhlamulo, Decorate and Langu Baloyi

My friends : Hamnet Sondlane, Masego Letshabo, Priscilla Ngoveni,

Hlayisani Makhubele and Thabang Kekana

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## **ABSTRACT**

The aim of this dissertation is to examine the impact of phonetics and phonology on the Xitsonga orthography. It looks at the history of Xitsonga orthography and the developments from the missionaries' era in the 1800s until 2013. The study also examines the contribution made by the Tsonga Language Board, the Tsonga Language Committee and Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB) in the development of Xitsonga orthography. In addition, the study focuses on the Xitsonga speech sound types and the way they are spelled by the speakers. On the other hand, there are speakers who adhere to the standard orthography whereas on the other hand there are speakers who prefer to use speech sounds according to their respective dialects. The challenges which Xitsonga speakers face on a daily basis have been outlined and what can be done to resolve them. It is suggested that more Xitsonga dictionaries should be written and published and PanSALB should ensure that booklets that deal with Xitsonga spelling rules must be distributed as widely as possible.

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

The word orthography is derived from the Greek word “orthographein” where “ortho” means right or correct whereas “graphein” means to write (Kgagara, 1993:2). Orthography, therefore, refers to practice of writing words following correct rules of grammar. The *Oxford Dictionary* (2008:306) defines orthography as the “conventional spelling system of a language, the study of spelling and how letters continue to represent sound and form words”. Thus orthography is a standardised system for using a particular writing system to write a particular language.

Baumbach (1981:2) defines phonetics as the linguistic discipline which is used by phoneticians in the study of the production of speech sounds and their representation in a language. Whereas phonology is defined as the branch of linguistics concerned with the study of speech sounds with reference to their distribution and patterning (Crystal, 2005:3).

The languages which are considered to be significant in the modern era have been written down, and for such languages a standard orthography has developed, often based on the standard variety of the language. The designing of orthography relies on many linguistic aspects such as phonetics, phonology, semantics and syntax. For this study, however, the emphasis is on the utilisation of phonetics and phonology on the designing of Xitsonga orthography.

### **1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

Xitsonga orthography was originally developed by the Swiss missionaries. In 1869 two Swiss theological students, Paul Berthoud and Ernest Creux volunteered for mission work in Africa. These early missionaries contributed knowledge to African linguistics, which was used by their successors in various African languages as a foundation, including Xitsonga. In April 1873, Reverend Mabile organised an expedition to the then Northern Transvaal (Hone, 1981:2). This journey led them to the place called Spelonken, in the Zoutpansberg, where they found a man called

Joao Albasini who had lived there since 1841. Albasini was recognised by local inhabitants as their chief since they had none.

Albasini was happy about the suggestion of a mission station in which Mabile and Berthoud made the first contact with the Vatsonga. The missionaries managed to buy a farm at a reasonable price from a Scotsman called Watt. It was at this stage that the fight between Muzila and Mawewe had ceased and that the Vatsonga fleeing from the South found refuge with Albasini. Seeing the various clans grouped around Albasini, known as *Gwamba*, these two missionaries, Mabile and Berthoud recognised that a lot of work could be done (Hone, 1981:2).

Eliakim Matlanyane and Asser Segagabane from Lesotho, who accompanied the expedition, were left in Klipfontein on Mr Watt's farm when Paul Berthoud and Ernest Creux returned to Lesotho. In July 1875, Berthoud and Creux arrived with their families and equipment in the Spelonken, where the Valdezia mission station was found on the farm in Klipfontein and they managed to translate the Lord's Prayer and several hymns into *Gwamba* dialect (Hone, 1981:3). Rev. Berthoud and Creux also had the purpose of writing the books that they were going to use in the station in order to communicate with people who were staying at Valdezia.

The Xitsonga orthography remains the same as previously published in the *African Education Journal* of October, 1956 (Vol. II, 8) as amended in October, 1960 (Vol. VI, 8), together with a few slight changes effected since then. However, there are some challenges and problematic areas phonologically.

Ernest Creux and Paul Berthoud established the Xitsonga sound system on which they then based the alphabet and Xitsonga orthography. Although the orthography was established, years passed without a final decision on the value of speech sounds /b/ and /v/; /v/ is the one which was finally accepted but /b/ still has an impact especially on surnames, for example:

*Shibambu-Shivambu*

*Hlabangwani- Hlavangwani*

### ***Bilankulu- Vilankulu***

Some people use *Ngobeni* instead of *Ngoveni* but they pronounce it as *Ngoveni* though they write /b/ in the place of /v/. Sometimes this causes confusion because /b/ and /v/ are phonetically not the same. /b/ is represented as [b] while /v/ is regarded as [β].

Another challenge pertains to the use of /o/ and /u/, as well as /e/ and /i/. Some people use *Hlongwane* instead of *Hlungwani* and they pronounce it as *Hlungwani*. This influence comes from the Sotho language since the people who accompanied the missionaries were from Lesotho, where /e/ is pronounced as [i] and /o/ as /u/ and in other cases /o/ and /e/ are used interchangeably as the following examples prove:

***Hlongwane***

***Hlungwani***

Another challenge is the use of /sh/and /x/ because they sound the same but spelt differently. The /sh/ is usually used in surnames whereas /x/ is used to denote other speech categories, as the following examples illustrate:

### **Surnames**

***Shivambu***

***Shiluvani***

***Shondlani***

***Shikwambani***

But in normal writing “x” is the one that is used, for example:

### **Ordinary nouns**

***Xikolo***                    (school)

*Xikwembu* (God)

*Xinkwa* (bread)

*Xixevo* (relish)

### **Concords**

*Xilo xa mina* (my thing)

### **Verbs**

*Xuma* (work)

*Xava* (buy)

### **Adjectives**

*Xikulu* (a big thing)

*Xitsongo* (a small thing)

The illustrations above are few examples of problems posed by the incorrect usage of phonetics and phonology in Xitsonga orthography.

### **1.3 AIM OF THE STUDY**

This study is aimed at examining the influence of phonetics and phonology on the development of Xitsonga orthography.

## **1.4 OBJECTIVES**

In order to achieve the aim, the study has the following objectives:

- To identify the effects that phonetics and phonology have on Xitsonga orthography.
- To identify the phonological challenges on Xitsonga
- To suggest what can be used to overcome the phonological challenges.

## **1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The following research questions have been answered:

- What are the effects that phonetics and phonology have on Xitsonga orthography?
- What are the phonological challenges on Xitsonga?
- What are the suggestions which can be adopted to overcome the phonological challenges?

## **1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Research methodology in this study consists of the following:

### **1.6.1 Research design**

The method employed in this research is qualitative. The qualitative method is used when a study describes and examines a new phenomenon. Since this research is based on analysing the impact of phonetics and phonology on the development of Xitsonga orthography, the qualitative method is the suitable one for this research.



## **1.6.2 Data collection**

In order to collect information in relation to the problem of the impact of phonetics and phonology on the development of Xitsonga orthography, the study used the following methods to collect data.

### **1.6.2.1 Primary data**

The following respondents will be interviewed:

- ◆ 4 authors of Xitsonga grammar books.
- ◆ 3 Xitsonga lecturers at the University of Limpopo.
- ◆ 10 Xitsonga teachers (that is 5 at primary and 5 at secondary levels).
- ◆ 3 Xitsonga language practitioners (one of each from PanSALB, Xitsonga lexicography unit and Department of Arts, Sports and Culture, Limpopo Province).

The abovementioned respondents are apt because they deal with orthographic matters on a regular basis and some are academics, and therefore are experts in the field.

### **1.6.2.2 Secondary data**

The researcher opted for this method because it focuses on relevant information that other scholars have gathered. Information is obtained from various sources such as dissertations, theses, articles, books and internet.

## **1.7 DATA ANALYSIS**

The researcher has taken into consideration the answers given by the respondents and analyse them. Data found from different sources is compared and the process continued until the researcher has been convinced that they have covered all angles

and there are no more arising issues uncovered and this is done using the comparative analysis method.

### **1.8 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY**

The researcher interpreted the data obtained from the interviews and the participants were asked to comment in order for the researcher to validate the findings. The use of different speech sounds in a variety of dialects is being compared to determine whether there are similarities and dissimilarities that form consistent patterns.

### **1.9 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

This study will help improve the orthography of Xitsonga and also minimise the phonological confusion. It will also improve the standard of Xitsonga as a language.

### **1.10 ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY**

**Chapter 1** focuses on the introduction, background, methodology and significance of the study.

**Chapter 2** presents the literature review of the study.

**Chapter 3** concentrates on Xitsonga orthography and word categories.

**Chapter 4** deals with Xitsonga orthography, compound and borrowed words.

**Chapter 5** serves as the conclusion of the study.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to present a variety of views pertaining to Xitsonga orthography. This will be achieved by discussing the following topics: orthography, phonetics and phonology in detail.

#### 2.2 THE HISTORY OF XITSONGA ORTHOGRAPHY

The Xitsonga orthography was invented by the Swiss missionaries. Masunga (1999: 18) states that “in August 1873, missionaries Paul Berthoud and Reverend Adolphe Mabile came into contact with the Xitsonga-speaking people when on an exploratory trip”. Masunga (1999:18) further states that the aim of the missionaries was to preach the word of God to the Vatsonga people. The trip of the missionaries led to them meeting Joao Albasini, a man who lived in the Spelonken since 1841 (Hone, 1981:2).

According to Hone (1981:2), Albasini supported the idea of having a mission station and this is where Mabile and Berthoud came into contact with the Vatsonga people for the first time. The missionaries met Zambiki, a Tsonga man who knew the Sesotho language (Masunga, 1999:18).

Masunga (1999:18) states that “these missionaries were from Lesotho and were accompanied by two Sotho speakers, Eliakim Matlanyane and Asser Segagabane”. Masunga (1999:18) further states that “these Basotho helped the missionaries to translate the Bible and Hymns into Xitsonga”.

According to Masunga (1999:18) the first book to be published in the Xitsonga language was the *Buku ya Tšikwembu tšinwe ni Tisimo ta Hlengeletano* (1883), translated as “Book of God together with songs for the congregation”.

### **2.2.1 The Tsonga Language Board**

The Swiss missionaries played a big role on the development of Xitsonga as a written language from 1875 to 1938 (Masunga 1999:19). The Transvaal Native Education Department took over the black education from the missionaries in September 1938. The Transvaal Native Education Department established Language Boards for different African Languages. These Language Boards took over the responsibilities of developing African languages from the Swiss, German and English missionaries. In 1938 the Tsonga Language Board was established to develop Xitsonga as a written language.

In 1953 black languages were given the platform to be used as media of instruction for the first eight years of education, this was decided by the National Party through the Bantu Education Act (Masunga, 1999:20). Language Boards were also changed into Language Committees; and the Tsonga Language Board was changed into Tsonga Language committee in 1955.

### **2.2.2. The Tsonga Language Committee**

The newly formed Tsonga Language Committee was given additional responsibility, such as compiling a list of Xitsonga equivalents terms needed in teaching Arithmetic, Hygiene and Environmental Study (Masunga, 1999:20). Among other duties, word division was another issue the committee had to deal with, conjunctives such as *naswona*, *nakona* and *xakona* were to be written as single words, rather than disjunctively. And for words which were pronounced differently but written the same, an apostrophe had to be used to differentiate them, for example:

*Nanga* (flute) and *n'anga* (traditional doctor)

*Nwana* (to drink) and *n'wana* (a child).

The Tsonga Language Committee was dissolved in 1977, when Gazankulu became a Self-Governing Territory due to political changes in 1973, and the affairs of the Vatsonga were then conducted by the Gazankulu Legislative Assembly (Masunga, 1999:37). The first Tsonga Language Board under this dispensation was inaugurated

in 1978 and it functioned until 1995, and then the Language Boards were disbanded because the Constitution of South Africa (Act 106 of 1996) established the Pan South African Language Board and its structures to take care of language matters.

### **2.2.3. The Pan South African Language Board**

The Pan South African Language Board was established in 1995 in terms of the Pan South African Language Board Act 59 of 1995 amended as PANSALB Amendment Act of 1999. The Board was established according to the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa* (Act 106 of 1996) to promote and develop African and other languages spoken and used in South Africa.

PanSALB has been focusing on the lexicography and terminology development of South African languages including Xitsonga since 1995 to date.

## **2.3. ORTHOGRAPHY**

Orthography refers to “the development of writing systems for languages, which includes, for alphabetic orthographies, symbols for all distinctive sounds (phonemes) as well as for distinctive tone and stress, along with rules for word division and punctuation” (Gardner, 2010:9). According to Hosken (2003:1) orthography is used to refer to the ways that text is written in a particular language. Implementation of a particular orthography is often used as a writing system in the computing domain. In this case Hosken uses the term “script” or “script family” to describe set of characters used in different languages by related orthographies.

Orthography deals with letters and spellings, and it represents speech in writing. According to Venezky (1999:4) English orthography is fundamentally alphabetic and it translates spelling into sound. In the earliest writings of English only 22 letters existed but as time went by new letters were borrowed or invented and two-letter combinations were introduced, for example [th] (Venezky, 1999:5). Later on, non-Roman letters were cast aside and extra symbols were introduced when the current 26 letter system evolved.

Punctuations such as the hyphen, apostrophe, dieresis and features such as italics and boldface were invented. Further, Venezky (1997:7) indicates that “unlike a phonetic alphabet, English orthography consists of both relational units which directly translates into sound, the [b] in bird, the [ch] in such, and markers which make the pronunciation of another letter indicates a morphemic status, [e] in nurse shows that [s] is not a plural ending”.

