

**THE USE OF XITSONGA AT THE UNIVERSITY OF
LIMPOPO TURFLOOP CAMPUS: A SOCIOLINGUISTICS
ANALYSIS**

by

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DECLARATION

I, DELINA NKHWASHU declare that the mini-dissertation “The Use of Xitsonga at the University of Limpopo Turfloop Campus: A Sociolinguistics Analysis”, hereby submitted to the University of Limpopo, for the degree of Masters in Translation studies and Linguistics Studies has not previously been submitted by me at this or any other university; that it is my work in design and in execution, and that all material contained herein has been duly acknowledged.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my beloved mother, Mosokodi Anna Mawasha

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the effectiveness and relevance of Xitsonga at the University of Limpopo, Turfloop Campus. The study argues that as one of the six (6) official languages of Limpopo Province, Xitsonga deserves to be treated with the respect that it deserves. Although Xitsonga enjoys some recognition and support nationally and on campus, the study has discovered that there are problems associated with negative attitudes among Xitsonga speakers as they feel that the use of the English language enables them to be part of a global world. Furthermore, a major stumbling block with regard to the use of Xitsonga at the University of Limpopo Turfloop Campus is that some of its speakers hold a negative attitude towards their language as they prefer the use of English language for academic purposes. This is one reason English is still dominant amongst the student community as it is viewed as the language of the corporate world.

However, the study reveals that a large number of respondents now support the idea that Xitsonga should be used in all official communication. Finally, the study recommends the use of Xitsonga in social and educational settings. It also recommends the holding of workshops and cultural activities in order to further promote and revitalise the language and its people, thus widening the circle of its acceptance at the Turfloop Campus of the University of Limpopo and beyond.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTORY ORIENTATION

1.1 Introduction

There are many universities in South Africa such as the University of Cape Town, Limpopo, Venda, Pretoria, the Free State to mention but a few. All these universities have both students and staff who use different languages. This study will however concentrate on the use of Xitsonga at the University of Limpopo, Turfloop Campus.

The University of Limpopo is a cosmopolitan community, consisting of students and staff from various regions and countries who speak different languages. The languages that are spoken include English, Afrikaans, Northern Sotho, Sesotho, Setswana, Siswati, isiZulu, isiNdebele, isiXhosa, Shona, Tshivenda and Xitsonga. Xitsonga is one of the languages that is spoken by one of the minority groups at the University of Limpopo. It is important to mention that Xitsonga has been granted official status by the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. This simply shows that Xitsonga must enjoy parity of esteem and must be treated the same as other official languages (i.e. English, Afrikaans, Tshivenda, isiZulu, isiXhosa, Sesotho, Setswana, Siswati and isiNdebele).

The question that one may pose at this juncture is: what is a language? According to Sapir (1921:8) as quoted by Poole (1994:4) “language is a purely human and non-instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions and desires by means of a system of voluntarily produced symbols”. It is non-instinctive in that people can choose what to say or whether to say anything at all.

Poole (1994:4) states that, “these symbols are, in the first instance, auditory; thus language is primarily a matter of speech as opposed to sign language”. From this definition it is clear that language is a communication tool. It is a means through which people express their feelings. It may be verbal or non-verbal. It communicates ideas and emotions. According to Mothiba (2005:18), language is defined as “a communication of thoughts and feelings through a system of arbitrary signals, such as voice sounds, gestures or written symbols, as a

system used by a nation, people or other distinct communities”. This simply means that without a language there would hardly be any communication.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Xitsonga was introduced as a written language in 1874 when missionaries from Switzerland selected the Gwamba dialect to be codified. In the 1950s Xitsonga and the other eight indigenous languages were undermined by the apartheid government and their uses were restricted to oral official status during the apartheid era. These languages gained official status in 1994 at the commencement of the democratic government in South Africa. In South Africa there are 11 official languages which are stipulated in the constitution. Section 6 of the *Constitution of South Africa* (1996:04) states that “the official languages of the Republic of South Africa are Afrikaans, English, isiNdebele, isiXhosa, Sepedi, Setswana, Sesotho, isiSwati, Tshivenda and Xitsonga”.

At the University of Limpopo, there are many languages that are spoken and Xitsonga is one of them. This research is an attempt to investigate the way in which the native speakers of Xitsonga use their language as a communicating channel and a learning tool. Xitsonga was one of the marginalised languages before 1994 when South Africa became a democracy; this led to many Xitsonga speaking people to not be proud of using their language in public. Even after 1994, it seems there are still people who look down upon their own languages.

This is also confirmed by Murwamphida (2008:1) when she says: “some Africans are to blame for the lack of use of African languages in South Africa as they still harbour a negative attitude towards African languages”. The majority of literate Africans prefer to use English when communicating with each other. For example, one will find two native speakers of Xitsonga having conversation in English. Ngugi wa Thiong’o (1986:11) remarks that many Africans undermine and look down upon their own languages. This shows that some Africans choose to undermine their native languages under the guise of adhering to a quality way of education. There are some Africans who still do not understand that to be able to speak English does not necessarily mean that one is very highly educated.

In its language policy (2006:3), the University of Limpopo, among other things, states:

Xitsonga will be used as a medium of instruction in Xitsonga courses. At postgraduate level, candidates have the right to use Xitsonga as medium of instruction.

1.3 AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of this research is to examine the use of Xitsonga as a medium of instruction and learning as well as a means of general communication at the University of Limpopo. In order to achieve this aim, the following research questions will be posed:

- What attitude do students and staff have about Xitsonga?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of using Xitsonga as a medium of instruction at the University of Limpopo?

1.3.1 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this research are:

- To determine the perception of Xitsonga speaking students and staff about their language.
- To determine the perception of non-mother speakers of Xitsonga.
- To find out what the university of Limpopo is doing to promote Xitsonga.

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE

This research will draw attention to the university community to accord Xitsonga official status. It will help in the process of promoting the issue of multilingualism in South Africa; and it will also help to encourage the youth to use their languages.

1.5 SCOPE

The research will focus on the Use of Xitsonga at the University of Limpopo, Turfloop Campus.

1.6 METHODOLOGY

1.6.1 Research Design

The researcher intends to use the exploratory research design because it will help the research to gain insight into a situation, phenomena, communities, and individuals.

1.6.2 The Qualitative Research Method

The study will use the qualitative research method as it enables the researcher to obtain a good grasp of why things are occurring the way they do. In addition, this research method is suitable to this study as it will help the researcher to understand people's attitude towards Xitsonga and the meanings they attach to the use of Xitsonga at the University of Limpopo.

In this study stratified sampling has been used and it offers several advantages over simple random sampling.

- It can provide greater precision than a simple random sample of the same size.
- It provides greater precision, a stratified sample often requires a smaller sample, which saves money.
- It can guard against an "unrepresentative" sample (e.g., an all-male sample from a mixed-gender population).
- It ensures that the researcher obtains sufficient sample points to support a separate analysis of any sub-group.

There are other several major reasons why stratified sampling was preferred over simple random sampling. First, it assures that not only the overall population is represented but also key subgroups of the population, especially small minority groups. If we want to be able to talk about subgroups, this may be the only way to effectively assure we will be able to. If the subgroup is extremely small, we can use different sampling fractions (f) within the different strata to randomly over-sample the small group (although we will then have to weigh the within-group estimates using the sampling fraction whenever we want overall population estimates). When we use the same sampling fraction within strata we are conducting *proportionate* stratified random sampling. When we use different sampling fractions in the strata, we call this *disproportionate* stratified random sampling. Second, stratified random sampling will generally have more statistical precision than simple random sampling. That is why it is employed in this study. This will only be true if the strata or groups are homogeneous. If they are, we expect that the variability within-groups is lower than the variability for the population as a whole. Stratified sampling capitalises on that aspect.

1.6.3 Data Collection

Data collection will depend on two methods namely, the primary as well as secondary methods.

1.6.3.1 The primary research method

The researcher will use non-probability sampling because not every Xitsonga speaking person will take part in this study. The following people will be interviewed by using structured questions:

- 20 Xitsonga speaking students
- 20 students who are not speakers of Xitsonga
- 5 Xitsonga speaking academic staff of the University of Limpopo
- 10 Xitsonga administrative staff of the University of Limpopo

- 15 academics and administrative staff of the University of Limpopo who are not speakers of Xitsonga.

These respondents are relevant as they are located on the Turfloop Campus, and language matters directly affect them.

1.6.3.2 Secondary research method

Books, journals, articles and other relevant documents will be used to secure more information related to the study.

1.7 Data analysis

Data analysis will depend on the data captured from the questionnaires. In other words, the data will be analysed taking into account similarities and dissimilarities of the respondents. The responses will be analysed thematically.

1.8 LITERATURE REVIEW

In the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996), it is stated that everyone has the right to receive education in the language of his or her choice, where this is reasonably practicable. In order to ensure the effectiveness and implementation of this right, the state must consider all reasonable educational alternatives, including single medium institutions, taking into account:

- a) equity;
- b) practicability, and
- c) the need to redress the results of past racially discriminatory laws and practices.

Commenting on the state of affairs, Webb (1999:1) states:

The language stipulations of the South African Constitution (both the interim and the final, 1996 constitution) were, probably, a surprise to most language planners internationally, in that eleven languages were declared to be official languages at the national level.

It seems as if what is said in the Constitution (1996) is not yet practised at the University of Limpopo, Turfloop Campus. For example, Xitsonga is still offered as a mere course and there is no course which is offered using Xitsonga as a medium of instruction. Interviews for lecturers who are supposed to lecture African languages are still conducted in English. Another point is that a Mutsonga student cannot just proudly enter any office in the university and ask for help in his or her native language. The likelihood is that he/she might find himself or herself going away without the help that he or she needed, due to misunderstanding.

The right to receive education in the language of one's choice is also not yet practised as well because students still study subjects such as mathematics and science, to mention but a few, in English.

The National Language Policy Framework of 2002 section 1.3.2 says that "the Constitution emphasises that all official languages must 'enjoy parity of esteem' and be treated equitably, thereby enhancing the status and use of indigenous languages, with government taking 'legislative and other measures' to regulate and monitor the use of disadvantaged indigenous languages". It seems it might be helpful if the National Language Policy Framework can be urgently adopted as binding policy so that the government, institutions and individuals can be urged to implement it.

Attitudes also play a role in the way people view languages. Crystal (1992) defines language attitudes as "the feelings people have about their own language or the languages of others", Crystal further points out that these feelings may be negative or positive in South Africa. Colonialism implanted negative attitudes amongst the speakers of indigenous languages. For example, there is a saying that Xitsonga speakers are ugly, not clever, and are uncivilised. This has contributed to the issue of the negative attitude towards the Vatsonga themselves. In

many instances, Xitsonga speakers prefer to hide behind other languages, for example, when a Xitsonga speaker in Gauteng calls himself or herself a Zulu speaker.