Venezky (1999:7) further states that “English always had a loose immigration regulation for vocabulary, for example, words like /people/ have been always welcomed, irrespective of their origins”. Over the last centuries foreign spellings have been allowed to coexist with native ones.

Words borrowing is also said to exist in English and this may frustrate the use of etymology for predicting spelling-sound patterns, and the entire enterprise of orthographic rule making (Venezky, 1999:8).

Venezky (1999:11) states that “in the IPA and a few number of orthographies, including Finnish and Turkish, each symbol has a single pronunciation and each phoneme has one symbolic representation”. It is a different case in English though, some letters have more pronunciations and each of them usually has more spellings, for example, the spelling [c], which has three pronunciations: [k], [s], and [ʃ] and a rare one [č]. The sound [k] for example, is spelled as:

[c] in /coal/

[ck] in /pick/

[k] in /kid/ and

[q] in /liquor/

Baumbach (1981:14) states that phoneticians make very minute distinctions between different sounds, so they have settled on a phonetic orthography for Xitsonga. For example, the symbol [k] stands for voiceless velar stop or explosive and nothing else. If this sound is labialised, they indicate it with a certain sign, and if it is palatalised, they will indicate it with another sign.

Baumbach further explains that with the coining of this orthography, the phoneticians have striven to keep as near as possible to our known Roman alphabet, so that most of the phonetic symbols (orthography) are the same as those used in the ordinary printing of Xitsonga, for example:

<b>Xitsonga orthography</b>	<b>Phonetic symbol/orthography</b>
p, b, f, m	[p], [b], [f], [m]
t, d, s, z	[t], [d], [s], [z]
n, k, g, ts	[n], [k], [g], [ts]
dz, a, i, u	[dz], [a], [i], [u]

The *Department of Education and Training-Tsonga* (1980:11) has published orthographic symbols and pronunciation and they are as follows:

### **Orthographic symbols and pronunciation**

bv ( <i>mbabva</i> )	(a cheat)
by ( <i>byala</i> )	(beer)
ch ( <i>chava</i> )	(flee)
dl ( <i>dladla</i> )	(hut)
gw ( <i>gwitsi</i> )	(snow)
mh ( <i>mheho</i> )	(weather)
mp ( <i>mpimo</i> )	(rate)
mpfh ( <i>mpfhuka</i> )	(distance)
n ( <i>nala</i> )	(enemy)

nc ( <i>ncila</i> )	(tail)
nf ( <i>nfенhe</i> )	(baboon)
n' ( <i>n'anga</i> )	(doctor)
nh ( <i>nhamu</i> )	(neck)
vh ( <i>vhiki</i> )	(week)

The Department (1980:13) has also published guidelines on the use of correct Xitsonga orthography. These guidelines are as follows:

### **Voiced dentilabial fricative**

The symbol [vh], which is a voiced, dentilabial fricative, is to be used to represent the voiced, dentilabial fricative English [v] or Afrikaans [w]. This symbol [vh] is usually found in words which originated from foreign words, for example:

*Vhilwa* (wheel)

*Vhiki* (week)

*Movha* (motor-car)

### **The velar nasal**

The velar nasal is represented by the symbol [n'], for example:

*Ku n'oka* (to shrink, contract)

*N'anga* (doctor)

*Ku n'unun'uta* (to grumble)

*N'wana* (child)

*N'wampfundla* (Mr. Hare)



*N'wexemu* (last year)

### **The double nasal**

The use of a double nasal at the beginning of some nouns will be discontinued, and substituted by a single nasal, as double nasal symbols usually represent a syllabic nasal, which is not a Xitsonga feature, for example:

*Miri* (body)

*Muwu* (boabad)

*Nawu* (law)

*Nambu* (river)

*Nenge* (leg)

*Noti* (whistle)

*Nungu* (porcupine)

### **The glottal**

The glottal fricative Afrikaans [g] is to be written as [hh], for example:

*Saka ri tele ri ku hhwepu!* (the bag is full to the brim).

### **Clicks**

All clicks are to be represented by [q], for example:

*Muqulu* (bundle of tobacco)

*Qhavula* (shake hands)

*Quva* (manure)

## **Apostrophe**

An apostrophe is used after [n] to represent a velar nasal. The use of apostrophes in qualitative (adjectival, possessive and relative) concords is to be discontinued. The word division of these forms remains as hitherto.

## **Adjectives**

*Munhu lonkulu* (a big person)

*Xihari lexitsongo* (a small animal)

*Vanhu lavanene* (good people)

*Tihomu letinyingi* (many cattle)

## **Possessives**

*Swiluva leswo tshwuka* (red flowers)

*Vanhu lavo tala* (many people)

*Tinyimpfu leto basa/ to basa* (white sheep).

## **Direct relatives**

*Vanhu lava tirhaka* (people who work)

*Xikoxa lexi fambeke* (the old woman who went away)

## **Indirect relatives**

*Tihomu leti ndzi ti vonaka* (the cattle which I see)

*Vana lava hi va rhandzeke* (the children whom we have loved).

Direct relatives are now spelt the same way as the indirect relatives.

## Hyphens

A hyphen must be used to separate a prefix and the following word or stem which begins with a capital, for example:

*N'wa-Boyi*

*N'wa-Khazamula*

*N'wa-Jack*

Hyphens, however, are not used in personification or ordinary names, for example:

*N'wankoti*

*N'wampfundla*

*N'wanhenga*

*N'wamhunti*

A hyphen is used in all compound words, irrespective of their constituent elements, for example:

*Vupela-dyambu* (west)

*Xihaha-mpfhuka* (aeroplane)

*Ku tsutsuma-tsutsuma* (to run a little).

### 2.3.1 The basic factors of orthography

According to Gardner (2010:42), there are some key concepts of orthography development which were found to be relevant for representing phonological processes in African languages. These concepts are: linguistic, sociolinguistic, pedagogical and practical.

### 2.3.2 Linguistic factors

Gardner (2010:42) states that:

The most fundamental linguistic principle for orthography has been the phonemic principle as modern phonological theories do not recognize the existence of a separate phonemic level between the phonetic level and the underlying representation.

Gardner (2010:43) further states that:

When sound changes take place within word boundaries, a tension arises between whether to represent the sound phonemically or retain a constant visual image and if a new allophone of a sound is created, the representation of the original phoneme is maintained, for example: the labiovelar [ɱ] before an /f/ or /v/ (in English or Swahili) is generally represented by [m] or [n] to differentiate it from a syllabic /m/ rather than [ɱ].

### 2.3.3 Sociolinguistic factors

Sociolinguistic factors can also contribute to decisions in the development of the orthography of a specific language (Gardner, 2010:43). There is an issue of related language varieties, both dialects and languages and they can both create challenges or solutions to the process, for example, the northern dialect of Mwani (in northeast Mozambique) has two distinct phonemes // and /r/, while in the southern dialect they are two allophones of the same phoneme (Gardner 2010:43).

Gardner (2010:43) further indicates that:

if <l> and <r> are spelled distinctly it would work fine for the dialect with distinct phonemes, while in the dialect that has a single phoneme, overrepresentation could work fine for reading, but might cause difficulties for writing. On the other hand, if they are both spelled with an <r>, it would work well for the dialect with only one phoneme, but the underrepresentation in the other dialect

would cause difficulties, especially for reading. Using both symbols would be recommended if the one that has the /l/ and /r/ was a national language since prestige has an effect on these cases.

The spelling of borrowed words from other foreign languages also create challenges, for example, most explosives /b's/ in Xitsonga are borrowed from English words such as “book “for /*buku*/ and “bomb “for /*bomo*/. This creates a situation whereby sounds need to be symbolically distinguished.

### **2.3.4 Pedagogical and psycholinguistic factors**

There are several factors in these areas that seem to be most critical for orthography development: the use of diacritics and digraphs, transition to or from literacy in a national language, functional load and maintaining a constant word image. Gardner (2010:45) states that it is advisable for the ATR mid vowels to use <ɛ> and <ɔ> than a modified <e> and <o>, to avoid the use of diacritics. It may, however, be necessary to use diacritics in a case of seven or nine vowel system.

According to Gardner (2010:45), diacritics can be useful in indicating tone, for example, an acute symbol for High tone <é> and an acute symbol for a Low tone <è>. It is also advisable to avoid digraphs when possible, for example, <c> is preferable to <ch> for the voiceless alveopalatal affricative.

According to Schroeder (2010:2), the purpose of orthography is to “empower mother-tongue speakers to read and write their languages as a result of their own informed orthography decisions”. Schroeder (2010:2) also came up with foundational assumptions for orthography development and they are as follows:

- a) Community ownership/ involvement in every stage of the orthography development process, not only to develop orthographies which are accepted by local communities, but to encourage local understanding of the rationale underlying orthography decisions.
- b) The centrality analysis to orthography development which includes phonology, morphophonemics, grammar and discourse will seem to be competing with one

another for prominence in writing system, since they overlap and influence one another on the surface of a spoken language.

c) Mother-tongue speakers' perception should play a significant role in orthography decisions. That perception can be developed and enriched for those who take part in the orthography development process.

d) Orthography-in-use as a goal, and also as means for constant feedback and evaluation.

e) Questions of readability and write-ability will be considered throughout the development process.

f) Revisions will be ongoing, and will necessarily reflect the political, educational and social context of the writing system.

Orthographies are visual language representations which are complicated and they are designed to facilitate literate communication (Schroeder, 2010:4). Schroeder (2010:4), further says that "a good orthography enables readers to quickly recognize meaning, and its spelling rules are as simple as possible, to aid the reader". Solid linguistic analysis is said to be essential for good orthography development even though it is not the only factor in orthography decision. "It under-girds any writing system which accurately represents the speech and perception of the mother-tongue speaker" (Schroeder, 2010:4).

## **2.4. PHONETICS**

Phonetics has a broader scope and types of phonetics; that is acoustic, auditory and articulatory phonetics (Roach, 2009)

There are different organs used in the speech production. For example, there are two thin membranes in the larynx, which can be contracted or relaxed in the speech production. These membranes are called the vocal cords (Baumbach, 1981:3).

In a case whereby these vocal cords are contracted and come closer to each other, they vibrate and a strong air from the lungs is pushed out then voiced sounds are

produced, i.e. [b, d, g] and [dz]. When the vocal cords stay apart, the air pushed from the lungs flows freely producing voiceless sounds such as [p, t, k] and [ts]. When vocal cords vibrate they produce voiced sounds, when they do not vibrate they produce voiceless sounds (Baumbach, 1981:4).

Below, different speech organs and places of articulation are going to be discussed, and then the manner of articulation. Articulation is described as the “production of speech sounds by moving parts of our body, using the contraction of muscles” (Baumbach, 1981:4).

The parts of the mouth and throat that are moved when speaking are called articulators; the movement of these organs is called articulation. The main articulators are the tongue, lips, the lower jaw and the teeth, the velum/ soft palate, uvula and the larynx.

#### **2.4.1 Places of articulation**

Consonants are made by producing an obstruction to the flow of air in the vocal tract. The place where obstruction is made; which is known as the place of articulation, is one of the important things when we classify consonants to establish where the obstruction is made. The place of articulation for [p, b] is bilabial, for [f, v] is labiodentals, for [θ, ð] is dental, [t, d] is alveolar, for [k, g] is velar, and for h is glottal.

#### **The lungs**

The lungs are very important since they are usually filled with air which is pushed out by contractions of muscles (Baumbach, 1981:5). The major function of lungs from the speech point of view is to provide the driving force that compresses the air we use for generating speech sounds.

## **Oral tract**

The roof of the oral tract is subdivided into the following parts for phonetic descriptive purposes:

### **a) Upper teeth**

According to Baumbach (1981:5), upper teeth (dentes) form the front part of the roof of the mouth.

The teeth play some important role in speech. In dental consonants the tip of the tongue is in contact with some of the front teeth. In dental, alveolar and palatal articulations it is important to keep a contact between the sides of the tongue and the inside part of the upper molar teeth in order to prevent air from escaping.

### **b) Alveolar ridge**

There is a bony ridge behind the upper front teeth which is known as the alveolar ridge. The tongue comes closer with this in the production of the English consonants and other languages; sounds such as t, d, s, z, n are consonants with alveolar place of articulation (Roach, 2009). Alveolar sounds are heard at the beginning of the English words such as top, deer, soap, zip, lip and neck (Katamba and Dobrovolsky, 2004:25).

### **c) Pre palatal region**

Pre palatal region lies behind the alveolar ridge (Baumbach, 1981:5).

### **d) Palatal region**

The palatal region is the highest part of the roof of the mouth. Behind the alveolar ridge, there is the roof of the mouth which arises sharply; this is known as the



alveopalatal area. Alveopalatal consonants are heard in the English words show, measure, chip and judge (Katamba and Dobrovolsky, 2004:25).

The palate is also known as the roof of the mouth. “It is divided into the hard palate, which comes from the alveolar ridge at the front of the mouth to the beginning of the soft palate at the back, and extends from the rear end of the hard palate almost to the back of the throat, terminating in the uvula, which can be seen in a mirror if you look at yourself with your mouth open” (Katamba and Dobrovolsky, 2004:25).

The hard palate is made by of a thin layer of bone and is dome shaped, and one can feel it by exploring the tip of the tongue. The soft palate, also known as a velum, can be raised and lowered, it is raised during the pronunciation of the nasal consonants and other speech sounds.

#### **e) Velar region**

According to Katamba and Dobrovolsky (2004:25), the soft area towards the rear of the roof of the mouth is called the velum or soft palate. “If you look in the mirror, you can see it hanging down at the back of your mouth very wide and say aaaa” (Baumbach, 1981:5). Sounds made with the tongue touching or near this position are called velars. Velars are heard at the beginning of English words like call, guy and at the end of a word like hang (Roach, 2009).

#### **f) Lateral region**

“Lateral region lies on the insides of the upper teeth” (Baumbach, 1981:5)

## **The different articulators**

### **Lips**

The lips are mobile and active articulators in speech production. They can be brought into contact with the teeth and tongue, and with a complete closure they can produce sounds such as /p/, /b/ and /m/.

### **Lower lip**

When the lower lip touches the upper teeth consonants such as /f/ and /v/ are formed.

### **Tongue**

The tongue is the primary articulating organ. The tongue is the active articulator. Phonetic description refers to five areas of the tongue, i.e. the tip, which is the narrow area at the front. The blade is just behind the tip. The main mass of the tongue is called the body. The root of the tongue is contained in the upper part of the throat, the pharynx. The sides of the tongue can be raised or lowered (Katamba and Dobrovolsky, 2004:24)

## **2.4.2 Manner of articulation**

Speech sounds make different sorts of obstruction, a vowel makes very less obstruction, while a plosive consonant makes a total obstruction. The type of obstruction is known as the manner of articulation. The International Phonetic Association classifies consonants according to their manner and place of articulation.

## Stops

“The term stop is used as synonymous with plosive; however, it is sometimes used to refer to the class of sounds in which there is a complete closure specifically in the oral cavity”. In this case, sounds such as [m, n] are nasal stops (Roach, 2009)

“A stop is the sound articulated when the active and passive articulators touch, stopping the flow of the air through the oral cavity completely for a period” (McMahon, 2002: 28). “If you put your lips together and produce the sound [p] *pea*, and hold them in that position, you will feel the air which is then released when you move from a stop to a vowel, [t]and [k] *key* are also stop sounds” (McMahon, 2002:28).

“Stops are produced when there is a complete closure either in the oral cavity or at the glottis” (Katamba and Dobrovolsky, 2004:27). Stops are found at labial, dental, alveolar, palatal, velar, uvular and glottal points of articulation. In English, bilabial, alveolar, and velar oral and nasal stops occur in the words shown on the table below:

<b>Bilabial</b>	Transcription
Voiceless      span	[p]
Voiced          ban	[b]
Nasal            man	[m]
<b>Alveolar</b>	
Voiceless      stun	[t]
Voiced          dot	[d]
<b>Velar</b>	
Voiceless      scar	[k]

Voiced	gap	[g]
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### a) Oral stops

The oral stops can be subdivided into explosive and implosives. Stop sounds are also called plosives. Plosives may be voiced for example, [b], [d], and [g] or voiceless, for example, [p], [t], and [k].

### Explosives

Explosives such as [t, d, k, b, p] and [g] are formed when the air moves from inside the oral tract outwards after being released. The formation of these explosives occurs when closing the oral tract, pressing an articulator against a certain point of the oral tract (Baumbach, 1981:9).

There are aspirated, partially labialised, palatalised and murmured explosives.

### Aspirated explosives

ɸ [ph]: voiceless aspirated bilabial explosives, for example:

-*phula* [phula] (remove pot from fire)

-*phandla* [phandla] (disappoint)

th [th]: voiceless aspirated alveolar explosive, for example:

-*thatha* [thatha] (roast on open fire)

-*thukutha* [thukutha] (steal everything).

Tlh [tlh]: voiceless aspirated alveo-lateral explosive, for example:

*-tlhaka [tlhaka]* (break out)

kh [kh]: voiceless aspirated velar explosive, for example:

*Khumba [khumba]* (bush-pig)

*-khukhumba [khukhumba]* (wash up as river in flood).

### **Partially labialised explosives**

tw [tw]: voiceless partially labialised alveolar explosive, for example:

*-twala [twala]* (be evident).

*mutwa [mutwa]* (thorn).

thw [thw]: voiceless aspirated partially labialised alveolar explosive, for example:

*-thwasa [thwasa]* (become visible again, as new moon).

*thwi [thwi]* (of being straight).

dw [dw]: voiced partially labialised alveolar explosive, for example:

*dwaka [dwaka]* (of breathing the water's surface).

rw [rw]: voiced partially labialised alveolar intermittent explosive, for example:

*rwe-rwe [rwe-rwe]* (of croaking like frogs).

tlw [tlw]: voiceless partially labialised alveo-lateral explosive, for example:

*tlwa* [tlwa] (of disappearing of the sun).

-*tlwamula* [tlwamula] (pull out pegs).

kw [kw]: voiceless partially labialised velar explosive, for example:

*Kwala* [kwala] (here).

*Mukwana* [mukwana] (knife).

### **Palatalised explosives**

py [pj]: voiceless palatalised bilabial explosive, for example:

-*pya* [pja] (lose in ncuva game).

-*pyitla* [pjitla] (smear liberally).

phy [phj]: voiceless aspirated palatalised bilabial explosive, for example:

-*phyisa* [phjisa] (cause to dry up).

*Phyandla* [phjandla] (of breaking into fragments).

### **Murmured explosives**

bh [bʰ]: murmured bilabial explosive, for example:

*mbhimbi* [mbʰimbi] (sp. Of tree).

*mbhambhazi* [mbʰambʰazi] (sp. Of ants).

rh [rʰ]: murmured alveolar intermittent explosive, for example:

*rhama* [rʰama] (cheek).

*-rhurha [rʰurʰa]* (emigrate).

*rhw [rʰw]*: murmured partially labialised alveolar intermittent explosive, for example:

*-rhwala [rʰwala]* (carry).

*rhwembu [rʰwembu]* (of catching running animal).

## **Implosives**

Implosives such as [q] are formed when the air moves from outside the oral tract inwards after the release. “This sound in Xitsonga is formed by closing the oral tract with the tip of the tongue being pressed against the upper teeth or the alveolar ridge. Then to make a sucking action by pulling the rest of the tongue downwards and backwards” (Baumbach, 1981:9).

Several different types of speech sounds can be made by inhaling air into the body rather than by expelling it in the usual way. “In an implosive it is done by bringing the vocal cords folds together and then drawing the larynx downwards to suck air in; this is usually done in combination with the plosive manner of articulation”. Most implosives are voiced speech sounds and it is surprising since it should not be possible for the vocal folds to vibrate if the glottis is closed.

## **Aspirated implosives**

*q<sup>h</sup> [ʰ]*: voiceless aspirated dental implosive, for example:

*-qhavula [ʰaβula]* (shake hands)

*xiqhaka [ʰi/haka]* (trap).

## **Partially labialised implosives**

gqw [g/w]: voiced partially labialised dental implosive, for example:

*gqweta* [g/weta] (lawyer)

qhw [/hw]: voiceless aspirated partially labialised dental implosive, for example:

*qhwaya* [/hwaja] (leave a place never to return to it again).

### **b) Nasal stops**

Stops also include nasal sounds, where the flow of the air continues through the nose. English sounds such as [m], [n] and [ŋ] are called nasal stops and they are all voiced stops (McMahon, 2002:28).

## **Nasals**

m [m]: voiced bilabial nasal, for example:

*-mama* [mama] (suck the breast).

n [n]: voiced alveolar nasal, for example:

*-nana* [nana] (work slowly).

*nambu* [nambu] (river).

ny [ɲ]: voiced prepalatal nasal, for example:

*nyama* [ɲama] (meat).

*-nyanya* [ɲaɲa] (get worse).



### **Partially labialised nasals**

nw [nw]: voiced partially labialised alveolar nasal, for example:

*-nwa [nwa]* (drink).

*-nwaya [nwaja]* (scratch).

n'w [ɲw]: voiced partially labialised velar nasal, for example:

*n'waka [ɲwaka]* (year).

*n'wana [ɲwana]* (child).

### **Murmured nasals**

mh [mɦ]: murmured bilabial nasal, for example:

*mhulu [mɦulu]* (beeswax).

*mhiri [mɦiri]* (sp. Of snake).

nh [nɦ]: murmured alveolar nasal, for example:

*nhamu [nɦamu]* (neck).

*nhutlwa [nɦutlwa]* (giraffe).

nhw [nɦw]: murmured partially labialised alveolar nasal, for example:

*nhwala [nɦwala]* (louse)

n'hw [ɲɦw]: murmured partially labialised velar nasal, for example:

*n'hwari [ŋh̥wari]* (francolin).

### **Palatalised nasals**

my [mj]: voiced palatalised bilabial nasal, for example:

*Myambo [mjambɔ]* Xitsonga surname.

### **Fricative**

This type of consonant is made by pushing air through a narrow gap so that a hissing sound is generated. This may result in a voiced fricative such as z, or it may result in a voiceless sound as s. All fricative sounds are acoustically composed of energy at relatively high frequency but they vary greatly (Roach, 2009).

### **English fricatives**

English has voiceless and voiced labiodentals fricatives at the beginning of the words fat and vat

V [β]: voiced bilabial fricative, for example:

-vava [βaβa] (hurt)

F [f]: voiceless labiodentals fricative, for example:

-fana [fana] (resemble)

-fafata [fafata] (drizzle)

S [s]: voiceless alveolar fricative, for example:

-sasa [sasa] (make beautiful)

*sikisi [sikisi]* (of running fast).

z [z]: voiced alveolar fricative, for example:

*-nzinga [nzinga]* (be dignified)

*zangazanga [zangazanga]* (rude girl).

h [h]: voiced glottal fricative, for example:

*-haha [haha]* (fly)

*mahihana [mahihana]* (dusk).

### **Partially labialised fricatives**

zw [zw]: voiced partially labialised alveolar fricative, for example:

*zwe [zwe]* (of being silent after hubbub).

*-zwichala [zwichala]* (become dark).

### **Murmured fricatives**

vh [vh]: murmured labiodentals fricative, for example:

*mvhangazi [mvhangazi]* (sp. of tree).

### **Palatalised fricatives**

hy [hy]: voiced palatalised glottal fricative, for example:

*hyi [hyi]* (intej. used to show fright)

## **Affricates**

An affricate is a type of consonant composed of a plosive followed by a fricative with the same place of articulation, for example: dʒ sounds at the beginning and end of “judge” dʒʌdʒ, this is a voiced sound. It is not easy to decide whether any particular combination of a plosive plus a fricative should be classed as a single affricate sound or as two separate sounds.

## **Semi-vowels**

According to Baumbach (1981:10) the semi-vowels are formed by means of a drastic narrowing of the passage through which the air stream from the lungs moves through the oral tract:

w [w]: voiced bilabio-velar semi-vowel, for example:

*wukuwuku* [wukuwuku] (sp. of birds)

*wakawaka* [wakawaka] (empty groundnut shell)

y [j]: voiced palatal semi-vowel, for example:

*yuyuyu* [jujuju] (large well-built ox)

*yimayima* [jimajima] (of standing restlessly).

## **Murmured semi-vowel**

wh [wʰ]: voiced palatal semi-vowel, for example:

*yhu* [jʰu] (please not that!).

### **2.4.3 Complementary characteristics of consonants**

#### **Aspirated**

“Upon the release of a voiceless explosive a strong puff of air may follow over and above the normal flow of air accompanying the pronunciation of such sounds”(Baumbach, 1981:11). Explosives like these are aspirated, for example, [th], [kh] and the [h] indicates that the sound is aspirated.

#### **Murmur**

A murmur is also known as a breathy voice, it produces voiced sounds but the vocal folds are relaxed to allow enough air to escape (Katamba and Dobrovolsky, 2004: 22).

#### **Palatalised**

The pronunciation of sounds such as /p/, /t/, /d/ is followed by a high raising of the middle part of the tongue so that it approaches the palatum with resultant concomitant palatal quality which accompanies its pronunciation and the result is the production of sounds such as /py/, /ty/ and /dy/.

#### **Partially labialised**

There are some of the sounds which are not produced with rounded lips but sometimes lip rounding occurs when they are produced even though they are usually pronounced without lip rounding.

## **Descriptive phonetics**

Descriptive phonetics is sub-divided into four areas, but the focus will be on combinatory phonetics.

## **Combinatory phonetics**

Combinatory phonetics describes the modifications that occur as a result of the association of sounds (Mbaheno, 2010:25).

## **Xitsonga sound changes**

The study of sound changes of a language is called morphophonology or morphonology (Baumbach, 1981:49). Morphemes play a big role in phoneme changes. There are two approaches which could be used to get to terms to signify sound changes that may occur in a specific language, (a) by referring to the cause of the change, or (b) by referring to the result of the change.

Baumbach (1981:49) states that “if the cause of the change is taken as the starting point, one very soon stumbles on the problem of having to work diachronically to be able to explain certain sound changes”. A student is at a disadvantage to understand the different sound changes and being able to interpret them if he/she is not well experienced and skilled in Proto-Bantu.

Baumbach (1981:49) further states that “if the result of the change is taken, interpretation is easy because one can see/hear that specific sound and by applying your phonetic knowledge one can immediately identify that change”. For example, if [m] becomes [n'] then one may know that the sound change is velarisation because the velar nasal takes the place of the bilabial nasal which in this case is the [m].

According to Baumbach (1981:50), the principles underlying the coining of terminology for the different sound changes are as follows when the result of the change is taken as the starting point:

“The difference in manner of articulation between original sound and the resultant sound is taken as main criterium”. The sound change of [l] or [r] into [dz] is called affrication because a fricative or plosive has changed into an affricate. However, when [l] changes into [t] it is called plosivation because a fricative has changed into a plosive. “When there is no difference in the manner of articulation between the original and the resultant sounds, then resort must be taken to the elimination of distinctive features to see which one is the distinguishing factor”. For example, when [k] changes into [kh], the manner of articulation does not change, it is an explosive but the second sound is aspirated while the first one is unaspirated.