Abegbija (1994:4) states that:

The quality of education also affects a society's awareness, progress, general well-being and productivity. In most African countries, as indicated earlier, indigenous languages are designated to function only at the lower levels or during the first few years of primary education.

This statement supports the issue of negative attitude that speakers of African languages have towards their own native languages. Adegbija (1994:33) further argues that “negative attitudes towards African languages in the domain of education would have changed drastically had post-colonial language and educational policy makers taken bold steps to install the use of indigenous African languages in the educational domain in general and higher levels of education in particular”. This argument suggest that there are a number of aspects that need to be done to change the negative attitude towards the use of indigenous languages.

In 1994 when South Africa became a democratic country, many parents saw the opportunity of taking their children out of the schools they were in and enrolling them in what was then called Model C schools. For many, this was seen as a move to give their children a “good” education which was to be given only in English medium schools. This contributed a great deal to the problem of children having a negative attitude towards indigenous languages. South Africa has many youngsters who do not know either English or their first language in a manner that they can fully express themselves, especially in formal settings. This matter was also observed by De Klerk (2000 in M.J. Probyn 2005) who states: “Township schools perceived that they are losing learners to previously “white” schools in the suburbs because their parents want them educated in English and in order to counter this trend are offering English as medium of instruction from grade 1”. This was also confirmed by the research conducted in Zimbabwe concerning the language policy of the Department of education by Ndamba (2008) which shows that “Africans still resist mother tongue education in favour of English which they view as a language of knowledge” (Ndamba, 2005:178).

In spite of the negative attitude that some people have against indigenous languages, there are many advantages of using mother tongue in learning, some of which are:

- It gives students a stronger sense of who they are as people.
- It helps students to understand themselves better; to know where they come from and their culture as well.
- It facilitates higher-level learning for students.
- It enables students to study the second language better and faster. If a student struggles to understand the second language one can translate from source language to target language.
- It provides a positive and non-threatening environment for students.

When a student knows a language he or she becomes confident to use it in public and is not ashamed of being a speaker of that language (Madadzhe and Sepota, 2006:157). Since 1994, the South African government has engaged in serious promotions of the use of African languages in many areas, including using them as mediums of instruction at school and tertiary levels. This possibility was brought about by the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) which grants recognition to 11 official languages. In as far as education is concerned, section 29 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa states:

Everyone has the right to receive education in the official languages of their choice in public educational institutions where that education is reasonably practicable.

In addition, the Language Policy for Higher Education (2002, paragraph 15.1) reinforces the aforementioned position because, while it acknowledges the importance of English and Afrikaans as entrenched mediums of instruction, it nevertheless encourages the implementation of multilingualism in higher education. This means that tertiary institutions must have their own language policies to cater for the promotion of multilingualism.

Bearne (1992:27) indicates that:

Some students clearly feel excluded from much of their education; not because they do not understand the language they encounter, but because they feel that their own spoken language is socially and culturally inferior.

Murwamphida (2008:4) notes that there is an assumption and fear that African indigenous languages do not have enough literature and that they lack adequate technical terms and vocabulary for teaching most of the subjects such as Natural Science and Mathematics, stating further that African languages are not being used much in education as a result they are dying because of globalisation and development.

1.9 ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY

Chapter one serves as an introductory orientation.

Chapter two deals with literature review which was used to support the topic in analysis.

Chapter three handles the history of Xitsonga and the literary achievement of Xitsonga.

Chapter four interprets and analyses the results of the study.

Chapter five gives recommendations and concludes the study.

1.10 Conclusion

This chapter indicated the general orientation of the study, providing the background and methods to be used to collect and analyse data. The next chapter will deal with literature review.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to look at the literature that deals with language attitudes and language policies as both these aspects are relevant to the topic under analysis.

2.2 Language attitudes

The purpose of this section is to outline how negative attitudes towards indigenous languages affect these languages. In this section the researcher will deal with language attitude and the discussion will be supported by views from a variety of scholars and authors.

As far as Crystal (1992:1) is concerned, “Language attitudes are the feelings people have about their own language or the languages of others. For example, mother tongue speakers may feel secure about their language and take pride in using it. If so, they may want their orthography to be very distinctive from other languages used in the country”. According to the definition above, it means the feeling that a speaker has about a language can be negative or positive. For example, if a Xitsonga speaker prefers to be called an isiZulu speaker, he/she will be displaying a negative attitude about his/her language. In the same vein, White (2010: 1) is of the view that “language attitude is the overall cultural opinion of language acquisition and a society's willingness to adopt new languages”.

On the issue of language attitude with regard to the French people, Gordon in Schiffman (1996: 78) notes that:

The French see their language as having the mission in the world; it is seen as universal, pure and lucid, the proper and appropriate medium of the value of humanism

Compared to African languages, one notices that French is regarded as more developed and its speakers have positive attitude towards their language. French speakers are able to protect their language from undue influence from other languages, because they value their language highly. Schiffman (1996: 79-80) confirms what has been stated above by stating:

French speakers have strong positive attitudes toward the French language; they think of it as characterised by rationality, lucidity and clarity, and they see it as strongly linked to aspects of French culture that they value highly.

This can help speakers of other languages to believe in their languages. Schiffman (1996: 80) goes on to write:

French speakers think of the French language not just as a vehicle of French culture, but as its highest embodiment. And since they see language and culture as strongly linked, they also fear that the spread of English will bring with it cultural values that they dislike.

Makamu (2009: 1) also points out:

First language speakers of African languages at the Turfloop Campus do not use their source languages. They shun their languages, preferring English language instead. This happens because they hold negative attitudes towards their source languages.

Makamu's view will help the researcher to assess the attitude of Vatsonga towards Xitsonga as the medium of instruction at the University of Limpopo, Turfloop Campus. According to Makamu (2009:10), people prefer English because they regard it as an international language, and this attitude puts African languages at a disadvantage. It also affects the growth of these languages in a negative manner.

Makamu (2009: 10) further states:

Students felt that using their mother tongue, especially in tutorials would help them, but it would create tensions and make speakers of other languages uncomfortable. Using English as a *lingua franca* was seen as the only "politically correct" option.

English is popular because students use it as a medium of instruction in class, and they also prefer it even outside the class room, even though they being to single African language.

Mbila in Makamu (2009:22) argues that “We do not find our mother tongue that important. You do not make overseas calls in your mother tongue; you do not use it in everyday life. It is not useful”. This confirms the fact that speakers of indigenous languages have negative attitude towards their languages and prefer to communicate in English rather than in their mother tongue. Of course there are reasons for this. In this regard, Webb and Kembo-Sure (2000: 4) indicate:

The striking preference in African communities for English, French, and Portuguese as languages of learning and teaching in pre-tertiary education suggests that Africans generally regard their languages as less fit for use in formal contexts.

The issue of language attitudes cannot be taken for granted. Abegbija (1994:108) confirms this when he states:

Language attitudes will most likely continue to be inflamed in most countries of sub-Saharan Africa if the multilingual reality of these countries is not recognised, accepted and reckoned with in educational language planning in particular and language planning in general.

From Abegbija’s view, one realises that multilingualism must be encouraged at schools and at higher education institutions. This will go a long way in helping indigenous languages to grow. Abegbija (1994:109) goes on to argue that “the lack of development of indigenous languages, which makes it impossible for most of them to function in literacy programmes, is a major contributory factor to high illiteracy rates”.

The use of a foreign language at an early age has its own demerits. Bell in Nxumalo (2000:13) illustrates:

It is possible that, by using a second language from too early on, we are stunting the development of our learners’ mother

tongues, impeding the development of their cognitive/academic abilities, promoting negative attitudes towards the mother tongue, and resulting in low achievement in conceptual subjects such as mathematics and science”.

Introducing education in mother tongue at an early stage is vitally important. It helps the child grow having positive attitude towards the mother tongue, and also helps the child learn a second language easily. Terminology must be developed in subjects such as mathematics and science so that prescriptive books can also be written in Xitsonga. When a large number of prescriptive books are written in Xitsonga it will be possible to the language as a introduce as medium of instruction in high school and in institutions of higher learning.

According to Makalela in Nxumalo (2000:15) “with regard to the pre-colonial era, there are virtually no written records of literacy and education, where the medium of teaching and learning can be discerned”. The lack of the written literature in Xitsonga contributes towards the lack of interest in the language. Xitsonga speakers need to be encouraged to have positive attitude towards their language so that they can write literature using their language. This will make the youth to have interest in Xitsonga.

De Klerk in Mabila (2000:15) observes that “the nine African languages that are currently official languages of the country were largely developed into their present standard forms, first through activities of missionaries and later through the efforts of the Afrikaner Nationalist government that came into power in 1948”. The nationalist government developed African languages in order to further isolate Africans, to put them in their own corner so that the policies of apartheid can easily take root. Because of colonisation African people still look down upon their languages. They do not have the passion and trust that their language can be developed like English or other international languages.

On the other hand, as De Klerk in Mabila (2000:18) points out, “for Afrikaans and English speaking children all the conditions for them to acquire the other official language were set up”. It is easy for them to be educated because they are using their mother tongue and they are able to find out their careers while they are still young because they are taught in their mother tongue. They also have positive attitude towards their mother tongues.

The *Sunday Times* in Mabila (2000:29) observes that, “who can blame teenagers for shunning their mother tongues? For them, English is the future, a language that represents progress, opportunities and modernity. The ability to speak English has become a new status symbol”. This means that the youth of today see English as the best language in South Africa, full of opportunities, unlike their mother tongues. This means that organisations such as PanSALB still have a challenge to encourage the youth to consider African languages as valuable. Or else, the country may face language shift, which will in turn lead to language death to some languages such as Xitsonga.

These negative attitudes against mother tongue education are further denounced by Webb in Nxumalo (200:31) who also underscores the “mismatch between policy and practice which is found in the domain of language in education”. This statement indicates that language policies are not implemented in regularly. Where language policies are implemented, there is no monitoring tool to evaluate if the language policies are indeed being implemented.

Bamgbose (1991:64) points out:

This is largely restricted to those countries that have a mother tongue education policy, particularly at primary level. Variations are possible, as in those cases where certain so-called easy subjects, such as Nature Study or Story-telling are taught in a mother tongue, while more difficult Subjects such as Arithmetic and Geography are taught in a LWC. The use of an African mother tongue as a medium of instruction beyond primary level is rare.

Bamgbose’s opinion confirms that prescriptive books especially in subjects such as mathematics and science are hardly written in mother tongue. This is one of the reasons why mother tongue has not yet been introduced as a medium of instruction in South Africa, yet as has been argued African languages are good enough to serve as media of teaching and learning.