There are sound changes which are caused by a specific sound and grouped under morphonology, and there are also sound changes which are not caused by any specific sound or morpheme but physiological reasons (Baumbach, 1981:50). Examples in Xitsonga are as follows:

#### **2.4.4 Affrication**

Affrication is a process whereby an affricate sound replaces a non-affricate sound (Baumbach, 1981:51-52).

#### **Sound change**

(m) + /l/ or /rh/ or /r/ becomes (n) dz

(n) + /l/ or /r/ becomes (n) dz

/l/ becomes /dz/

#### **Place of occurrence**

Nouns in class 3 derived from stems with /l/ or /rh/ or /r/ as initial consonants:

- (i) *Ndzuvo* (tribute) < *muluvo* cf. pl. *Miluvo*, and *-luva* (pay homage to)

*Ndzeriso* (order/ command) <*muleriso*, cf. Pl. *Mileriso*, -*lerisa* (give detailed instructions)

*Ndzuko* (plot in literature), cf. -*luka* (plait/weave).

(ii) *Ndzhwalo* (load) <*murhwalo*, cf. Pl. *Mirhwalo*, and -*rhwala* (carry).

*Ndzhati* (line/mark) <*murhati*, cf. Pl. *Mirhati*.

*Ndzhava* (type of basket) <*murhava*, cf. Pl. *Mirhava*.

*Ndzhelelo* (incline) <*murhelelo* cf. -*rhelela* (descend).

(iii) *Ndzivata* (sp. of tree) <*murivata*, cf. -*rivata* (let forget).

*Ndzingo* (temptation) <*muringo*, cf. Pl. *Miringo*, and -*ringa* (test/try).

*Ndziho* (fine) <*muriho*, cf. Pl. *Miriho*, and -*riha* (pay a fine).

Nouns in class 9 derived from stems with (i) [l] or (ii) [r] as initial consonant. Also a few plurals in class 10-9:

(i) *Ndzumulo* (weaning) <*nilumulo*, cf. -*lumula* (wean)

*Ndzovolo* (lobolo) <*nilovolo*, cf. -*lovola* (pay lobolo)

*Ndzovo* (fish-hook) <*nilovo*, cf. -*lova* (catch a fish with hook and line).

(ii) *Ndzima* (portion of land) <*nirima*, cf. -*rima* (plough).

*Tindzimi* (languages) <*tinirimi*, cf. Sing, *ririmi*.

*Ndzisana* (younger brother) <*nirisana*, cf. -*risa* (look after cattle)

Nouns in class 18 with stem initial [l] or [rh]:



- (i) *Ndzeni* (inside) <*muleni*.
- (ii) *Ndzhaku* (behind) <*murhaku*.

With fossilized prefix /dz-/ < /li-/ of class 5

- (i) *Dzana* (hundred) <*liana*.
- (ii) *Dzowa* (sweet marula beer) <*liowa*.
- (iii) *Dzombe* (herd of buffaloes) <*liombe*.

#### 2.4.5 Aspiration

According to Baumbach (1981:53) an aspiration is “the process whereby an original non-aspirated plosive or affricate is replaced by its aspirated counterpart”.

#### Sound change

- (a) K > kh
- (b) Ts > tsh

#### Place of occurrence

- (a) In some of the nouns in class 5 with stem initial /k/, for example:

*Khoti* (vulture) <*rikoti*, cf. Pl. *Makoti*

*Khondlo* (rat) <*rikondlo*, cf. Pl. *Makondlo*

*Khava* (big protruding navel) <*rikava*, cf. *Nkava* (navel).

- (b) *Tshahelo* (supply where one draws from) <*ritsahelo*, cf. –*tsaha* (scoop out of receptacle).

*Tshanga* (cattle kraal) <*ritsanga*, cf. *-tsanga* (surrounded with fence).

The above sound change occurs spontaneously sometimes.

*-tsimbisa* > *-tshimbisa* (forbid/restrain)

*-kwenga* > *-khwenga* (take the last drop out).

#### **2.4.6 Assimilation**

According to Baumbach (1981:56) assimilation is the “process whereby two different neighbouring sounds become more alike”. There are six types of assimilations, namely: complete progressive, complete retrogressive, partial progressive, partial reciprocal assimilation, partial retrogressive and partial retrogressive assimilation with elision.

#### **Complete progressive assimilation**

According to Baumbach (1981:56) complete progressive assimilation is “the process whereby a vowel is replaced by the one preceding it”.

#### **Sound change**

Different vowels

(a) Occur spontaneously in certain words:

*-tshikelelana* > *tshikilelana* (make things difficult for each other)

*Chelela* > *chelele* 5/6 (crawl of bird)

*Xibetsa* > *xibetse* 7/8 (bracelet made of grass).

(b) In the negative verbal relative construction present tense:

*Tirhiki in lava nga tirhiki* (those not working) < *lava nga tirhika*, cf. *Lava*

*tirhaka* (those working).

### **Complete retrogressive assimilation**

According to Baumbach (1981:57) complete retrogressive assimilation is the “process whereby a preceding vowel is replaced by the one in the next syllable”.

### **Sound change**

- (a) Different vowels
- (b) Different consonants

### **Place of occurrence**

(a) (i) occurs spontaneously in certain words:

*Homucha* > *humucha* 5/6 (unscrupulous young man)

*-gomula* > *-gumula* (bump into)

*-palatela* > *-paletela* (cover with soil)

(ii) In the following syntactic environment where the progressive aspect formative – *aha-* is used:

*Ya ha dya lamula* (he is still eating the orange) < *yi ha dya lamula*, cf. *Yi dya lamula* (he is eating the orange).

*Wa ha mila swinene* (it is still growing very well) < *wu ha mila swinene*, cf. *Wu mila swinene* (it is growing well).

(iii) In the following compound demonstrative pronouns:

*Dyeledyi* (this specific one) <*dyoledyi*.

*Xelexi* (this specific one) <*xolexi*.

*Sweleswi* (these specific ones) <*swoleswi*.

### **Partial progressive assimilation**

According to Baumbach (1981:58) the partial progressive assimilation is the “process whereby a fricative takes over the stop quality of the nasal of the nasal preceding it”.

### **Sound change**

Mv > mb

### **Place of occurrence**

With certain nouns in class 3 with /v/ as stem initial:

*Mbango* (dispute) <*muvango*, cf. Pl. *Mivango*.

*Mbele* (teat of animal) <*muvele*, cf. *Vele* 5/6 (edder)

*Mbukuri* (severe cold with bad coughing), cf. *-vukula* (bark).

### **Partial reciprocal assimilation**

According to Baumbach (1981:58), partial reciprocal assimilation is defined as the “process whereby juxtaposed consonants partially influence each other”.

### **Sound change**

Nv > mb

## Place of occurrence

(a) With nouns in class 9 with /v/ as stem-initial:

*Mbatlo* (small adze) <*nivatlo*, cf. –*vatla* (carve).

*Mbati* (mark) <*nivati*, cf. *Xivati*, 7/8 (mark/scar).

*Mberha* (dew) <*niverha*, cf. *Xiverha*, 7 (dew).

(b) With nouns in class 10-9 with /v/ as stem initial:

*Timbala* (bare patches in veld) <*tinivala*, cf. *Rivala*, 11 (plain).

*Timbalelo* (laths) <*tinivalelo*, cf. Sing. *Rivalelo*, 11.

## Partial retrogressive assimilation

Partial retrogressive assimilation is defined as the “process whereby a nasal takes over partially a characteristic of the consonant in the next syllable” (Baumbach, 1981:59).

## Sound change

(a) (i) m + alveolar cons. > n + alveolar cons.

(ii) m + labiodentals cons. > [m] + labiodentals cons.

(iii) m + alveolar cons. > [ŋ] + velar cons.

(iii) m + prepalatal cons. > [ɲ] + prepalatal cons.

(b) (i) n + bilabial cons. > m + bilabial cons.

(ii) n + labiodentals cons. > [m] + labiodentals cons.

(iv) n + prepalatal cons. > [ɲ] + prepalatal cons.

(v) N + velar cons. > [ŋ] + velar cons.

## Place of occurrence

(a) With certain nouns in class 1 and 3:

(i) *Ntukulu*, 1 (grandchild) <*mutukulu*

*Ntlhambi*, 3 (herd) <*mutlhambi*.

*Ndandani*, 3 (esp. of herb) <*mudandani*.

*Ndzilo*, 3 (fire) <*murilo*.

*Nseve*, 3 (arrow) <*museve*.

(ii) *Mfava*, 3 (esp. of plant) <*mufava*.

*Mpfumelo*, 3 (assent) <*mupfumelo*, cf. –*pfumela*.

*Mbvumo*, 3 (nimbus cloud) <*mubvumo*.

(iii) *Nkukulo*, 3 (broom) <*mukukulo*

*Ngombye*, 1a (large male baboon) <*mugombye*

(iv) *Ncivovo* (esp. Of bird) <*mucivovo*

*Nxakwa*, 3 (trunk) <*muxakwa*.

(b) With certain nouns in class 9 and 9-10:

(i) *Mpandla*, 9 (baldness) <*nipandla*.

*Timpanga*, 10-9 (swords) <*tinipanga*, cf. Sing. *Ripanga*.

(ii) *Mfenhe*, 9 (baboon) <*nifenhe*.

*Mpfula*, 9 (rain) <*nipfula*.

*Mbvururu*, 9 (swindler) <*nibvururu*.

(iii) *Nxangwana*, 9 (groomsman) <*nixangwana*.

*Tinxanxa*, 10-9 (rows/lines) <*tinixaxa*.

*Nchugulu*, 9 (kind of fruit) <*nichugulu*

(iv) *Ngoti*, 9 (rope) <*nigoti*

*Tingomela*, 10-9 (misleading echo) <*tinigomela*

*Nkokotso*, 9 (crab) <*nikokotso*.

### **Partial retrogressive assimilation with elision**

Partial retrogressive assimilation with elision is defined as the “process whereby a nasal takes over partially a characteristic of the consonant in the next syllable with simultaneous elision of the consonant” (Baumbach, 1981:60).

### **Sound change**

Ml > n

### **Place of occurrence**

With certain nouns in class 1 and 3 with stem initial 1:

*Nala*, 1 (enemy) <*mulala*, cf. Pl. *Valala*

*Noyi*, 1 (sorcerer) <*muloyi*, cf. Pl. *Valoyi*, and *-loya* (bewitch)

*Nandzulo*, 3 (negation) <*mulandzulo*, cf. *-landzula* (deny)

*Nala*, 3 (esp. of tree) <*mulala*, cf. Pl. *Milala*

*Nurhu*, 3 (premonition) <*mulurhu*, cf. Pl. *Milurhu*.

## 2.5. PHONOLOGY

Phonology is the study of how the speech sounds of a language are used in that language to distinguish meaningful units (such as words) from each other, and how sounds are patterned in a language. Meaning should be taken into consideration (Delahunty and Garvey, 2004:107).

Phonology is also defined as “the study of sound in language” (Odden, 2005:2). It deals with distinctive sounds within a certain language. Fromkin and Rodman (2010:267) define phonology as the study of how speech sounds form patterns. These patterns may be as simple as the fact that the velar nasal cannot begin a syllable in English, or as complex as why [g] is silent in *sign* but is pronounced in the related word *signature*.

Other examples are the [n] in *autumn* and *autumnal*, or the second [b] in both *bomb* and *bombard*, this proves that this is a pattern. Phonology also allows us to adjust our pronunciation of a morpheme, it maybe the past or the plural morpheme, to suit a different phonological contexts.

### 2.5.1 The pronunciation of morphemes

How we pronounce words and parts of words (morphemes) determine the knowledge that we have of phonology. Some morphemes are different, they are based on context. This variation will be described with phonological rules, with examples from English and Xitsonga.

#### The pronunciation of plurals

A	B	C	D
Cabs	caps	buses	children
Bags	cats	bushes	oxen
Cans	backs	buzzes	mouse- mice



Bars	cuffs	matches	criterion- criteria
Boys	faiths	garages	sheep- sheep

The final sound of the plural nouns on column A is a [z] and that is a voiced alveolar fricative. The plural sound in the column B nouns is an [s] and that is a voiceless alveolar fricative. In column C is [ez]. This shows that one morpheme can have a different pronunciation, depending on the context. The regularity from column A to C does not exist in column D. On child, -ren has been added for child to be a plural, on ox, -en has been added for it to be a plural noun while mouse and criterion had to change completely and sheep had to stay the same.

Phonologists are usually interested in the sound patterns of certain languages, and in what hearers and speakers need to know (McMahon, 2002:2).

Phonology looks at the behavioural patterns of sounds in speech, their realisations in different environments.

### 2.5.2 Phoneme: the phonological units of language

Phoneme is the fundamental unit of phonology. According to Gardner (2010:24) “phonemes are basically abstract forms for the distinctive sounds within a particular language”. Phonemes are also defined as sound units that distinguish words from each other.

Phonemes are the basic form of sound and are sensed in your mind rather than spoken or heard (Fromkin and Rodman, 2010:272). Each phoneme is associated with one or more sounds called allophones, which represent the actual sound, for example, [p] is pronounced with the aspirated allophone [p<sup>h</sup>] in [pit] but without aspiration in [spit].