Transvaal United African Teachers’ Association (TUATA) in Nxumalo (2000:94) notes:

... our languages are self-sufficient to express our thoughts, feelings and aspirations. We use them in our gatherings to express certain points and related ideas. But we do not accept the imposition of these languages over us by officialdom. It is

not our intention to down-grade our languages. But we deplore it when they are used to divide and separate us as a people.

Economic reasons also play a role in the way people view African languages.

Malibane in Mabila (2007:109) indicates:

African languages are not languages which will give socio-economic mobility to the Africans, as they are not used in business. Most Africans are unable to study an African language to a higher level because it cannot provide them with opportunities associated with the admired and respected groups, and to participate in the lucrative market.

This statement shows that African languages are not used in business because of lack of commercial terminology. This means that there is a need for funds to develop African languages, especially terminologies in, for example commerce and science. This will encourage the youth to have positive attitude in learning their mother tongue further, knowing that they will be a position to use them in the business world .

Hachipola in Mabila (2007:110) points out:

Some people who ethnically belong to a minority language do not even know their language. They speak one of the major languages.

Hachipola's view confirms that the loss of interest by speakers of African languages in their own languages is due to the negative attitude they hold towards their mother tongue. Most of them adopt English as their mother tongue because of its international status, not knowing that by so doing they are killing their mother tongue. This means that there is a need for change of attitude towards these languages in order to add value and develop African languages.

Alexander (1990:194) states that "the problem of culture ... is essentially a problem of how best we can maintain and develop the various cultural forms in a language". This suggests that there must be strategies to develop a culture of a certain language. The more the language is spoken, the more the culture develops.

Alexander (1990:194) goes on state:

I have my doubts whether Lwo language can express in all its fineness Lusoga songs, and yet I consider that Uganda's policy to teach more and more English should be matched with the teaching of some other African language.

It is important that languages of the country must be developed equally because it helps the speakers of such languages to have positive attitudes towards their languages. Alexander (1990:194) poses some pertinent questions:

We are trying to think about a possible answer to the question of why we need an African language as a national language? Do we need it merely for political purposes, for addressing public meetings, for talking in Council? Do we need it as a language for workers; to enable them to talk and argue their terms with their employers? Do we need such a language to cover every aspect of our lives intellectually, politically, economically?

Using a language in all its aspects helps it to grow and flow to the next generation. Children will inherit the love of the language from their parents and such a language will be utilised and passed from generation to generation. The importance of a language cannot be overemphasised as Alexander (1993:1) shows:

During the rule of Lord Milner (1901-1905) and of Verwoerd and Vorster (1958-1979), social conflict was articulated, among other ways, in terms of the use and recognition of Afrikaans in the schools that catered for Afrikaans-speaking white and Bantu speaking black children respectively. It was the Soweto Uprising of 1976, as we now know, that set off the series of tremors that eventually caused the implosion of the apartheid state.

If the South African youth of today were united like the youth of 1976, in fighting for the use of mother tongue as a medium of instruction in schools and higher institutions of learning, it was going to be easy to conquer the negative attitude towards indigenous languages. This was going to pressurise the government to implement language policy by investing more in indigenous languages. This would also convince the private sector to invest in the

development of indigenous languages. Institutions of higher learning were also going to put more effort in the development of indigenous languages.

Alexander (1990:199) argues:

Our point of departure must be that all languages spoken by the people of South Africa have an equal right to flourish, having due regard to the economic and technical constraints that inevitably limit the implementation of policy. This position is not based on sentiment or on some ethnic mystique but rather on the fact that no language is inherently superior or inferior to another.

This argument indicates that the economic constraints must not be a stumbling block to the development of indigenous languages and must not be an excuse for the speakers of indigenous languages to have a negative attitude towards their languages. For example, one might find a Xitsonga speaking person preferring to buy English books than Xitsonga books because of being ashamed of using his/her language . This gives the impression that this person does not understand that there is no language that is superior or inferior to the other.

2.3 Language policy

The purpose of this section is to outline the importance of language policy in various schools and institutions of higher learning. It also discusses the importance of implementing language policy as a way of contributing to language development.

Webb in Rammala (2002:22) states that, a policy must be a legal document that sets out precise aims and objectives concerning provisions regarding language, its management mechanism and arrangement which clearly outlines support services to be provided, as well as details on funding, complaints and mediation. A policy should indicate how language can make people economically active and contribute towards economic growth, which is another facet of transforming society (Rammala, 2002:23). According to Webb in Rammala (2002:23), “a policy is a mission statement: a detailed list of tasks to be performed in order to realise the version the political leaders have for the country as a whole”. What all this means is that a policy is drafted by political leaders in order to achieve certain goals, this also helps

in solving certain problems in the country. Usually, the government also regulate the implementation of the policy in order to see if some problems are being solved and if some stipulations can be changed or improved.

In this regard, Alexander (1993:2) reveals:

... (Language) is built into the economic and social structure of society so deeply that its fundamental importance seems only natural. For this reason, language policies are often seen as expressions of natural, common-sense assumptions about language in society.

A language policy helps to solve natural conflicts among people who speak different languages. Sometimes a language policy is used to oppress people using other languages. For example the apartheid government used language policy to oppress South Africans who did not speak Afrikaans. In spite of their objections, other population groups were compelled to use Afrikaans in formal settings, for example in school.

Sometimes there is no correlation between theory and practice. Alexander (1991:116) explains:

Declaration of policy without implementation can take one of three forms. First, a policy may be declared which in the circumstances cannot be implemented, and policy-makers are aware of this. For example, when a country declares that pre-primary education shall be in the mother tongue and there are no pre-primary schools in the country, the policy is only for propaganda purposes.

This statement points out what is also happening in South Africa because since 1994 little has been done about language issues. Languages such as Tshivenda and Xitsonga still feel inferior to other South African languages and their development has not yet been seen by speakers of these languages.

Rammala (2002:24) argues:

The Limpopo provincial language-in-education policy states that the learning of more than one language must be a general practice and principle and that it aims to promote societal and individual multilingualism by maintaining home languages while providing access and effective acquisition of additional languages.

The language policy of South Africa seems good on paper, but in implementation it is hard to see its validity because the youth of today do not know their mother tongue, neither do they know English. Alexander (1991:205) writes:

Because of the peculiar demands made on language users at different levels of maturity, no rigid prescriptions can or should be made. Certain principles are, however, beyond question. For example, parents will be allowed to send their children to the pre-schools and schools shall learn the language(s) used at those schools.

This indicates that it is not a must that people have to follow the policy because parents still choose to take their children to private schools where their mother tongue is not taught or used as a medium of instruction. Children end up not knowing their mother tongue because they learn the language that is used in that particular school, either English or Afrikaans.

Parents also influence the languages that should be used. Nxumalo (200:29) indicates that “the parents do not simply demand the teaching of English second language to their children”, but expect the schools to teach their children English first language. Responding to what he called “imperialism”, the former Limpopo MEC for Sport, Arts and Culture, Mr. Joe Maswanganyi, attached educators and parents who did not want to see African languages taught at Capricorn High School:

The recent discussion about African languages in schools is an attempt to undermine the achievements of our revolutionary democracy. In the process, the same victims of imperialism and colonisation are being brainwashed into believing that perfecting English must be at the expense of African languages... Those who are undermining our African

languages have become irrelevant to our cause of building a new society (Northern Review in Nxumalo 2000:30).

It is unfortunate for parents to disagree on the implementation of a language policy, including indigenous languages in private schools. This hinders the development of indigenous languages and the implementation of the country's language policy.

Alexander (1990:208) proposes a solution to this problem:

Education faculties at universities and teacher training colleges have a special responsibility in anticipating future developments along the lines I have sketched. Teacher trainees ought not to be certificated unless they have a sound knowledge of English and communicative competence in one or more of the indigenous languages. To make this possible, it will be necessary to upgrade the level, content and methodology of language classes throughout tertiary institutions and especially in education departments. A well-trained and properly prepared core of teachers will be one of the main guarantees of successful implementation of policies agreed as being appropriate to the new realities which are emerging in South Africa.

Cooper in Rammala (2002:21) points out that:

The apartheid language policies were aimed at strengthening elite power and they created problems for the majority of the South Africa citizens, mostly the Bantu languages speaking people. He goes on to argue that political and economic elites or counter elites benefit most of the time.

This statement supports the argument that language policy is sometimes used to oppress other languages.

Bamgbose (1991:121) states that "when language policies are not arbitrary, there are a number of possible inputs that may influence their formulation". A language policy can help solve social economic and racial issues. It can also guide the speakers of various languages on how to treat each other when coming to language matters. It can also help the people to contribute in the development of multilingualism and to respect each other's languages.

Another thing which can help in implementing a language policy is that everybody must be encouraged to participate in language policy making.

Bamgbose (1991:122) presents a convincing suggestion when he indicates:

If a government is planning to choose a language as medium of instruction, it would need to know how many people speak the language, whether as a first or second language, and in which domains, what proportion of the school population speak the language in question as a lingua franca, whether the language is already attitudes of native speakers and others are to the language.

The viewpoint above stipulates that compiling the sociolinguistic profile is important when drafting a language policy. It also contributes to the understanding of the problems that the people of the country might be facing. The policy also helps to guide the leadership and the citizens of the country in how solving the problems that have been indicated in the sociolinguistic profile.

Academics should also play a role as far as curricula are concerned as Rammala (2002:25) illustrates:

The national curriculum is the domain of education planners, some of whom may be linguists. Empowered by law they decide in issue like school readiness and admission age, the length of primary school education, the length of compulsory education. The choice of medium of instruction is very important in primary school education, as pupils are then first introduced to formal education. The vehicle of transmitting education should be most appropriate to assist starting learners to learn and achieve their educational goals maximally.

So, it is important to encourage everybody to participate so that there will be no hindrances in implementing the policy, this will also contribute in the development of multilingualism in the country.

Languages are important in the delivery of education in schools. Pretorius (2007:68) comments:

The language and reading abilities of the Grade 6 and 7 learners at school M are also tested once a year towards the end of the year, to provide a comparative perspective on the literacy development of learners in the township context. Since no African languages are taught as a subject at the private school, the Northern Sotho tests were not administered to the Grade 6 and 7s at this school; they only completed the English language and reading tests.

This shows that learners sometimes are being disadvantaged because of the failure of teachers to correctly implement the language policy. This might be due to their poor training. Lack of literature in indigenous languages also contributes in poor teaching by teachers. Pretorius (2007:84) adds:

In order to develop good readers in the African languages, more reading needs to be done in these languages, more books and a greater variety of books need to be written in the African languages and put in classrooms, and enthusiasm for reading in the African languages needs to be nurtured. As a result of the intervention project, the two township schools are gradually adopting many of the characteristics of reading schools and reading levels in both languages are slowly improving.

This shows that something has to be done urgently, especially in terms of writing literature in indigenous languages as this will promote smooth learning and teaching in South African schools. The shortage of literature in African languages is a serious problem which needs close attention. Children are tomorrow's nation and if they are not given quality education which is culturally and social relevant, the nation of tomorrow will suffer.

Taking into account the challenges that may be encountered in this regard. Bamgbose (1991:123) notes:

Where there is doubt concerning whether to introduce an indigenous language as a second language to be taught as a

subject in the school system, the availability of adequate descriptive studies which could serve as a basis for the production of materials may sway the decision in favour of introducing it.

The problem of shortage of literacy delays the introduction of mother tongue as a medium of instruction in some schools. This means that it might take time to see the implementation of an effective language policy in schools and institutions of higher learning. Drastic measures should be taken in order to solve problems related to the implementation of language policy.

Bamgbose (1991:124) suggests:

The one advantage that commissions have is that they give an opportunity for experts to have an input into the decision-making process, irrespective of whether their opinion is accepted or not. Even when a government has decided on a policy contrary to expert advice, at least it cannot turn round and claim that it has not been made aware of alternative courses of action.

In spite of some challenges, there is hardly any doubt that South Africa is trying its best to provide support to all official languages. In this regard, Pretorius (2007:86) points out:

We can be proud of South Africa's progressive school language policy, and we can applaud the moves to ensure that children initially acquire literacy in their home languages and that their home languages continue to be taught and supported after they have changed to English as a LoLT. However, in multilingual developing countries where poverty is wide schooling conditions are less than ideal, where print resources are scarce, where literacy levels in the surrounding communities are low, and where there are few educational opportunities for extensive reading in a home language, a far more complex schooling is needed to overcome the challenges facing schools.

One thing which is needed is for the public and other important stakeholders to participate in the contribution of implementing the language policy. The private sector can also take part in investing more in the implementation of the language policy. It may not seem beneficial, but

South Africans will see the benefit in the near future when the country will be having a huge number of well educated and successful people.

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter has shown how negative attitudes towards the use of indigenous languages are threatening the growth and the development of these languages. It has shown the efforts some scholars have put to encourage the change of negative attitude towards a more positive attitude in order to help indigenous languages to grow. It is clear from the literature that this will not be easy without the full participation of the government, the private and public sectors and the relevant stakeholders. The chapter also indicated that effective language policy can help develop the indigenous languages as long as this policy is implemented.

CHAPTER 3

THE HISTORY AND THE LITERARY ACHIEVEMENTS IN XITSONGA

3.1 Introduction

This chapter concentrates on the origin of Vatsonga and Xitsonga, codification of Xitsonga, and explains why Xitsonga is offered at universities. The chapter also discusses literary achievements of Xitsonga.

3.2 THE ORIGIN OF VATSONGA AND XITSONGA

Boonzaaier (2002) states that the name Tsonga comes from the Mozambican "Ronga," meaning "from the east." This indicates that Vatsonga are originally from the east, their language having originated there. This also means that their language was named according to the direction of their location where they originally come from (which is the eastern side) of Southern Africa.

Boonzaaier 2002 also observes:

Tsonga is a South Bantu language, part of the larger Niger-Congo family of languages. It developed from Zulu, southern Mozambican Thonga, and Tembe and forms a bridge between Shona and Nguni. There are four Tsonga language groups: Tshwa (spoken in Mozambique); Ronga dialects (Mozambique); the Northern Province Tsonga dialects; and Maputsu or Tembe (Ingwavuma-district of Kwazulu-Natal, South Africa).

This indicates that Xitsonga is formed out of many dialects and this might be influenced by the migration of people during the times of wars and famine. This might mean that these dialects were mutually intelligible. It is hard to get concrete information about this because most of Vatsonga history is not written or recorded in reliable studies.

Junod (1977:9) says that “Vutsonga i byikulu, byi entile, byi anamile. A byi tiviwi hi lavanyingi, a byi tiviwi hi munhu un’we”. This shows that Xitsonga is broad, wide and deep. The information about Vatsonga is not known by many because their history was not recorded as they were illiterate. The Portuguese are the ones who first captured the information about the history of Vatsonga. It is possible that some of the information might not have been well captured because the Portuguese recorded what they saw only and they wrote according to their understanding.

Junod (1977: 19) points out:

Sweswi Vatsonga va le kusuhi ni timiliyoni tinharhu: ERhodesia (50 000), eMozambique kusuhi ni timiliyoni timbirhi, na le Tranvaal (737 000). Va tele swinene emadorobeni, ePretoria, eJohannesburg, eka Mpfumu. Va tele emigodini. Vutsonga byi va hlanganisa hinkwako.

This argument shows where Vatsonga were originally located and also where they migrated to because of jobs, better education, service delivery and access to better life. The major cause of migration for Vatsonga from Mozambique was wars among them which lasted many years in that country. Even today South African still receives many migrants from Mozambique because of poverty.

Junod (1977:21) observes that “... Vatsonga va le vuxeni, laha ririmi ra vona ri nga tumbuluka kona ...” This means that Xitsonga originated from the east. It also indicates that Xitsonga language started in the South-eastern side of Africa and later developed as a spoken and written language.

Colonialism also had a role to play regarding the status of Vatsonga. Portugal ruled Mozambique as its colony, and in most cases, the Portuguese rule was not conducive to progress and peace among the Vatsonga. In this regard Mathumba in Nxumalo (2000:68) states:

Nghunghunyana and his sons, as well as his uncle Mpisane were captured by the Portuguese for deportation, but Nghunghunyana secured the release of his sons as well as his uncle Mpisane in exchange for diamonds. When Nghunghunyana had been deported and the whole of Mozambique placed under Portuguese rule, Mpisane decided to move into the Transvaal and between 1879 and 1900 many Shangaans followed him. They settled in the Bushbuckridge area with Mpisane as their chief.

This indicates that the Portuguese started to fight Vatsonga-Mashangana after they realised that their country was rich in diamonds, and they arrested Nghunghunyana's sons and his uncle Mpisane. After experiencing this tragedy, Nghunghunyana decided to give them diamonds and the Portuguese released Nghunghunyana's sons and his uncle Mpisane and they chased them away from their country.

Makamu (1985) confirms the struggle of Vatsonga from Mozambique. He writes about the pain which Vatsonga went through when the Portuguese attacked them and took all their wealth and killed some of them. He also explains the way Vatsonga ran for their lives to South Africa. They moved from Mozambique to South Africa on foot. They did not even use wagons because the Portuguese did not allow them to prepare themselves for the journey. Some of them did not even have food for the journey. They survived on wild fruit and by hunting wild animals.

They walked until they reached Nkomati River where they took a rest and drank water and washed themselves. After that they continued with their journey and they walked until they reached Libombo (Rivombo) mountains where they found some huts which were left by those who were deported first, and after they took a rest they continued with their journey until they reached the Swazi people who fought with them. However, they continued with

their journey being guided by some of the things they met on the way that were indicating the Xitsonga culture and lifestyle. They survived wild animals and rains. They finally found the place where Mpisane and others who followed him settled in, and Mpisane gave them the land. Mpisane got this land from the Basotho who ran away from their place because of being afraid of the Swazi people. Mpisane found an empty land and requested from the Swazi people if it was possible for him to occupy it, and the Swazi people told him that he had to ask for permission from the Basotho because they were the owners of the land. Mpisane did so, and the Basotho gave him the permission to occupy the land.

After Mpisane and those who followed him had arrived in South Africa, Mpisane realised that he was old enough to excuse himself from the responsibility of leading as the chief. He announced to the people that he would no longer be able to lead them but he would allow Nghunghunyana's son Msinganyela to be their leader. Msinganyela was going to be the one who would lead the people for a while until the proper chief Buyisonto came and continued to lead. Msinganyela was from the royal house but was not the one who was supposed to be the chief after Nghunghunyana.

When Msinganyela was inaugurated, Buyisonto was in jail in Mozambique together with his father Nghunghunyana, having been arrested by the Portuguese. He finally got released but his father died in jail. Buyisonto arrived in South Africa after some years his brother Msinganyela was ruling the Vatsonga. It was a huge excitement for Vatsonga to see Buyisonto and they prepared a ceremony to inaugurate him as their chief.

Makamu's book also points out that those who did not come to South Africa were made slaves by the Portuguese. Mathumba in Nxumalo (2000:69) maintains that the man who played a significant role in settling the Vatsonga refugees in the Northern Transvaal was Joao Albasini, a Portuguese merchant who had been appointed Vice-Counsel by the British government. All this confirms that Vatsonga came to South Africa as refugees who escaped the war which was started by the Portuguese in Mozambique. It also indicates that the South

African government which was under British rule then welcomed the Vatsonga from Mozambique to stay here in South Africa because of their situation in Mozambique.

According to Mathumba in Nxumalo (2000:70) the Vatsonga clans, the Nkuna, moved further north and settled near the confluence of the Limpopo river until they reached the east coast of Mozambique not far from the Limpopo river.

This narration points out that during the migration process the Vatsonga were migrating according to their clans or families. This was done in order to protect each other, from other ethnic groups in the areas they passed.

Whilst a larger number of Vatsonga remained in Mozambique, a significant group of them settled in South Africa. The political situation in South Africa also had an impact on the lives of the Vatsonga people.

www.kwintessential.co.uk/language/about/xitsonga.html - observes:

During the apartheid period, the ruling National Party's policy of Grand Apartheid was built on a vision of ethno-linguistically discrete territories for South Africa's indigenous population. Beginning after 1960, the widely condemned "Bantustan" policies of Prime Minister H.F. Verwoerd resulted in the creation of ten self-governing territories in predominantly rural areas of South Africa. Thus the independent territory of "Gazankulu" was created in the northern Transvaal (today the Northern Province), to serve as the designated homeland of Xitsonga speakers. This territorial authority was subsequently reincorporated into the Northern Province administration.

This statement indicates how the apartheid government used its power to oppress and divide black people. They knew that if they could create policies which would make South Africans

to be divided, it would be easy for them to oppress them. Indeed the creation of homelands made black people to have negative attitude towards each other and also created hatred among them.

Boonzaaier (2002): indicates where Vatsonga were located at the time:

About 700,000 Tsongas still live in the rural communal territories comprised of three areas (northern, central, and southern) in the east of the Northern Province of South Africa, divided into seven districts (Giyani, Malamulele, Hlanganani, Ritavi 1, Ritavi 2, Lulekani, and Mhala) with a total area of 2,535 square miles (6,565 square kilometers).