Phonemes are easily identified through minimal pairs. Thus pete [pit] and beat [bit] differ only in that where [pit] has [p]; [bit] has [b]. “These two words make a minimal pair that shows that [p] and [b] represent separate phonemes in English, which we symbolize as [p] and [b]” (Delahunty and Garvey, 2004:108).

According to Roach (2009), phonemes are contrastive and one must find cases where the difference between two words is dependent on the difference between two phonemes, for example, we can prove that the difference between 'pin' and 'pan' depends on the vowel and that [i] and [æ] are different phonemes. Below are other examples differing in vowels only (Fromkin and Rodman, 2010:273)

Beat [bit] [i]

Bit [bɪt] [ɪ]

Bait [bet] [e]

Bet [bɛt] [ɛ]

Bat [bæt] [æ]

Bite [baɪt] [aɪ]

Boot [bu:t] [u]

But [bʌt] [ʌ]

Boat [bot] [o]

Bought [bɔ:t] [ɔ]

Bout [baʊt] [aʊ]

Any two of these sounds form a minimal pair; it is two different words that differ in one sound.

### **Distinctive features of phonemes**

“For two phones to contrast meaning there must be some phonetic difference between them. The minimal pair /seal/ [sil] and /zeal/ [zil] show that [s] and [z] represent two contrasting phonemes in English, they cannot be allophones of one phoneme because they cannot replace each other and still mean the same thing” (Fromkin and Rodman, 2010:236).

### 2.5.3 Allophones

Allophone is defined as sounds which are variants of a phoneme. They usually occur in different positions in a word and cannot contrast with each other, nor be used to make meaningful distinctions (Vrabel, 2009:25).

Phoneme can be pronounced in many different ways. In English the [r] sounds in 'ray' and 'tray' are the same sound or phoneme, but they are really two different sounds- the [r] in 'ray' is voiced and non-fricative, while the [r] in 'tray' is voiceless and fricative (Roach, 2009).

The vowels in the words *cat* and *cad* are different; one is longer than the other one. The consonants after the vowels are also different, [t] is voiceless and [d] is voiced (Claire, 2005:24).

All allophones of a phoneme share the same set of different characteristics but each one can also show additional features, for example, the phoneme [p] is realised as [p<sup>h</sup>], as it would be in every time it appears in a word as the beginning consonant before a vowel, and as [p] in all cases.

[p<sup>h</sup>] and [p] are said to be allophones because they are both voiceless bilabial plosives and if we swap one for the other we do not get any change in meaning but rather an odd pronunciation. Consonants also have allophones which are distributed by rules; [t] has the following examples:

Tick [t<sup>h</sup>ɪk]

Stick [stɪk]

Hits [hɪts]

In *tick* we find that it has an aspirated [t<sup>h</sup>], while *stick* and *hits* have an unaspirated [t], [t] sounds differently in all three cases. In phonology, the aspirated [t<sup>h</sup>] occurs before a stressed vowel, the unaspirated [t] occurs directly before or after [s].

#### 2.5.4 Minimal pairs

Words which differ in only one sound and have different meanings are referred to as minimal pairs, for example, 'fairy' and 'fairly' make a minimal pair and prove that [r] and [l] are separate, contrasting phonemes (Roach, 2009).

Fromkin and Rodman (2010:268) also define minimal pairs as two words with different meanings that are identical except for one sound segment that appears in the same place in each word, for example, cab [kæb] and cad [kæd] are a minimal pair that differ in their final segments while cat [kæt] and mat [mæt] are a minimal pair that differ only in their initial segments.

There are minimal pairs whose members take different allomorphs, for example, cab [kæb] and cap [kæp], which takes the allomorphs [z] and [s] to form a plural noun. The final segments are the ones which determine the different plural allomorphs (Fromkin and Rodman, 2010:269). The final segment of the singular form is responsible for the distribution of the English plural allomorphs.

The substitution of [h] for [ʃ] changes *she* into *he*, [h] and [ʃ] belong to two different phonemes. In this case what matters is whether the substitution of one sound to another changes the meaning or not. When two identical strings of sound are different and this difference changes the meaning, these two strings are said to constitute a minimal pair.

#### 2.5.5 Classical phonology

"Classical phonology has developed from structural grammar, which emphasizes the study of the organising/organisation of language; hence, the emphasis on the dichotomy between 'substance' and 'form'; phonemic and morphemic status; and analytical or discovery procedure" (Ogunsiji and Sunday, 2011:157). The main goal of classical phonology is to investigate the phonic features serving a certain language capable of serving in natural language, to distinguish utterances (Sommerstein, 1977:1).

The focus of the classical phonology is based on the establishment of the phoneme, and the phonemic and morphophonemic alterations and the phoneme is seen as an irreducible contrastive sound unit.

Philologist's plan is to establish sounds that belong to the same family and this leads to the setting up the principles of contrast and complementary. "If two sounds occurring in the same environment, when substituted bring out the meaning change, they must be considered as two separate phonemes, for example, the sound [p] and [b] in [pat] and [bat]; [t] and [d] in [mat] and [mad]" (Ogunsiji and Sunday, 2011:157-158). These kind of words are called minimal pairs and where two sounds occur in mutually exclusive environments, where only one occurs are called allophones, for example, the aspirated [k<sup>h</sup>] and unaspirated [k<sup>-</sup>] in [come] and [skull].

### **2.5.6 Generative phonology**

Chomsky and Halle (1968) introduced Generative Phonology which subsequently has been developed by many others. Generative phonology forms part of the theory Transformational Generative Grammar popularized by Noam Chomsky (1957; 1965). In this model, generative phonology is like semantics while generative is like syntax, ironically.

Generative phonology is concerned with the development of rules that will deal with the pronounce-ability of the strings generated by the syntactic component of the grammar. The development of generative phonology (and generative grammar more generally) was born in the rupture and brought its rifts in the field (Goldsmith and Laks, 2011:7).

There was a program of research developed during the 1980s by a group of phonologists. It was proposed as a refinement of classical generative phonology, but incorporated insight from a wide range of theories such as pre-generative structuralist phonology and natural phonology (Goldsmith and Laks, 2011:14).

## **2.6 CONCLUSION**

The review of literature on orthography, phonetics and phonology in general and Xitsonga in particular has been made in this chapter. The Xitsonga orthography was invented by the Swiss missionaries and has been improved by the Language Boards over the years and the Pan South African Language Board is now responsible for the development of the language.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **XITSONGA ORTHOGRAPHY AND WORD CATEGORIES**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

The aim of this chapter is to introduce the parts of speech of the Xitsonga language and to discuss their orthography in both standard and non-standard Xitsonga. The following topics are discussed: nouns, verbs, adjectives and ideophones. They are going to be discussed in detail below:

#### **3.2 PARTS OF SPEECH**

##### **3.2.1 NOUN**

Wikipedia (2013) defines a noun as a “part of speech typically denoting a person, place, thing, animal, or idea”. Linguistically, a noun is defined as a “member of a large, open lexical category whose members can occur as the main word in the subject clause, the object of a verb, or the object of preposition”. Nouns can also be described as words that refer to a person, place, thing, or event.

##### **3.2.1.1 Types of nouns**

There are six types of nouns in Xitsonga, namely: proper nouns, common nouns, countable nouns, collective nouns, abstract nouns and compound nouns (Junod, 1985:7).

##### **a. Proper noun**

According to Junod (1985:7), proper nouns are the kind of nouns which represent one person or thing that has a name, for example: Africa, Jesus, and Muzila. Other examples are:

Table 1

Correct spelling	Incorrect spelling
<i>Shivambu</i>	<i>Xivambu</i>
<i>Shiluvani</i>	<i>Xiluvani</i>
<i>Shilubani</i>	<i>Xiluvani</i>
<i>Shikwambani</i>	<i>Xikwambani</i>
<i>Bilankulu</i>	<i>Vilankulu</i>
<i>Chauke</i>	<i>Cawuke</i>

The nouns in table (1) above are Xitsonga surnames but they present the challenge when it comes to the use of /x/ and /sh/, /v/ and /b/, /c/ and /ch/ because they sound the same but they are spelt differently and they differ phonetically.

*Bilankulu* is a Xitsonga surname, it is pronounced as *Vilankulu* even though it is a /B/ not a /V/. It causes confusion because /b/ and /v/ are phonetically different but here they are pronounced the same, so /b/ and /v/ pose a challenge in Xitsonga.

Another challenge is the use of /x/ and /sh/, in surnames like *Shikwambani*, *Shivambu* and *Shiluvani* they use /sh/ but pronounce it as /x/ and this causes confusion as to which one to use.

There is another challenge when it comes to a surname like *Chauke*, it is pronounced as “*Cawuke*” and the speech sound /h/ is not pronounced. Another thing is that /u/ is pronounced as /wu/ even though there is no /w/.

All these challenges are something that the authorities should correct in their orthography rules and guidelines.



## b. Common noun

This is a kind of noun which refers to anything that can be touched or seen, for example:

Table 2

Correct spelling	Incorrect spelling
<i>Xibedhlele</i> (hospital)	<i>Xibedlhele/ xibedlele</i>
<i>Nhlampfi</i> (fish)	<i>hlampfi/ hlapfi</i>

*Xibedhlele* (a hospital)

*Xibedhlele* is sometimes misspelled as *xibedlele* or *xibedlhele*. This confusion is caused by the fact that *xibedhlele* used to be spelled as *xibedlhele*.

*Nhlampfi* (a fish)

*Nhlampfi* is sometimes misspelled as *hlampfi* because speakers feel it should not be nasalised from the beginning or *hlapfi* because some people just do not pronounce the nasals when they speak.

## c. Countable noun

Grammar Revolution (2009-2013), defines countable nouns as “nouns that you can count”, for example:

Table 3

Correct spelling	Incorrect spelling
<i>Gqweta</i> (lawyer)	<i>Dlweta</i>
<i>N'wana</i> (child)	<i>Nwana</i>

*Gqweta* is sometimes misspelled as *dlweta* because that is how people speak and since they are not good with clicks they just write it in a simple way.

*N'wana* is sometimes misspelled as *nwana*, many Xitsonga users do not see a need for using the apostrophe and it changes the whole meaning because *nwana* means to drink.

#### d. Collective noun

According to *YOURDICTIONARY* (1996-2013), collective nouns are defined as “nouns that refer to a group of something in a specific manner, such as a group of animals”. Examples of collective nouns:

Table 4

Correct spelling	Incorrect spelling
<i>Vapfumba</i> (tourists)	<i>Vaphumba</i>
<i>Nyandza</i> (bundle)	<i>Nyanda</i>

*Vapfumba* is sometimes misspelled as *vaphumba*. On words like this it tends to be confusing on which consonant comes first between /f/ and /h/.

*Nyandza* is sometimes misspelled as *nyanda*; there are individuals who do not pronounce the /z/ sound so they do not write it. The standard form is however *nyandza*.

#### e. Abstract noun

According to *YOURDICTIONARY* (1996-2013), abstract nouns are defined as “concepts, ideas, philosophies, and other entities that cannot be concretely perceived”. Examples of abstract nouns are:

Table 5

Correct spelling	Incorrect spelling
<i>Vutlharhi</i> (intelligence)	<i>Vutlhari</i>
<i>Vusopfa</i> (carelessness)	<i>Vusompfa</i>
<i>Rirhandzu</i> (love)	<i>Rirhandu</i>

*Vutlharhi* is sometimes misspelled as *vutlhari*. People do not notice a difference between these two words, the /h/ sound in /rh/ is not pronounced properly so people do not notice any difference whether it is there or not.

*Vusopfa* is sometimes misspelled as *vusompfa*. Speakers add the /m/ sound when they pronounce *vusopfa*. This is the reason they spell it as *vusompfa*.

*Rirhandzu* is sometimes misspelled as *rirhandu*. Some speakers do not see the need of reflecting the speech sound /z/. They in fact demand to write it as *rirhandu* as their dialects do not use the speech sound /z/.

#### f. Infinitive

This is the kind of a noun that shows what is being done, for example:

Table 6

Correct spelling	Incorrect spelling
<i>Ku dzaha</i> (to smoke)	<i>Ku zaha</i>
<i>Ku huha</i> (to play)	<i>Ku huhwa</i>
<i>Ku cukumeta</i> (to throw away)	<i>Ku chukumeta</i>

*Dzaha* is sometimes misspelled as *zaha*, which is how people pronounce it.

*Huha* is sometimes misspelled as *huhwa*, which is how people pronounce it.

*Cukumeta* is sometimes misspelled as *chukumeta* because there are surnames like *Cawuke* which are spelled as *Chauke* and this causes confusion on whether the speech sound /h/ should be there or not.

### **g. Noun classes**

According to *Wikipedia* (2013), “the term noun class refers to a system of categorizing nouns. A noun may belong to a given class based on its characteristics of its referent, such as shape, sex”.

Mayevu and Nkatini (1976:10-13) provide noun classes and examples below:

#### **Noun classes mu- (1)/ va- (2)**

This class has nouns beginning with mu-, some with n’w- and some with m- to express the singular meaning.

Examples of the nouns beginning with mu-:

**Table 7**

<b>Correct spelling</b>	<b>Incorrect spelling</b>
<i>Mudzabi</i> (coach)	<i>Muzabi</i>
<i>Mulandzeli</i> (follower)	<i>Mulandzeri</i>
<i>Muleteri</i> (lecturer)	<i>Muleteli</i>
<i>n’wana</i> (a child)	<i>Nwana</i>
<i>N’wingi</i> (daughter-in-law).	<i>Nwingi</i>

*Mudzabi* is sometimes misspelled as *muzabi*; some people do not pronounce the /d/ sound as it is not available in their dialects such as Xihlengwe.