Northern Province is now called Limpopo Province. Mhala district was changed to Bohlabela district after 1994 and now it no longer falls under Limpopo Province but under Mpumalanga Province.

Apartheid policies also negatively influenced the status of African languages including Xitsonga. Mathumba (2000) argues:

The apartheid government undermined the development of the African languages. The government did not fund the development of Xitsonga as it did with Afrikaans and English. Xitsonga was not used as one of the official languages.

This statement proves that, because of the lack of contribution from the government during the apartheid era on the development of Xitsonga, the policy impacted on the language itself and its speakers. The speakers of Xitsonga developed a negative attitude towards their language and also felt inferior when they were among other people who speak other languages. This happens even today and it might take some years for the problem to disappear.

Mathumba (2000) also observes:

While other African languages are promoted in the media such as TV and newspapers, Xitsonga and Tshivenda are marginalised. There is also little use of the language either as medium of instruction at schools or as subject. According to statistics from the Department of Education for 1997, only 1% of schools uses Xitsonga in some form as medium of instruction. 23 012 Matric candidates had Xitsonga as First language subject in 1999; only 5 took It as an additional language subject. The language is also threatened by negative attitudes of some mother-tongue speakers.

Mathumba's observation as reflected above confirms the negative attitude which has developed towards Xitsonga speaking people and the major threats to the development and growth of Xitsonga. This means that major steps of preventing the situation to continue must be taken and be implemented as soon as possible before the language faces the situation of language death.

Although apartheid was largely negative regarding the lives of African people, it contributed to the development of African languages in its own strange ways.

www.kwintessential.co.uk/language/about/xitsonga.html - points out:

Under apartheid, separate language boards were also created for each of the nine standardised indigenous languages, including Xitsonga. The Tsonga Language Board played an important role in the development of terminology and the standardisation of orthography. It also had a screening role, limiting protest and restricting content to "cultural" issues. The old board was disbanded in 1994 and its functions were eventually transferred to a new national body.

This means that despite the lack of support from government, Xitsonga had a language board which strove to develop the terminology for Xitsonga. The board was also responsible for regulating the use of Xitsonga. Even though Xitsonga was not given the official status, it was used in schools, churches, courts of law by the interpreters and also in the social sphere. The

advent of democracy in South Africa in 1994 brought about some major changes as far as the development of languages is concerned.

www.kwintessential.co.uk/language/about/xitsonga.html - also observes:

Following the democratic transition 1994 responsibility for language policy and development now rests with the Department of Sports Arts and Culture. A new body – the Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB) – was also created and charged with responsibility for language planning. PanSALB has sought to facilitate the further development of the language. Under PanSALB there are now a Tsonga Language Unit and a Tsonga Lexicography Unit. The former promotes the use of the language, while the latter is responsible for developing terminology in the language. The development of the language in education has proven to be especially difficult.

This means that the institutions mentioned above work hand in hand in developing the previously marginalised languages. The development includes the coinage and the development of new terminologies, encouragement of literature writing, especially for educational purposes; encouraging the youth to write literature using their mother tongues. The institutions also have the responsibility of promoting multilingualism in South Africa.

3.2.1 CODIFICATION OF XITSONGA

The codification of Xitsonga was not an easy process. However, a start had to be made. As it was not possible to codify every Xitsonga dialect. The missionaries reduced to writing the dialect that they first encountered, namely, Xigwamba. In this regard Bill and Masunga (1983:26) illustrate:

In August 1873, Paul Berthoud together with the Rev. Adolphe Mabile of the Paris Evangelical Mission Society arrived at the fortress of Jogo Albasini on an exploratory trip into the

Northern Transvaal. Also in the group were two Basotho evangelists, Eliakim Matlanyane and Asser Segagabane. Albasini and the other scattered white settlers in the area were in favour of mission work being established among the Magwamba, living in the plains below the mountains. The Revds. Schwellnus and Beuster of the Berlin Mission had started work among the Venda, living in the mountains of the Soutpansberg, several years before. After experiencing the warm welcome offered by Albasini and the German missionaries, and becoming aware of the favourable prospects for mission work in the area, Paul Berthoud made an offer to buy the farm Klipfontein, belonging to a Scot named Watt, settled the two evangelists on the farm, and returned to Lesotho. Two years later, he journeyed back to the Soutpansberg with his family, together with the Revd. Ernest Creux, his family, and the family of Eliakim Matlanyane. They found that Segagabane and Matlanyane had already established a small school, and had translated the Lord's Prayer and several hymns from Sesotho into Gwamba, unfortunately, no trace of these first translations can be found.

The Missionaries are the ones who codified the Xitsonga language with the aim of spreading the Word of God. They arrived in Valdezia where they met the Vahlengwe who spoke the Xigwamba dialect and they chose two men to be with them and to teach them the Xigwamba dialect.

When the missionaries arrived they found the people were using the Xigwamba dialect but they ended up codifying Xinkuna dialect. Perhaps one of the two men they chose by the name Zambiki spoke Xinkuna dialect. Nevertheless, like in other instances, the missionaries translated the Bible from English into Xitsonga.

Bill and Masunga (1983:26) provided more details in this regard:

A catechism class had also been started, and as soon as the missionary families were settled in their simple shacks, Berthoud and Creux, with the help of their evangelists and two young Gwamba men, Mbizana, a speaker of the Hlengwe

dialect, and Zambiki, a speaker of the Nkuna dialect, both of whom had a knowledge of Sesotho, began the task of translating the Bible for their catechumens. They took as their model the Sotho Bible which had first been published in portions during the previous forty years 2,3. The first published work in Gwamba was the *Buku ya Tšikwembo tšinwe na Tisimo ta Hlengeletano* (1883), printed in Lausanne. This 'Book of God together with songs for the congregation' contained a translation of the first five chapters of Genesis, the Ten Commandments, a selection from the Gospels and the words of 57 hymns. In the same year, Paul Berthoud's *Lecons de šigwamba*, the first Tsonga grammar book, was published. The manuscripts for the first school reader had been ready since 1877, but publication was delayed until 1884, when *Dyonda ko hlaya*, appeared. This was the fore-runner to the series *šipele ša šigwamba - abecedaire gouamba* which was published in 1891.

The statement above indicates that the two men from Lesotho also played a role in reducing Xitsonga to writing. This is the reason why Xitsonga used the Sesotho speech sound (sh) until Professor Ntsan'wisi decided to change it to (x) in order to have the uniqueness in the Xitsonga language.

3.3 WHY XITSONGA IS OFFERED AT VARIOUS UNIVERSITIES

According to the language policy framework for higher education in South Africa (2001:4), Xitsonga is offered in three Universities which are: University of South Africa, University of Venda for Science and Technology and University of Limpopo, Turfloop campus. The University of Venda for Science and Technology and the University of Limpopo, Turfloop campus are in Limpopo Province, because of their location they had to cater for people living around them. The University of South Africa (UNISA) is based in Pretoria, but with branches of all over the country. Some branches of UNISA are in Limpopo Province where many Vatsonga live. Some of them are students of UNISA and therefore, it is important for them to be offered Xitsonga.

The recommendations of the Ministerial Committee

The recommendations in the report entitled: *The development of indigenous African languages as mediums of instruction in higher education* recommends that each university has to select an African language for this purpose. In regions in which both the Nguni and Sotho languages are strongly represented, universities could consider selecting one Nguni language and one Sotho language for specific development.

The language profile of the students at Universities

It is important for universities to have their sociolinguistic profiles before drafting their language policies and before selecting any language out of those nine previously marginalised languages for development. The sociolinguistic profile will help universities to know which languages have the majority students and which languages used by the students are more developed than others.

Financial concerns

The number of African languages that are identified for development will have financial implications for universities. Although the government has indicated that funds will be allocated for the development of African languages as teaching languages at higher education level, one cannot rely entirely on this. Therefore, the financial implications of such an undertaking will have to be considered carefully. Universities should therefore earmark one African language or two languages at most, for development. Others will have to follow at a later stage.

The strategic importance of developing the previously marginalized languages

The development of previously marginalised languages as languages of common use and as mediums of communication at universities is not only of strategic importance, but also a moral and educational necessity. Universities should therefore commit themselves to developing these languages as languages of teaching, as well as to using them as instruments for ensuring student recruitment and student retention.

3.4 LITERARY ACHIEVEMENTS IN XITSONGA

Bill and Masunga (1983:28) observe

..... the first fifty-five years of writing in Tsonga was dominated by white, European, and predominantly Swiss writers and translators. From 1938 onwards however, the Tsonga literary scene has witnessed the emergence of numbers of Tsonga writers. Their growing self-awareness, developing skill in the handling of literary genres, and their search for self-identity through literature, can only be a sign of hope for the future.

The role played by missionaries and others in writing Xitsonga books is highly appreciated, and now Vatsonga are encouraged to continue to write books in Xitsonga. By doing this they will be making a huge difference in developing the Xitsonga language.

Bill and Masunga (1983:30) indicate the first written school text books written in Xitsonga:

By 1938, *šipele ša šitonga*, the Tsonga primer, had reached its 10th 'edition', having actually been revised twice. Other readers and text books available included Arithmetic *kumbe buku ya tinhlayo* (1902) and *Geografy kumbe vutivi bya misava (1901) - the manuscripts of both of these, by Henri Berthoud, had in fact been ready for printing since 1887 I; the *Buku ya vahlayi*, the school reader, had reached its 4th edition by 1929; a school hymnbook *Tinsimu ta šikolo* was at its 2nd edition in 1930; the Revd. Alexandre Jaques' *Buku ya hygiene*

was published in 1926; and H.A. Junod's *Vutivi*: notions of elementary science appeared in 1925. At the turn of the century in Pretoria, the Rev. Numa Jaques had published his own primer *šipelenyana ša šigwamba* (1900 and 1905 editions), a short story of a religious nature, **Odušina*, the story of a liberated slave, and a history of the first 25 years of mission work, *khale na Tšetši*. These latter works are worthy of mention as being the first South African publications in Tsonga.

It is important that this is mentioned so that the people who left the legacy of making sure that the codification of Xitsonga is successful one known and acknowledged . This will also encourage the Vatsonga to continue to sustain the growth of their language by writing more school text books as it is highly needed now in order to implement the use of Xitsonga as a medium of instruction for academic purposes.

Bill and Masunga (1983:30) point out

The total output of Tsonga publications up to the end of what we have called the missionary era was some 70 titles, a tribute to the zeal and dedication, not only of the Swiss missionaries, but of others also, from other societies and churches, who faced severe hardships, difficult climatic conditions, isolation, inter-tribal and inter-racial conflicts, and personal tragedy in the fulfillment of their calling to bring salvation, education and health to the Tsonga people of the Transvaal and Mozambique.

This statement indicates the hardship that people faced when introducing Xitsonga into writing. Currently a good body of Xitsonga literature does exist.

What follows are examples of such works:

| GENRE | AUTHOR | YEAR | TITLE |
|--------------|-----------------|-------------|---------------|
| Novel | Marivate C.D.T. | 1938 | Sasavona |
| Novel | Baloyi S.J. | 1942 | Murhandziwani |
| Novel | Ndhambi E.P. | 1953 | Mambuxu |

| | | | |
|----------------------|-------------------|------|-------------------------------|
| Novel | Ntsan'wisi H.W.E. | 1957 | Masungi, mfana ka Maxele |
| Novel | Ntsan'wisi H.W.E. | 1960 | Mahlasela-hundza |
| Novel | Chauke M.S. | 1965 | Nkatanga I dlakuta |
| Novel | Mtombeni B.M. | 1967 | Mibya ya nyekanyeka |
| Novel | Thuketana F.A. | 1968 | Xisomisana |
| Novel | Nkondo E.M. | 1973 | Tinhlolo ti be mitsatsu |
| Novel | Mkhombo J.F. | 1976 | Ntsakisi |
| Drama | Thuketana F.A. | 1978 | N'waninginingi ma ka tindleve |
| Drama | Marhanele M.M. | 1980 | Byokota Madlayisani |
| Drama | Mahatlane A.D. | 1986 | Ndlandlalati ya Malenga |
| Drama | Rikhotso F.R. | 1989 | Muhloti wa Mihloti |
| Drama | Ngobeni M.T. | 1990 | A swi to yini? |
| Drama | Shabangu I.S. | 1992 | Xivoni xa Vutomi |
| Drama | Risenga D.J. | 1996 | Mulunguntima |
| Drama | Ndlovu P. | 1997 | Vukosi i mberha |
| Drama | Mahatlane A.D. | 2008 | Hlamba vunwa nandzuwe |
| Short stories | Mtombeni B.K.M. | 1973 | Ndzhaka ya vusiwana |

| | | | |
|----------------------|-------------------|------|---------------------------------|
| Short stories | Mtombeni B.K.M. | 1986 | Muhloli wa Mihloli |
| Short stories | Mashele R.H. | 1986 | Ximita-Ntsengele |
| Short stories | Ntsan'wisi H.W.E. | 1986 | Makomba-ndlela |
| Short stories | Maluleke D.R. | 1987 | Xona hi xihi? |
| Short stories | Mayevu G.S. | 1988 | Swinyotinyoti |
| Short stories | Ntsanwisi H.W.E. | 1988 | Swirungulwana |
| Short stories | Mayevu G.S. | 1992 | Mafelatiko |
| Short stories | Mpenyana M.B. | 1992 | Ngula ya swirungulwana |
| Short stories | Mabaso X.E. | 1995 | Hile fasitereni |
| Folklore | Marolen D.P.P. | 1966 | Garingani-wa- garingani |
| Folklore | Rutley C.B. | 1977 | Vutomi bya swihari ekhwatini |
| Folklore | Maluleke J.N. | 1980 | Vana, titwiseni! |
| Folklore | Maluleke M.J. | 1981 | N'wana wa tinhlalu |
| Folklore | Junod H.P. | 1987 | N'wampfundla- maxisana |
| Folklore | Baloyi P.B. | 1988 | Vulombe bya mitsheketo |
| Folklore | Manganyi K.T.C. | 1988 | Swa yila |
| Folklore | Rikhotso F.M. | 1993 | Khale ka makwangala |
| Folklore | Magagane M.G. | 1994 | Matshopetani ya |

| | | | |
|---------------|-----------------|------|------------------------------------|
| | | | vuhlangi |
| Poetry | Mnisi H.S. | 1969 | Risuna ra swithkovetselo |
| Poetry | Ntsan'wisi P.E. | 1971 | Xikatsa xa swithkovetselo |
| Poetry | Marhanele M.M. | 1975 | Vumhunu bya phatiwa |
| Poetry | Marivate C.T.D. | 1976 | Swihlengi swa vatsonga |
| Poetry | Mashele B.H.M. | 1982 | A hi hlomeni |
| Poetry | Mayevu G.S. | 1987 | Macakala ya miehleketo |
| Poetry | Nkuzana K.J. | 1989 | Dzundze ra swithkovetselo |
| Poetry | Marhanele M.M. | 1993 | Rihijahoja ra vutlhokovetseri |
| Poetry | Mpenyana M.B. | 1996 | Swilovolovo swa vutlhokovetseri |
| Poetry | Malungana S.J. | 1999 | Ndzumba wa Afrika 1 |

Examples of Xitsonga essays are hardly in existent. This means that there is a need for Xitsonga essays. Xitsonga authors must also consider writing Xitsonga essays in order to cover all genres and to develop Xitsonga language.

3.5 REASONS FOR STUDYING LANGUAGES AT UNIVERSITIES

(1) The following factors need to be considered when specific African languages are selected for development as academic and administrative languages for universities:

The language situation in the country

The language situation in the country (the total number of speakers of the individual languages). The inter-relationship between African languages is also relevant. They can be divided into two main groups, namely the Nguni and Sotho groups, with Xitsonga and Tshivenda related to neither group. The Nguni group includes Southern Ndebele (IsiNdebele), Swazi (SiSwati), Xhosa (IsiXhosa) and Zulu (IsiZulu). The Sotho group includes Southern Sotho (Sesotho), Tswana (Setswana) and Sesotho sa Leboa (Northern Sotho), www.uj.ac.za/./Language Choice.pdf.

The four Nguni languages and the three Sotho languages are closely related within their respective groups and the mutual comprehensibility among the speakers of the languages within each of the groups is fairly good.

Language planning guidelines for provinces concerned

The Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB) has confirmed on enquiry that each province has its own official languages depending on the people who live in those provinces. For example, the majority of people who live in Kwazulu-Natal speak isiZulu and languages such as Xitsonga and Setswana may not be their official languages.

Languages identified by the Provincial legislatures

The legislatures of all the nine provinces have confirmed on enquiry that they have identified their official languages out of those 11 official languages of the country. For example,

Limpopo province has six official languages which are Xitsonga, Tshivenda, Northern-Sotho, English, Afrikaans and isiNdebele. The legislature was guided by the sociolinguistic profile of the province.

There is a need for offering African languages in various universities as those languages are part of South Africa's heritage. South Africa being a multilingual needs language workers, language planners, interpreters, translators, authors of literature especially school textbooks, educators and so on. These various professionals will contribute in the development and sustenance of multilingualism.

De Stadler and Web (2011) outline the importance of multilingualism development in institutions of higher education. They indicate factors such as developing language policies for institutions which do not yet have them, and formation of implementation forces of those policies and the allocation of funds to the institutions of higher learning as crucial in promoting multilingualism in South Africa.

There is also an indication of how multilingualism can play a vital role in improving the level of the quality education that students can achieve when learning in their languages. This was indicated after poor performance by students in universities and the high rate of drop outs. It has been discovered that multilingualism can bring huge confidence in the performance of students.

Ongoing research has to be conducted to help in regulating the implementation of multilingualism in universities. Lack of funds, however, is used as an excuse of implementing multilingualism in some instances. Another excuse that is given by the management of universities is that multilingualism is problematic in their institutions.

There is a need for support structures and regulatory institutions to be able to monitor the implementation of multilingualism. The role players such as government, universities, the education and private sectors and the general public as a whole must play their roles in implementing multilingualism.

3.6 Conclusion

In summary, the chapter has discussed the origin of Vatsonga and Xitsonga, codification of Xitsonga, and also explained why Xitsonga is offered in universities. It also explained and outlined literary achievement in Xitsonga. The next chapter will interpret results.

CHAPTER 4

INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to analyse the interviewees' responses to the question of the use of Xitsonga at the University of Limpopo, Turfloop campus. Thereafter, a plethora of questions related to the main themes were designed in the form of a questionnaire. In summary the main objective of the questionnaire was to examine the use of Xitsonga at the university.

Interviews were conducted among the following groups:

- a. 40 Xitsonga and non-Xitsonga students.
- b. 20 Xitsonga and non-Xitsonga general staff members.
- c. 10 Xitsonga and non-Xitsonga academic staff members.

4.2 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS: XITSONGA SPEAKING RESPONDENTS (LECTURERS, STAFF MEMBERS, AND STUDENTS) AT THE UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO, TURFLOOP CAMPUS.

SPSS Statistics 17.0 and Microsoft Excel 2007 have been used in this study to analyse the data on the use of Xitsonga at the University of Limpopo, Turfloop Campus.

SECTION A: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS ON XITSONGA SPEAKING RESPONDENTS

Figure 1. The highest qualification of Xitsonga speaking respondents¹

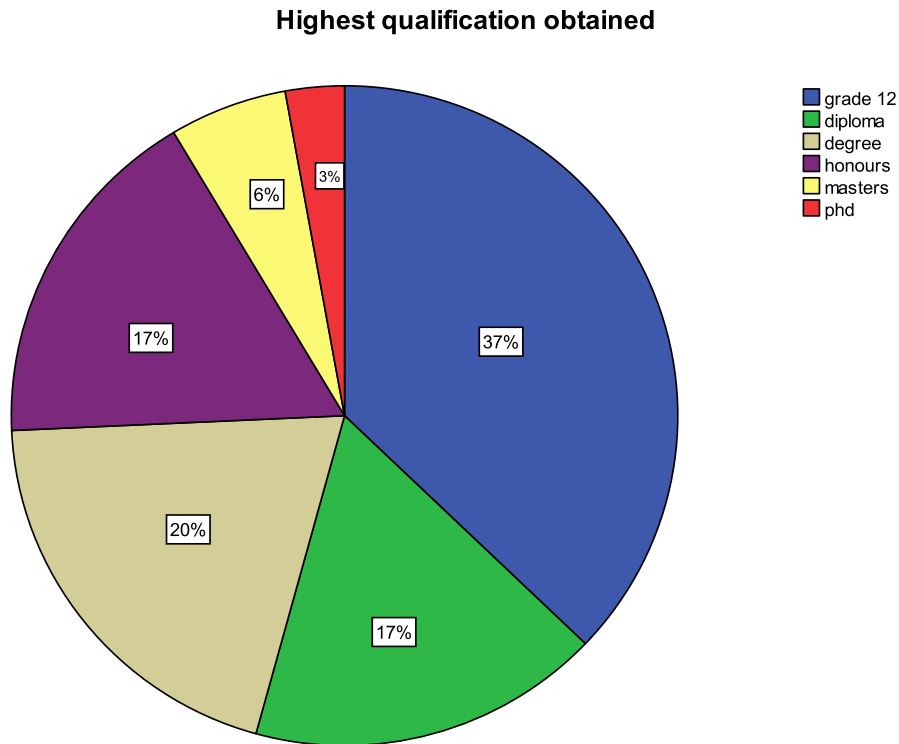


Figure 1 shows that 37% of the Xitsonga speaking respondents have Grade 12 as their highest qualification, followed by degree with 20%, and both Honours and Diploma with 17% each. This chart also indicates that only 6% and 3% of Xitsonga speaking respondents hold Master and Doctorate respectively. There is sufficient evidence that the majority of Xitsonga speaking respondents at the University of Limpopo, Turfloop Campus still have Grade 12 as their highest qualification. Only a minority have gone beyond Grade 12. It seems that most school leavers do not see the importance of using Xitsonga language especially for academic

¹ Respondents refer to lecturers, staff members and students at University of Limpopo, Turfloop Campus.

purposes, preferring the English language instead because it is general believed that it is a global language.