*Mulandzeli* can be misspelled as *mulandzeri* because that is how people speak. What has happened here is that /l/ is sometimes replaced by /r/ in some dialects such as Xigwamba and Xihlave.

*Muleteri* can be misspelled as *muleteli* because there are people who speak like that. What has happened here is that /r/ is sometimes replaced by /l/ in some dialects such as Xiluleke and Xihlengwe.

*N'wana* is sometimes misspelled as *nwana* because people do not take the apostrophe seriously and this changes the meaning because *nwana* means to drink.

*N'wingi* is misspelled as *nwingi* and it loses the meaning completely because *nwingi* means daughter-in-law or mother-in-law.

This noun class is in a singular form whereas its plural form is noun class 2. See the explanations above. There are nouns which begin with va-, and some with v-, for example:

Table 8

Correct spelling	Incorrect spelling
<i>Vadzabi</i> (coaches)	<i>Vazabi</i>
<i>Valandzeli</i> (followers)	<i>Valandzeri</i>
<i>Valeteri</i> (lecturers)	<i>Valeteli</i>

*Vadzabi* is misspelled as *vazabi* due to dialectical differences.

*Valandzeli* is sometimes misspelled as *valandzeri* where /l/ is replaced by /r/.

*Valeteri* is sometimes misspelled as *valeteli* because some speakers prefer the usage of /l/ instead of /r/.

### Noun classes mu-(3)/ mi-(4)

This class in singular form has nouns which begin with mu- or mu- which dissolves and results into n-.

Table 9

Correct spelling	Incorrect spelling
<i>muti</i> (family)	<i>Munti</i>
<i>Ntlawa</i> (group)	<i>Tlawa</i>
<i>Ntirho</i> (job)	<i>Tirho</i>
<i>Nsisi</i> (hair)	<i>Sinsi</i>

*Muti* is sometimes misspelled as *munti*; people just add a nasal even where it is not needed.

*Ntlawa* is sometimes misspelled as *tlawa* as the plural form is spelled as *mitlawa*.

*Ntirho* is sometimes misspelled as *tirho* as the plural form is spelled as *mitirho*.

*Nsisi* is sometimes misspelled as *sinsi* because people can misplace the nasals.

All these should be nasalised at a beginning, and not in the middle. The point here is that people prefer to pronounce words that are easy on the tongue. Nevertheless, it is important that Xitsonga speakers must be taught the correct orthography.

The plural form of noun class mu- (3) is noun class mi- (4), examples:

Table 10

Correct spelling	Incorrect spelling
<i>Misisi</i> (hair)	<i>Minsisi</i>
<i>Mikolo</i> (throats)	<i>Minkolo</i>

<i>Mitlawa</i> (groups)	<i>Mintlawa</i>
-------------------------	-----------------

*Misisi* is sometimes misspelled as *minsisi* because speakers just add nasals even where it is not needed. It seems the nasal /n/ makes it easier to pronounce the whole word.

*Mikolo* is sometimes misspelled as *minkolo* because *mikolo* comes from *nkolo*, so speakers do not remove the nasal even when it is in a plural form.

*Mitlawa* is sometimes misspelled as *mintlawa* because *mitlawa* comes from *ntlawa* and it is nasalised, so speakers do not remove the nasal even when it is the plural form.

### **Noun class ri- (5)**

The nouns in noun class (5) begin with ri-, for example:

**Table 11**

<b>Correct spelling</b>	<b>Incorrect spelling</b>
<i>Rihlampfu</i> (fence)	<i>Rinhlampfu/ rihlapfu</i>
<i>Rimbambu</i> (a rib)	<i>Rivambu</i>
<i>Ricinda</i> (cotton thread)	<i>Ricindha</i>

*Rihlampfu* is sometimes spelled as *rinhlampfu* or *rihlapfu*; some people pronounce it without the nasal sound.

*Rimbambu* is sometimes spelled as *rivambu*, as it is not clear which one should be used. Thus there is confusion on the use of the /b/ and the /v/.

*Ricinda* is sometimes spelled as *ricindha*, people usually pronounce it with the /h/ sound which is the reason they spell it as *ricindha*.

All these words pose a problem to the speakers of Xitsonga, it means the Xitsonga National Language Body (XNLB) has a huge task to familiarise the people with the appropriate orthography.

### **Noun class 6 (ma-)**

All the nouns begin with (ma-), for example:

**Table 12**

<b>Correct spelling</b>	<b>Incorrect spelling</b>
<i>Macincelo</i> (adjustment)	<i>Mancincelo</i>
<i>Macikinyelo</i> (manner of hanging)	<i>Mancikinyelo/ mancikinyhelo</i>

*Macincelo* is sometimes spelled as *mancincelo* because that is how people speak so they spell it as such. Here there is addition of the nasal speech sound /n/ as it makes it easier to pronounce the whole word.

*Macikinyelo* is sometimes spelled as *mancikinyelo* or *mancikinyhelo*. The observation here is that the nasal /n/ and glottal /h/ have been added. Unfortunately, this is not standard orthography and learners are marked wrong if they use such orthography.

### **Noun class 7 (xi- and x-)**

These are nouns beginning with xi- and x-, for example:

**Table 13**

<b>Correct spelling</b>	<b>Incorrect spelling</b>
<i>Xibedhlele</i> (hospital)	<i>Xibedlhele/ xibedlele</i>



<i>Xinkwa</i> (bread)	<i>Xikwa</i>
<i>Xigqoko</i> (a hat)	<i>Xiqoko/ xidloko</i>

*Xibedhlele* is sometimes spelled as *xibedlele* because that is how people speak or *xibedlhele* because it used to be written like that in the past.

*Xinkwa* is sometimes misspelled as *xikwa*, this is influenced by dialects and it changes the meaning.

*Xigqoko* is sometimes misspelled as *xiqoko* or *xidloko* because the /g/ sound is not pronounced, one cannot hear it and some people just pronounce it as *xidloko*. It might be prudent to adopt *xiqoko* and leave out the /g/ as it has no apparent usage.

### Noun class 8 (swi- and sw-)

Table 14

Correct spelling	Incorrect spelling
<i>Swimpfempfi</i> (fluid)	<i>Swipfepfi/ swipfempfi</i>
<i>Switsanana</i> (least)	<i>Swintsanana/ switsinini/ swintsinini</i>
<i>Swipyopyi</i> (drugs)	<i>Switswotswi</i>

*Swimpfempfi* is sometimes misspelled as *swimpfepfi*, *swipfepfi* or *swipfempfi*, this is influenced by how people speak their dialects.

*Switsanana* is sometimes misspelled as *swintsanana*, *switsinini* or *swintsinini*.

*Swintsinini* is the commonly used one; it is how people speak so they spell it as such.

*Swipyopyi* is sometimes misspelled as *switswotswi*; people hardly use the /py/ sound as they do not pronounce it, so they replace it with the /tsw/ sound. The cause here

is the difficulty that people experience in pronouncing labial and palatal speech sounds simultaneously.

### **Noun class 9 (yin-)**

This class is in the singular form and the plural form is noun class 10, examples of noun class 9:

**Table 15**

<b>Correct spelling</b>	<b>Incorrect spelling</b>
<i>Yinhla</i> (angle, corner)	<i>Yihla</i>
<i>Yinso</i> (kidney)	<i>Yinsu</i>

*Yinhla* is sometimes spelled as *yihla*; some people do not pronounce the nasal sound /n/ so they do not write it.

*Yinso* is sometimes spelled as *yinsu*; this is how it is pronounced, so the vowel /u/ is used instead of the /o/.

### **Noun class 10 (tin), for example:**

**Table 16**

<b>Correct spelling</b>	<b>Incorrect spelling</b>
<i>Tintangha</i> (peer group)	<i>Titangha/ tintanga</i>
<i>Tinhlamulo</i> (answers)	<i>Tihlamulo</i>
<i>Tinhlayo</i> (numeracy)	<i>Tihlayo</i>

*Tintangha* is sometimes misspelled as *titangha* or *tintanga*, *titangha* is the mostly used and it is how most people speak.

*Tinhlamulo* is sometimes misspelled as *tihlamulo*; this is because some people do not pronounce the nasals.

*Tinhlayo* is sometimes misspelled as *tihlayo* as there are people who do not pronounce the nasals.

### **Noun class 11 (ri-)**

Table 17

<b>Correct spelling</b>	<b>Incorrect spelling</b>
<i>Rifuwo</i> (wealth)	<i>Rifuwu</i>
<i>Rirhandzu</i> (love)	<i>Rirhandu</i>
<i>Riqingho</i> (telephone)	<i>Ritlingho</i>

*Rifuwo* is sometimes misspelled as *rifuwu*, this is how people pronounce it and not with the /o/ vowel at the end but /u/.

*Rirhandzu* is sometimes misspelled as *rirhandu*; some people do not pronounce the /z/ as their dialects do not have it.

*Riqingho* is sometimes misspelled as *ritlingho*; this is mainly because most people have trouble spelling and pronouncing the click sounds.

## Noun class 14 (vu- and by-)

Table 18

Correct spelling	Incorrect spelling
<i>Vusopfa</i> (negligence)	<i>Vusompfa</i>
<i>Vun'we</i> (unity)	<i>Vunwe</i>
<i>Vuvochwa</i> (custody)	<i>Vubochwa</i>

*Vusopfa* is sometimes misspelled as *vusompfa* because people think they should spell as they speak.

*Vun'we* is sometimes misspelled as *vunwe* because people think the use of the apostrophe does not make any difference and the reality is that it changes the whole meaning. *Vunwe* does not make any sense in Xitsonga.

*Vuvochwa* is often misspelled as *vubochwa*; this is influenced by the confusion between /b/ and /v/.

## Noun class 15 (ku-)

Table 19

Correct spelling	Incorrect spelling
<i>Ku pyanya</i> (crush with foot)	<i>Ku tswana</i>
<i>Ku huha</i> (to play)	<i>Ku huhwa</i>
<i>Ku phyaphyarha</i> (to make bubbles)	<i>Ku tshwatshwarha</i>

*Pyanya* is sometimes misspelled as *tswana* because speakers have some difficulties pronouncing the sound /py/.

*Huha* is sometimes misspelled as *huhwa* because that is how people speak.

*Phyaphyarha* is sometimes misspelled as *tshwatshwarha* because speakers have some difficulties using the sound /phy/.

### **Noun class 16 (ha- and he-)**

This noun class is a locative and it works as an adverb, for example:

Table 20

<b>Correct spelling</b>	<b>Incorrect spelling</b>
<i>Hansi</i> (beneath)	<i>Hasi</i>
<i>Henhla</i> (above)	<i>Hehla</i>
<i>Haleno</i> (here)	<i>Haleni/ halenu</i>

*Hansi* is sometimes misspelled as *hasi*, the nasal is not pronounced.

*Henhla* is sometimes misspelled as *hehla* because there are people who do not pronounce the nasals.

*Haleno* is sometimes misspelled as *haleni* or *halenu*, the vowel /o/ is usually replaced by the /u/ because that is how people pronounce it.

### **Noun class 17 (ku-)**

This noun class is also a locative and shows a place of adverb, for example:

Table 21

<b>Correct spelling</b>	<b>Incorrect spelling</b>
<i>Kusuhani</i> (close by)	<i>Kusuhwani</i>

*Kusuhani* is sometimes misspelled as *kusuhwani*; this is how people pronounce and spell it.

### Noun class 21 (dyi-)

Table 22

Correct spelling	Incorrect spelling
<i>Dyimunhu</i> (a big person)	<i>Dyi munhu</i>
<i>Dyitiko</i> (a big country)	<i>Dyi tiko</i>
<i>Dyilwandle</i> (a big ocean)	<i>Dyi lwandle</i>

*Dyimunhu* is sometimes misspelled disjunctively as *dyi munhu*.

*Dyitiko* is sometimes misspelled as a disjunctive and not a conjunctive, *dyi tiko*.

*Dyilwandle* is sometimes misspelled as a disjunctive and not a conjunctive, *dyi lwandle*.

The reason being that all these words have two parts which can be divided into two and still be meaningful. Another reason is that the rules about separating words are not clear, and it has not been stated why some words should be written conjunctively whereas others should appear disjunctively.

### 3.3 VERBS

According to Junod (1985:29), verbs are the main words in speech and without a verb there will be no complete meaning, for example:

(23) *Hosi leyinene ya nga*-my honourable chief.

The noun (*hosi*) has been used, adjective (*leyinene*), possessive concord (*ya*) and absolute pronoun (*nga*), but the meaning is incomplete. When I say *hosi yi tile*-the chief has come, there is a full meaning because of *tile* which is a verb.

### 3.3.1 Verbal stems

In Xitsonga, verbal stems may be inflected in various ways to form derivative verbs, each of which is conjugated in the different moods and tenses as is the simple stem. Verbal derivatives are, in the main, formed by suffix inflexion. In this way definite variations of meaning are derived, variations which English can only be made by the use of auxiliary verbs, adverbs or prepositions (Mayevu and Nkatini, 1976:28)

There are verbal stems which pose a challenge when it comes to how they should be written and they are going to be discussed below:

### 3.3.2 The stative verbs

This is similar to the infinitive indicated by *ku*. This indicates an action without describing it any further, for example:

Table 24

Correct spelling	Incorrect spelling
<i>Ku famba</i> (to walk)	<i>Kufamba</i>
<i>Ku vona</i> (to see)	<i>Kuvona</i>
<i>Ku tsala</i> (to write)	<i>Kutsala</i>

*Ku famba* can be misspelled as *kufamba*

*Ku vona* can be misspelled as *kuvona*

*Ku tsala* can be misspelled as *kutsala*

All the stative verbs above are written disjunctively and not conjunctively. Again, the weakness is that there is no explanation as to why this should be like this from Xitsonga authorities.

### 3.3.3 The diminutive

The diminutive form of the verb indicates that the action is performed slightly, this is shown by suffixing –nyana, examples:

Table 25

Correct spelling	Incorrect spelling
<i>Khomanyana</i> (touch a little)	<i>Khoma nyana.</i>
<i>Tirhanyana</i> (work a little)	<i>tirha nyana</i>
<i>Dyananyana</i> (eat a little).	<i>dyana nyana</i>

*Khomanyana* can be misspelled as *Khoma nyana*.

*Tirhanyana* can be misspelled as *tirha nyana*.

*Dyananyana* can be misspelled as *dyana nyana*.

When it comes to the diminutive verb, it must be spelled conjunctively and not disjunctively even though both parts can stand on their own and still make sense. In this case, the authorities should still explain why the spelling of diminutives is supposed to be like in the above case (25).

### 3.3.4 The reflexive

This verb stem is expressed by the suffix *ti-*. By using the reflexive form one refers to oneself (Junod, 1985:34). For example:



Table 26

Correct spelling	Incorrect spelling
<i>Ku tisola</i> (to regret)	<i>kuti sola</i> or <i>ku ti sola</i>
<i>Ku tidya</i> (to dress nicely)	<i>kuti dya</i> or <i>ku ti dya</i>
<i>Ku tivona</i> (to be proud)	<i>kuti vona</i> or <i>ku ti vona</i>

From the research, the researcher discovered that Xitsonga speakers encounter many difficulties regarding the spelling of the reflexive *ti*.

*Ku tisola* can mistakenly be written as *kuti sola* or *ku ti sola*.

*Ku tidya* can mistakenly be written as *kuti dya* or *ku ti dya*.

*Ku tivona* can mistakenly be written as *kuti vona* or *ku ti vona*.

What should be taken into consideration when it comes to the reflexive verb is that the suffix *ti-* should be added to the basic verb so that it always begins with *ti-*. It must be one word.

### 3.4 ADJECTIVES

Adjectives give extra information about persons or things; they are used to describe, indicate or to enumerate (count) persons or things (The Writing Centre, University of Ottawa).

According to *My English Grammar* (2013), there are several kinds of adjectives, namely: proper, descriptive, quantitative and numeral adjectives. They will be defined below:

## Proper Adjectives

These describe a thing by using a proper noun, slightly altered from its usual noun form. There is a challenge when it comes to the spelling of proper adjectives in Xitsonga, for example:

(27) a. *I n'wa-mabindzu wa **Mufurwa*** - He is a **French** businessman

**Mufurwa** is sometimes spelled as **muFurwa** or **MuFurwa**. **Mufurwa** is the correct spelling though.

b. *Hi hlangane na wansati wa **Muamerika*** -- We met an American woman

**Muamerika** is sometimes spelled as **muAmerika** or **MuAmerika**. **Muamerika** is the correct one, according to the current rules from Xitsonga National Language Body.

c. *Vapfhumba va **Maastraliya*** - Australian tourists

**Maastraliya** is sometimes spelled as **maAustralia** or **MaAstraliya**. **Maastraliya** is the correct spelling.

In this case proper adjectives are the names of countries and are slightly different from the country name itself. Xitsonga is different from English, the first letter should be a capital letter and the country's first letter should be in small case.

## Descriptive Adjectives

Descriptive adjectives describe persons or things, by showing of what quality or in what state a person or thing is. This class consists of all the colours, qualities and sizes, for example:

(28) a. *Ndzi ta ambala xikete **xantima*** - I shall wear a **black** skirt

**Xantima** is sometimes written disjunctively as **xa ntima** and it should be written conjunctively.

b. *Ndzi nyiketi mbita **leyikulu*** - Give me a **big** pot.

**Leyikulu** is sometimes written as a disjunctive **le yikulu** and it is a conjunctive.

c. *I wanuna lontsongo ngopfu* - That is a very **young** man

**Lontsongo** is also written as **lo ntsongo** sometimes but it is supposed to be written conjunctively.

### Quantitative Adjectives

Quantitative adjectives show how much a certain thing is meant, how much quantity. The adjectives of this class are:

Sufficient, much, little, no; half, enough, etc.

(29) a. *U pendile tin'wana ta tindlu* - He painted **some** of the houses (a certain quantity)

**Tin'wana** is misspelled as **ti n'wana** and it should be spelled conjunctively.

b. *Hi na nkarhi woringanela* - We have **enough** time (the right quantity)

**Wo ringanela** can sometimes be misspelled as **woringanela** whereas the correct spelling is to use the disjunctive method.

c. *Ndzi lahlekeriwile hi mali ya mina hinkwayo* - I lost **all** the money (the quantity)

**Hinkwayo** can also be misspelled as **hi nkwayo**. Rules in this case are also not clear. XNLB has to publicize and explain spelling rules so that all Xitsonga speakers know and apply them correctly.

### Numeral Adjectives

These Adjectives form two classes: definite and indefinite.

Definite Numerals denote some exact number, for example:

(30) a. *U ndzi lombe mune wa tirhandi* - He lent me **four rand**

**Wa tirhandi** is sometimes misspelled as *watirhandi* and it is a disjunctive not a conjunctive.

b. *U wansati **wosungula** ku switiva* - You are the **first** woman to know

*Wo sungula* is sometimes misspelled as *wosungula*.

c. *U Munhu wa vu **makumenkombo** ku fika* - You are the **seventeenth** person to arrive.

*Vu makumenkombo* is sometimes misspelled as *vumakumenkombo* and it is a disjunctive, not a conjunctive.

The issue here is lack of clear spelling rules in Xitsonga. The three groups above show different kinds of numeral adjectives, that is, there are three types of definitive numeral adjectives, namely: cardinals, ordinals and multiplicatives but in this case the focus will be on the ordinals and multiplicatives since they are the ones which pose a challenge.

## Ordinals

Table 31

Correct spelling	Incorrect spelling
<i>Xosungula</i> (First)	<i>xo sungula</i>
<i>Xavumbirhi</i> (Second)	<i>xa vumbirhi</i>
<i>Xavunharhu</i> (Third)	<i>xa vunharhu</i>

*Xosungula* is sometimes misspelled as *xo sungula*

*Xavumbirhi* is sometimes misspelled as *xa vumbirhi*

*Xavunharhu* is sometimes misspelled as *xa vunharhu*

Currently, the rules advocate the use of the conjunctive method regarding the examples in (31) above. The problem is that there is no explanation as to why the rules apply.

## Multiplicatives

Table 32

Correct spelling	Incorrect spelling
<i>Xin'we</i> (single)	<i>xi n'we</i>
<i>Kambirhi</i> (double)	<i>ka mbirhi</i>
<i>Ngimanharhu</i> (triple)	<i>ngima nharhu</i>

*Xin'we* is sometimes misspelled as *xi n'we*.

*Kambirhi* is sometimes misspelled as *ka mbirhi*

*Ngimanharhu* is sometimes misspelled as *ngima nharhu*.

All the multiplicative words above should be written conjunctively and not disjunctively even though it might look like both words can stand on their own.

## Indefinite Numerals

These denote number of some kind, without saying precisely what the number is. Such indefinite numerals are: all, some, few, several, enough, many, etc.

(33) a. *Vavanuna hinkwavo i timbyana* - **All** men are dogs.

**Hinkwavo** is sometimes misspelled as **hi nkwavo**.

b. *Vavasati van'wana va tsakela mali* - **Some** women like money.

**Van'wana** is sometimes misspelled as **va n'wana**.

c. *Ku lulamisiwile swakudya swo ringanela* - **Enough** food has been prepared

**Swo ringanela** is sometimes misspelled as **sworinganela**

The correct spelling in the above case (33) is to write indefinite numerals conjunctively.

### 3.5 IDEOPHONES

According to Dingemane (2012:654), ideophones are defined as marked words depictive of sensory imagery found in many of the world's languages. Ideophones are "words that evoke a vivid impression of certain sensations or sensory perceptions, for example: sound, movement, shape or action".

Characteristics of ideophones as quoted from De Schryver (2009:36) are as follows:

◆Ideophones represent or express actions or ideas, for example:

(34) *Nkolombyana wu lo **damaa!** e khumbini* (the lizard just stuck on the wall).

◆Ideophones echo, express, or mirror sense impressions or perceptions, for example:

(35) *Munhu u ta endla onge wa ku rhandza kasi **doo!*** (Someone will pretend to love you while they do not)

◆Ideophones express or reflect emotions and feelings, for example:

(36) *A hi lo **badaa!** na murhandziwa wa mina* (we were just lying down with my lover)

◆Ideophones complete thought or create images, for example:

(37) *Movha yi tshoveke yi ku **pfotloo!*** (The car broke down just like that!)

◆Ideophones vivify speech, for example:

(38) *Nyoka yi lo hundza yi ku **salalaa!*** (A snake passed so fast).

#### There are ideophones with one syllable

There is a challenge when it comes to the spelling of ideophones, sometimes the last vowel is doubled or tripled, for example:

Table 39

Correct spelling	Incorrect spelling
<i>Dzuu!</i> (when a dress falls down)	<i>Dzuuu!</i>
<i>Paa!</i> (pure white)	<i>Paaa!</i>

*Dzuu!* is sometimes spelled as *dzuuu!*

*Paa!* is sometimes spelled as *paaa!*

The same applies when it comes to ideophones with two morphemes.

### Ideophones with two syllables

Table 40

Correct spelling	Incorrect spelling
<i>Pfotloo!</i>	<i>Pfotlo!</i>
<i>Damaa!</i>	<i>Dama!</i>

*Pfotloo!* is sometimes spelled as *pfotlo!*

(41) a. *Movha yi tshoveke yi ku pfotloo!* (The car broke down just like that!)

*Damaa!* is sometimes spelled as *dama!*

b. *Nkolombyana wu lo damaa e khumbini* (the lizard stucked on the wall)

## Ideophones with three syllables

Table 42

Correct spelling	Incorrect spelling
<i>Tititi!</i>	<i>Tititii!</i>
<i>Salalaa!</i>	<i>Salalaaa!</i>

*Tititi!* The last vowel of almost every ideophone is doubled but *tititi!* is usually spelled with a single last vowel and rarely spelled as *tititii!*

(43) a. *Ndzhuti wo tititi!* (A cold shadow)

*Salalaa!* Is sometimes spelled as *salalaaa!* And that is triple the last vowel.

b. *Nyoka yi lo hundza yi ku salalaa!* (A snake passed so fast)

## Ideophones with four syllables

Table 44

Correct spelling	Incorrect spelling
<i>Humeleloo!</i>	<i>Humelelooo!</i>

*Humeleloo!* is sometimes spelled as *humelelooo!* With the last vowel being tripled.

*Malume va lo humeleloo!* (Uncle just appeared unexpectedly).

With almost all the ideophones, the last letter duplicates itself to show that a word is an ideophone. The problem in this case is that it is not clear as to when one should use single or double vowels. XNLB should also generate clear rules in this regard.



### **3.6 CONCLUSION**

This chapter has discussed parts of speech such as nouns, verbs, adjectives and ideophones with special emphasis on Xitsonga. It also pointed out the problematic areas on the spellings of nouns and verbs. It is not clear how the ideophones should be spelled as they sometimes double or triple the last vowel. What the chapter discovered is that there are no clear rules and guidelines regarding the spelling of various categories in Xitsonga. XNLB is therefore urged to suggest rules that are unambiguous as the current state of affairs leaves much to be desired.

## CHAPTER 4

### XITSONGA ORTHOGRAPHY, COMPOUND AND BORROWED WORDS

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will concentrate on compound and borrowed words, and all the words which pose challenges for the Xitsonga users in terms of spelling.

#### 4.2 COMPOUNDS

Compound nouns are “nouns made up of two or more words” (Grammar Revolution, 2009-2013). Compounds used to be written with a hyphen but things have changed since and PanSALB has decided that the hyphen is no longer necessary and all the compounds should be written as one word.

##### **Noun + noun**

- |                           |                      |
|---------------------------|----------------------|
| (1) <i>Mahungu-ndlela</i> | (hearsay)            |
| <i>Nhloko-mhaka</i>       | (topic)              |
| <i>Ntivo-maribye</i>      | (geology)            |
| <i>Ximali-tiko</i>        | (currency)           |
| <i>Xingoma-ntanda</i>     | (traditional healer) |

Compounds used to be written with a hyphen but now PanSALB is discouraging the use of a hyphen. This means the words above should be written as follows:

- (2) *Mahungundlela*

*Nhlokomhaka*

*Ntivomaribye*

*Ximalitiko*

*Xingomantanda*

**Noun + verb**

(3) *Kungu-ehleketeleriwa* (alleged plot)

*Lembe-tlula* (leap year)

*Mali-nghena* (income)

*Xiphemu-kayivela* (improper fraction)

According to PanSALB (2008:25), all the compound words must be written as one word, without a hyphen which means all the words above will be written as follows:

(4) *Kunguhleketeleriwa*

*Lembetlula*

*Malinghena*

*Xiphemukayivela*

**Noun + adjective**

(5) *Hofisi-nkulu* (main office)

*Hungu-nkulu* (headline)

*Lembe-xidzana* (century)

*Mhani-tsongo* (aunt)

*Xivulavuri-nkulu* (guest speaker)

The compounds above will be written as single words since PanSALB (2008:25) points out that the hyphen is no longer necessary:

(6) *Hofisinkulu*

*Hungunkulu*

*Lembexidzana*

*Mhanitsongo*

*Xivulavurinkulu*

### **Verb + verb**

(7) *Xikholwa-kholwana* (myth)

*Famba-famba* (walk about)

*Hundzuluxa-hundzuluxa* (twirl)

*Khwita-khwita* (limp)

*Khoma-khoma* (cares)

The words below are corrections of the words above since compounds should be written without a hyphen.