Figure 2. The level of study of Xitsonga speaking respondents

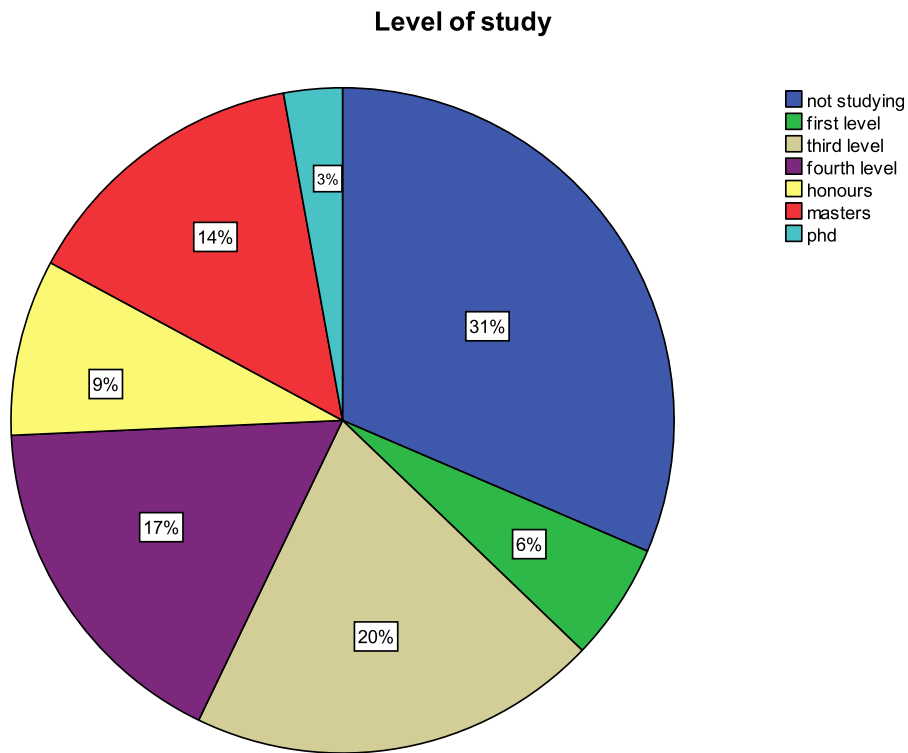


Figure 2 clearly indicates that 31% of the Xitsonga speaking respondents (mostly lecturers and staff members) are no longer studying. However, 20% ,17%, and 14% are in their third, fourth, and Masters levels, respectively. Only 9% and 3% of these respondents are in their Honours level and Doctorate, respectively.

Figure 3. The gender of Xitsonga speaking respondents

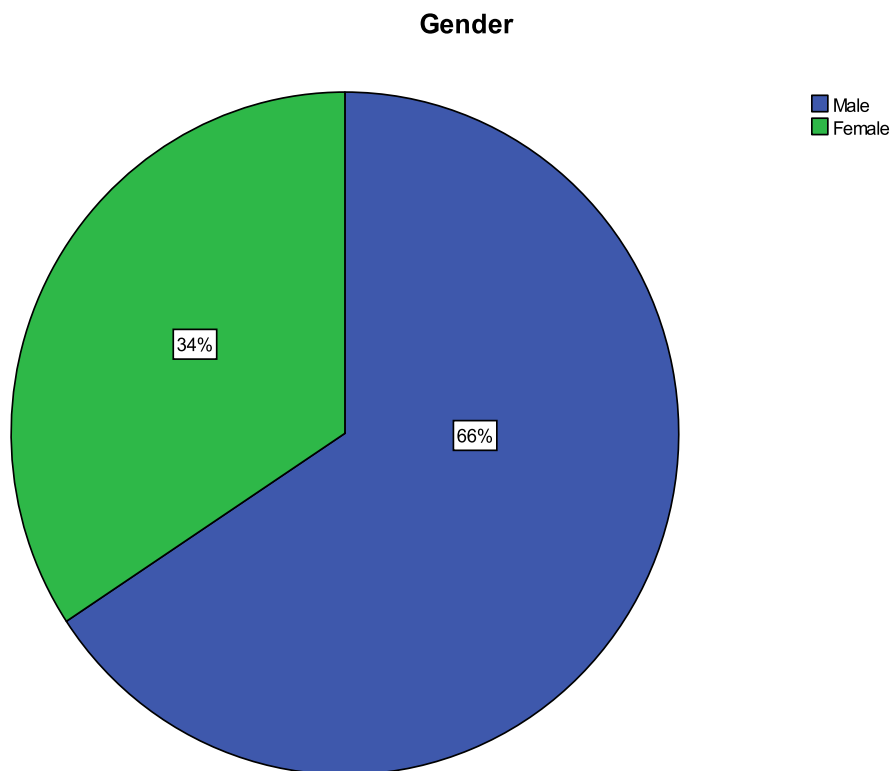


Figure 3 shows that the majority of the Xitsonga speaking respondents at the University of Limpopo are women comprising 66%, while only 34% of the respondents are men. This ratio is due to the simple random sampling that was employed in this study, where each and every Xitsonga speaking respondent had an equal opportunity to be included in the sample.

Figure 4. Xitsonga speaking respondents

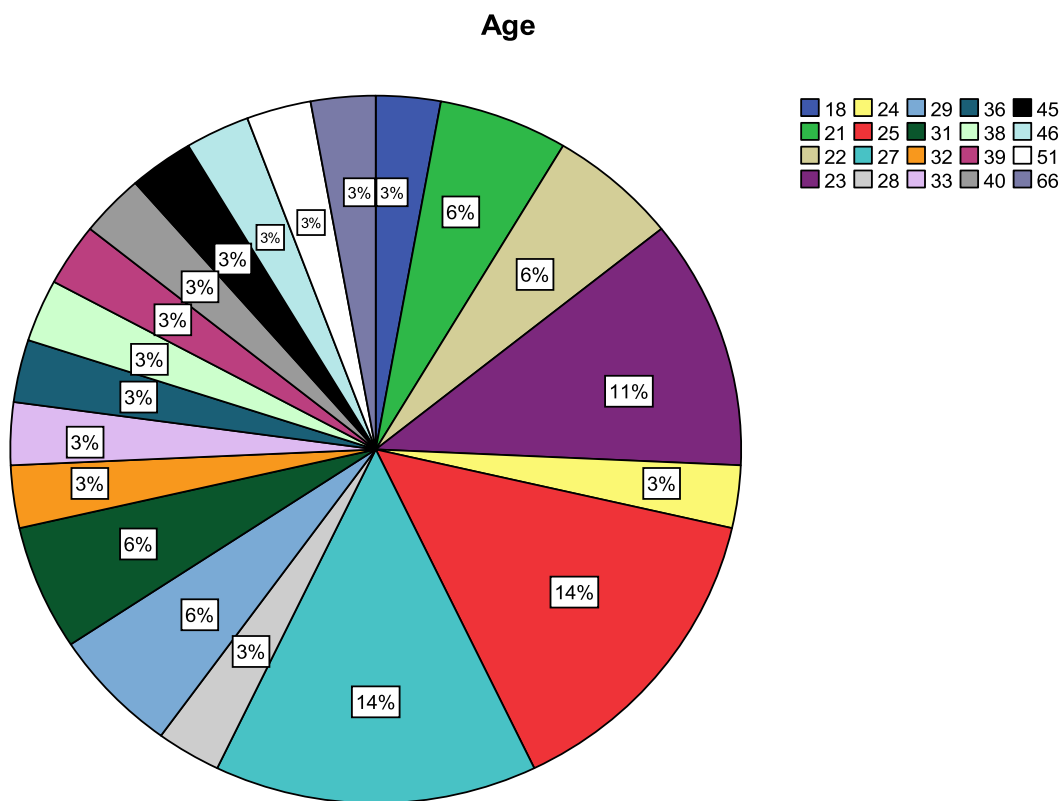


Figure 4 indicates that the oldest Xitsonga speaking respondent is 66 years and the youngest is 18 years. It further reveals that most of the respondents who participated in this survey are between 25 and 27 years. Amongst these respondents, they include fourth level, Honours, Masters and Doctoral students. The age mean statistic of Xitsonga speaking respondents is 30.11 years with age mean standard error of 1.68. It seems that the majority of the youth are educated they need to use the English language more than Xitsonga language because of the opportunity it presents to them.

There is also sufficient evidence that 100% of the Xitsonga speaking respondents would want to see Xitsonga used as one of the languages at University of Limpopo, Turfloop Campus. Amongst other reasons, the respondents mentioned that Xitsonga is one of the eleven official languages in South Africa, hence it has to be used in institutions of higher learning. They also

mentioned that Xitsonga was their mother tongue, an interesting language which was dominant at the University of Limpopo. Lastly, the study revealed that if Xitsonga was used at the university, it would make Xitsonga speaking respondents to learn easily and would grant non-Xitsonga speaking people an opportunity to learn this language and be bilingual as enshrined in the Constitution of South Africa.

Table A1. The use of Xitsonga as an official language

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid academic purposes | 2 | 5.7 | 5.7 | 5.7 |
| Social purposes | 28 | 80.0 | 80.0 | 85.7 |
| Communicative purposes | 1 | 2.9 | 2.9 | 88.6 |
| Always | 4 | 11.4 | 11.4 | 100.0 |
| Total | 35 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Frequency Table A clearly indicates that 80% of the Xitsonga speaking respondents use Xitsonga as an official language for social purposes, 11% of these respondents use this language always, 6% for academic purposes and only 3% for communicative purposes. The other reason why there is a small percentage of academic and communicative purposes is that English is still used as the medium of instruction at the university of Limpopo.