(8) *Xikholwakholwana*

*Fambafamba*

*Hundzuluxahundzuluxa*

*Khwitakhwita*

*Khomakhoma*

**Verb + noun**

(9) <i>Mphasa-mhala</i>	(Buffalo thorn)
<i>Mpima-vayeni</i>	(twilight)
<i>Mudya-ndzhaka</i>	(heir/ heiress)
<i>Nsivela-mavabyi</i>	(hygiene)
<i>Xikomba-nkarhi</i>	(watch)
<i>Xiolovisa-nhlayo</i>	(logarithm)

The compounds above will be written in a correct form bellow because the use of a hyphen is being discouraged by PanSALB.

(10) *Mphasamhala*

<i>Mpimavayeni</i>
<i>Mudyandzhaka</i>
<i>Nsivelamavabyi</i>
<i>Xikombankarhi</i>
<i>Xiolovisanhlayo</i>

**Verb + adjective**

(11) <i>Famba-nyana</i>	(walk a bit)
<i>Khumbha-nyana</i>	(touch a little)
<i>Khoma-nyana</i>	(hold a little)
<i>Tsutsuma-nyana</i>	(run a little)
<i>Yima-nyana</i>	(wait a bit)

According to PanSALB (2008:25), all the compound words must be written as one word without a hyphen, which means all the words above will be written as follows:

(12) *Fambanyana*

*Khumbhanyana*

*Khomanyana*

*Tsutsumanyana*

*Yimanyana*

### **Adjective + adjective**

(13) *Khume-nkombo* (seventeen)

*Makumenharhu-mbirhi* (thirty two)

*Madzana-nharhu* (three hundred)

*Makumenhungu-ntlhanu* (eighty five)

All compounds should be written without a hyphen so the compounds above are written in a correct form below.

(14) *Khumenkombo*

*Makumenharhumbirhi*

*Madzananharhu*

*Makumenhunguntlhanu*

Most of the teachers the researcher spoke to mentioned that the hyphen is necessary because it separates the word and shows where the meaning comes from and it is easy for the learners to write. On the other hand, the experts say the hyphen is no longer necessary and the compounds should be written as one word. From this analysis one observes that the hyphen is not necessary on some of the words and is necessary on the numbers because some numbers are very long, for example:

(15) *Dzanimakumenhungutsevu* (one hundred and eighty six)

*Makumenhungunkombo* (eighty-seven)

This is too long and a hyphen or two are needed in this case, for example:

(16) *Dzana-makumenhungu-tsevu*

*Makumenhungu-nkombo*

On words like:

(17) *Xihahampfhuka* (aeroplane)

*Nsulavoya* (thief)

*Ntivovukhonger* (religious education)

*Ntikoxikarhi* (middleweight)

*Xirindzamhangu* (accident cover)

The hyphen is not necessary and such, they are short and easy to spell and read.

### **4.3 BORROWED WORDS**

Borrowed words (loanwords) can be defined as “words adopted by the speakers of one language (the source language). The abstract noun borrowing refers to the process of speakers adopting words from a source language into their native language” ([www.ruf.rice.edu/~kemmer/Words04/structure/borrowed.html](http://www.ruf.rice.edu/~kemmer/Words04/structure/borrowed.html)).

PanSALB (2008:26), states that words will only be borrowed if they are not there in Xitsonga unless we want to reveal the deep meaning of the sentence. They further state that it is unacceptable to say *Januwari* while it is *Sunguti* in Xitsonga. It is also unacceptable to use words like:

(18) *Akhademiki* instead of *dyondzo*

*Alitari* instead of *gandzelo*

*Bedirumu* instead of *byetlelo*

*Khodi* instead of *funghelo*

*Rhediyo* instead of *xiyanimoya*

*Sejari* instead of *vutshungulelo*

There are borrowed words which do not have equivalents in Xitsonga. For example:

(19) *Khomphyuta*, *khompyuta* (computer)

*Khondhomu* (condom)

*Khopasi* (corpus)

*Hafu* (half)

*Jesi* (jersey)

PanSALB (2008:26) further states that there are words which will be borrowed as they are but will be written in italics or inverted commas will be used, for example:

(20) Fly-by-night

They also state that all the English /cl/ sounds and the Afrikaans /kl/ sounds will be written as /tl/ in Xitsonga. Examples:

(20) *Tliliniki* < clinic/ kliniek



*Tlilasi* < class/klas

*Tliloko* < clock

PanSALB (2008:27) further states that since Xitsonga does not have a diphthong **th** in **theory/ theorem/ thesis** they will be written as **thiyori/ thiyoreme/ thesisi**.

### **Borrowed nouns**

There are nouns which have been borrowed from other languages and have been transliterated because there are no direct equivalents in Xitsonga. For example:

(22) *Adirese* (address)

*Aphili* (appeal)

*Hofisi* (office)

*Inthavyu* (interview)

*Akhademiki* (academic)

*Bavhu* (bath)

*Chimele* (chimney)

*Galari* (gallery)

*Jeneretara* (generator)

*Ayisi* (ice)

### **Borrowed verbs**

There are also borrowed verbs which come from words which do not have direct equivalents in Xitsonga. For example:

(23) *Khondhona* (condone)

*Baka* (bake)

*Kopisa* (copy)

*Ku thayipa* (to type)

*Fotokhopa* (photocopy)

### **Scientific borrowed words**

Scientific words are a challenge because so many terms do not have equivalents in Xitsonga and they had to be taken as they are. For example:

(24) *Esidi* (acid)

*Khalisiyamu* (calcium)

*Garadiyente* (gradient)

*Fizika* (physics)

### **Medical borrowed words**

Medical terms also pose a challenge of non-equivalence and have to be translated as they are. For example:

(25) *Antibayotiki* (antibiotic)

*Philisi* (pill)

*Bandichi* (bandage)

### **Financial borrowed words**

There are also financial terms which had to be borrowed because of non-equivalence. For example:

(26) *Bili* (bill)

*Akhawunti* (account)

*Kharensi* (currency)

*Ikhonomi* (economy)

*Khexe* (cash)

*Banki* (bank)

### **Technology borrowed words**

Technology is the most challenging, so many things are being invented and Xitsonga does not have equivalents for them. For example:

(27) *Khompyuta* (computer)

*Inthanete* (internet)

*I-meyili* (e-mail)

*Fotokhopi* (photocopy)

*Khesara* (cursor)

### **Mathematical borrowed words**

Mathematical terms are just like scientific terms; the terms do not have equivalents and have to be borrowed as they are. For example:

(28) *Hekisagoni* (hexagon)

*Engele* (angle)

*Girafu* (graph)

*Hayipotesisi* (hypothesis)

### **Kitchen utensils**

There are so many words referring to kitchen utensils which are just borrowed as they are. For example:

(29) *Kettlele* (kettle)

*Khapu* (cup)

*Xitofu* (stove)

*Foroko* (fork)

*Pani* (pan)

### **4.4 CLICKS**

Clicks are defined as “any various stop consonants, found in Khoisan and as borrowings in southern Bantu languages that are produced by the suction of air into the mouth” (Collins English Dictionary 2003).

There are some challenges when it comes to Xitsonga click words, a /q/ sound is usually replaced by /tʃ/, the sound /gq/ is replaced by the sound /dl/ and the words below are the examples which support this statement:

(30) a. *Quva* (manure)

*Quva* is sometimes misspelled as *tluva*.

b. *Xigqoko* (a hat)

*Xigqoko* is sometimes misspelled as *xidloko*.

c. *Qambha* (compose)

*Qambha* is sometimes misspelled as *tlambha*.

d. *Qhavula* (shake hands)

*Qhavula* is sometimes misspelled as *thavula*.

e. *Gqweta* (lawyer)

*Gqweta* is sometimes misspelled as *dlweta*.

f. *Qhivi* (dam, swamp that has water the whole year round)

*Qhivi* is sometimes misspelled as *tlhivi*.

g. *Maqhingha* (tactics)

*Maqhingha* is sometimes misspelled as *matlingha*

The /q/ and the /gq/ sounds are a challenge to the Xitsonga speakers so they tend to avoid using them and find replacements and that is not how these click words should be written.

#### **4.5 GENERAL WORDS**

There are general words which pose challenges to Xitsonga speaking people in terms of spelling. These words will be categorised into nouns, verbs and clicks and they are going to be discussed below:

##### **Nouns**

a. *Xibedhlele* (hospital)

*Xibedhlele* is sometimes misspelled as *xibedlele* and *xibedlhele*. This is mainly because it used to be written as *xibedlhele* and it was later changed into *xibedhlele* because the /h/ sound comes before the /l/ sound.

b. *Xinkwa* (bread)

*Xinkwa* is sometimes misspelled as *xikwa*, removing the nasal sound and that changes the meaning as *xikwa* means an earthworm.

c. *N'anga* (doctor)

*N'anga* is sometimes misspelled as *nanga* and the removal of the apostrophe changes the whole meaning as *nanga* means trumpet.

d. *Xintshabyana* (a small mountain)

*Xintshabyana* is sometimes misspelled as *xintshadyana* because people tend to confuse the /b/ sound with the /d/ sound.

e. *Ximudyana* (a small tree)

*Ximudyana* is sometimes misspelled as *ximubyana* as the /d/ sound is confused with the /b/ sound and that makes the word to be meaningless.

f. *Swipyopyi* (drugs)

*Swipyopyi* is sometimes misspelled as *switswotswi*; the sound /py/ just tends to be difficult to spell.

g. *Joko* (yoke)

*Joko* is sometimes misspelled as *goko*; people usually confuse the sound /g/ with the sound /j/ because an English /g/ sounds like /j/ in Xitsonga.

## **Verbs**

(32) a. *Huha* (play)

*Huha* is sometimes misspelled as *huhwa*; it is influenced about how people speak.

b. *Phyaphyarha* (boiling porridge, make bubbles)

*Phyaphyarha* is sometimes misspelled as *tshwatshwarha* and this refers to what happens to a burnt wound, so the meaning changes completely.

c. *Phyakutela* (crush lumps)

*Phyakutela* is sometimes misspelled as *tshwakutela*, it is influenced by how people speak and people hardly use the /phy/ sound.

d. *Cukumeta* (throw away)

*Cukumeta* is sometimes misspelled as *chukumeta*. *Chukumeta* is influenced by surnames like *Cawuke*, it is usually written as *Chauke* but the /h/ sound is not pronounced.

e. *Tlhantlha* (tear apart)

*Tlhantlha* is sometimes misspelled as *ntlhantlha*, since the second part of the word starts with a nasal it is assumed that the word should begin with a nasal.

f. *Phya* (get dry, evaporate)

*Phya* is sometimes misspelled as *tshwa* as people have some difficulties writing the sound /phy/ and that changes the meaning because *tshwa* means burn.

## 4.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter has discussed the compound and the borrowed words and the words that pose challenges to the Xitsonga speakers in terms of spelling according to their categories. It has been noted that compound words in Xitsonga no longer require a hyphen as advised by PanSALB. This issue might require revisiting as some words are too long that to jettison the hyphen is not always tenable.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to conclude the research study by presenting the summary, findings and recommendations.

#### 5.2 SUMMARY

**Chapter 1** deals with the aim of the study, research methods and the impact of phonetics and phonology on the Xitsonga orthography.

**Chapter 2** discusses the literature review, the history of Xitsonga orthography, the Tsonga Language Board, the Tsonga Language Committee, the Pan South African Language Board and Xitsonga orthography.

**Chapter 3** introduces the Xitsonga parts of speech and also deals with the words which pose a challenge to the Xitsonga speakers, in terms of spelling.

**Chapter 4** analyses the words which are problematic to the Xitsonga speakers in terms of spelling. It also analyses the rules of writing compounds and borrowed words according to the Pan South African Language Board.

**Chapter 5** serves as the conclusion of the research study.

#### 5.3 FINDINGS

The research study has discovered that:

- ◆ Many Xitsonga speakers cannot write or spell Xitsonga correctly.
- ◆ Many Xitsonga speakers are ignorant of spelling rules for Xitsonga.



◆Instead of using the official orthography, some Xitsonga speakers prefer to apply their non-standard dialects.

◆Xitsonga speakers prefer to borrow English words even if those words exist in Xitsonga.

#### **5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS**

◆The standard Xitsonga orthography should also embrace dialects, rather than concentrating on one dialect.

◆PanSALB should distribute the *Milawu ya Mapeletelo na Matsalelo ya Xitsonga-2008* guidelines book.

◆Parents should encourage their children to speak and embrace Xitsonga as much as possible as this strengthens the existence and growth of Xitsonga.

◆New words should be invented to avoid borrowing.

◆Code-switching should be encouraged as it contributes to the growth of Xitsonga in instances where equivalents are absent.

◆New Xitsonga dictionaries should be written based on the PanSALB rules of writing and spelling.

◆Xitsonga spelling rules should be introduced to learners as early as possible, that is, as of Grade 1.

◆Xitsonga spelling rules should be part of the curriculum at both the school and tertiary levels.

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