Figure 5. The feelings of Xitsonga speaking respondents about Xitsonga as a medium of instruction at university level

Figure 5 shows that 69% of Xitsonga speaking respondents (lecturers, staff members and students) will not be proud to see Xitsonga being used as a medium of instruction at university level despite the fact that they are truly Tsonga. Only 31% of these respondents do support the fact that Xitsonga must be used as a medium of instruction, instead of English, at university level. Most of these Xitsonga speaking respondents indicated that if Xitsonga was used as medium of instruction at university level, it would have a negative impact on other people who do not speak this language as their mother tongue, hence English has to continue to be used as a medium of instruction.

Table A2. Perceptions about peers who would not like to use Xitsonga as their medium of instruction

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid proud | 8 | 22.9 | 22.9 | 22.9 |
| not proud | 27 | 77.1 | 77.1 | 100.0 |
| Total | 35 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Table A2 shows that about 77% of the respondents at the University of Limpopo indicated that their peers are not proud of Xitsonga while only 23% of these peers are proud. This shows that workshops and awareness campaigns on African languages are still needed to make African people feel proud of knowing other languages. Xitsonga language can be developed through cultural activities aimed at empowering the speakers of the language with positive attitude towards their language.

Figure 6. Factors which can help to change the attitude of such peers.

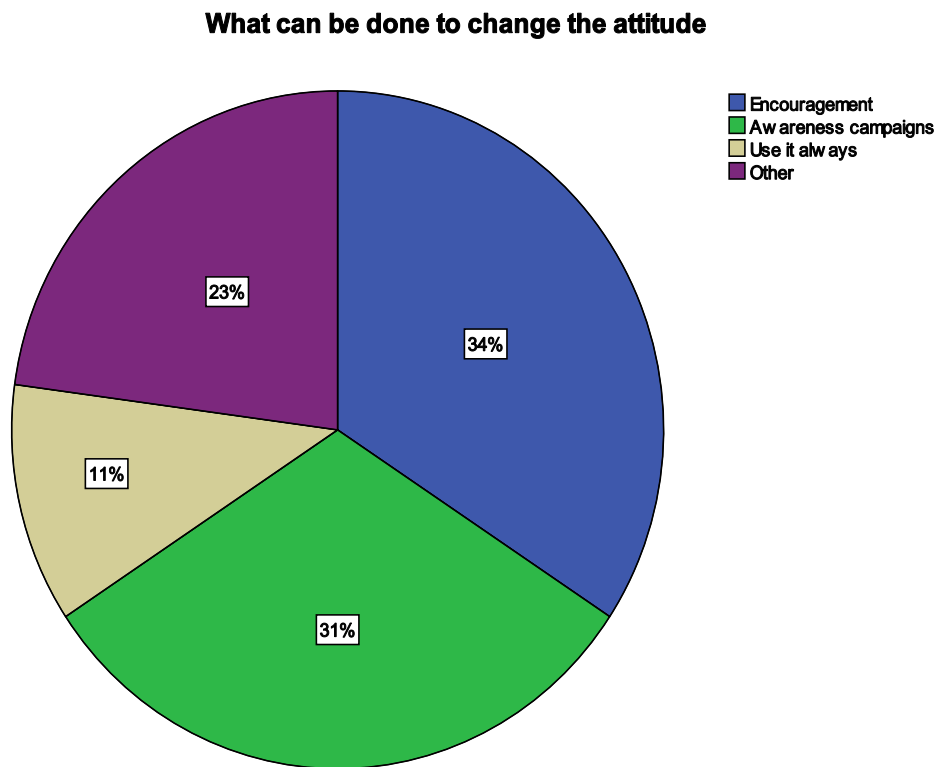
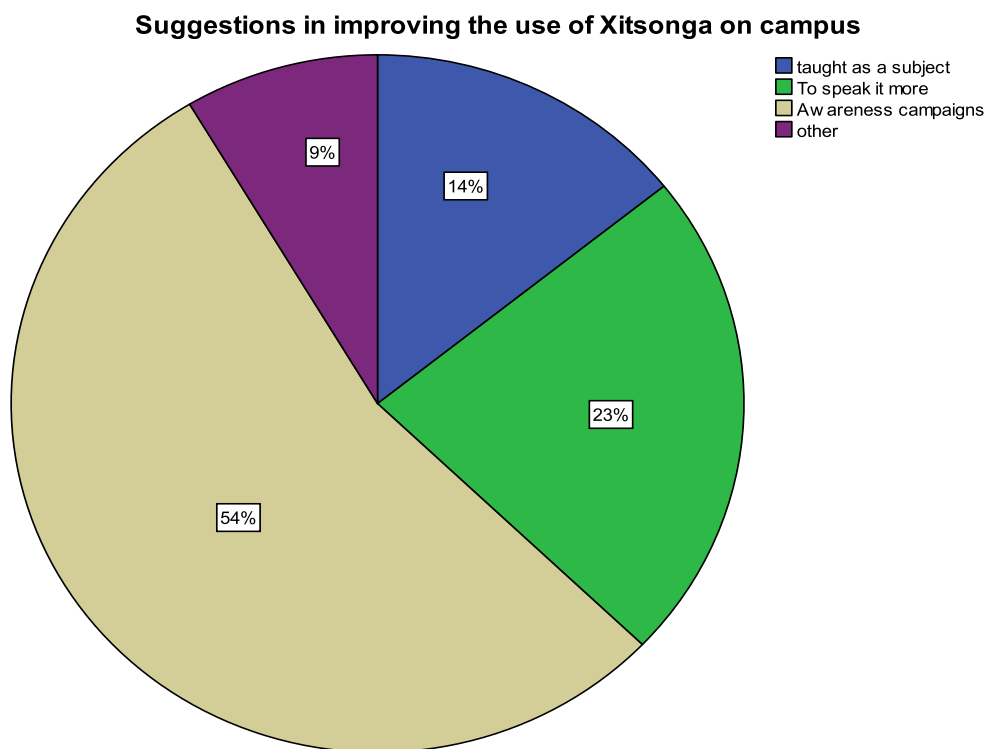


Figure 6 clearly shows that most (34%) of the respondents believe that individuals who are not proud of Xitsonga should be encouraged to use this language more often as this can enhance their exchange of information with other ethnic groups. Thirty-one percent of the respondents believe that Xitsonga awareness campaigns must be initiated to teach people about their language and culture, while 11% believe that using this language will be useful to peers. The peers with negative attitude toward the Xitsonga language use should be encouraged to use the language in all sectors, in social settings, at work and in the academic sector. The common usage of Xitsonga language will promote this language. A lack of positive attitude towards one's language may lead to the loss of identity and culture.

Table A3. Suggestions made by respondents to improve the use of Xitsonga on campus

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---------------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid Taught as a subject | 5 | 14.3 | 14.3 | 14.3 |
| To speak it more | 8 | 22.9 | 22.9 | 37.1 |
| Awareness campaigns | 19 | 54.3 | 54.3 | 91.4 |
| Other | 3 | 8.6 | 8.6 | 100.0 |
| Total | 35 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Figure 7.



Both frequency Table A3 and Figure 7 show that 54% of the respondents at the University of Limpopo still believe that awareness campaigns must be intensified in order to improve the use of Xitsonga on campus. However, 23% emphasizes the fact that people on campus should ensure that they speak this language whenever they get time, while only 14% say that teaching Xitsonga as a subject at university may help in improving its use.

Figure 8. Views of respondents on replacement of English with Xitsonga as a medium of instruction at the University of Limpopo

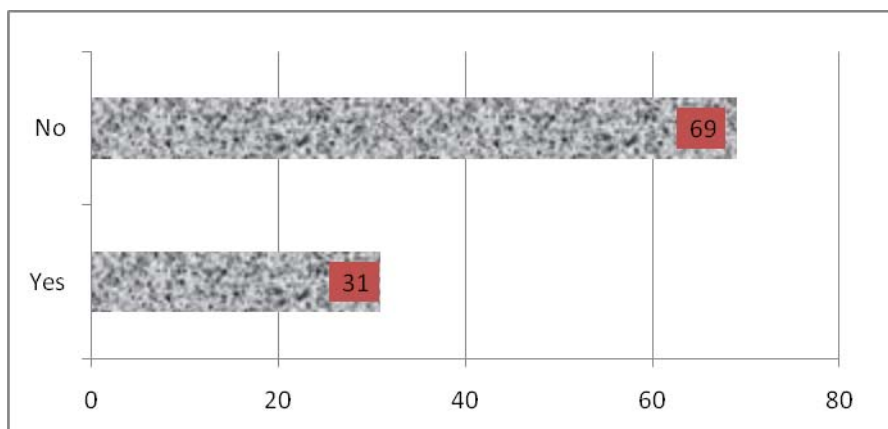


Figure 8 shows that 69% of the respondents (lecturers, staff members and students) at the University of Limpopo do not support that Xitsonga should replace English as a medium of instruction at university level. English, it is suggested should be used at the university because of the different ethnic groups that exist on campus. However, 31% of these Xitsonga speaking respondents wish that Xitsonga could be a medium of instruction at university of Limpopo. Judging from the above results it is evident that a minority of students and staff members are in support of the idea that Xitsonga should be used as a medium of instruction at the University of Limpopo. This mean only few respondents are in support of learning in the mother tongue, which means that much still needs to be done in order to educate people about the effect of learning in one’s mother tongue. This will enhance academic progress for students.

Table A4. Statistics of Xitsonga speaking respondents who are proud to be a Mutsonga

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-----------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid Yes | 35 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Table A4 shows that Xitsonga speaking respondents at the University of Limpopo are very proud of speaking Xitsonga as their mother tongue. This is supported by the fact that they are proud about their tradition and that they are the only visible ethnic group as far as different cultures are concerned on the campus.

Table A5. Reasons why Xitsonga speaking respondents are proud to be Mutsonga

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|----------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid No comment | 6 | 17.1 | 17.1 | 17.1 |
| Mother tongue | 14 | 40.0 | 40.0 | 57.1 |
| Language acquisition | 1 | 2.9 | 2.9 | 60.0 |
| Cultural heritage | 13 | 37.1 | 37.1 | 97.1 |
| Other | 1 | 2.9 | 2.9 | 100.0 |
| Total | 35 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Table A5 shows that 40% of Xitsonga speaking respondents are proudly Tsonga because this is their mother tongue, followed by 37% who believe this is their culture and 3% think that they are able to learn other things easily in Xitsonga. However, 17% of these respondents are just proud to be Vatsonga without giving reasons and only 3% have other reasons which are not mentioned here. There is sufficient evidence to conclude that most of the Xitsonga speaking respondents are proud of being Vatsonga because it is their mother tongue.

Figure 9. Advantages of using Xitsonga on the Turfloop Campus

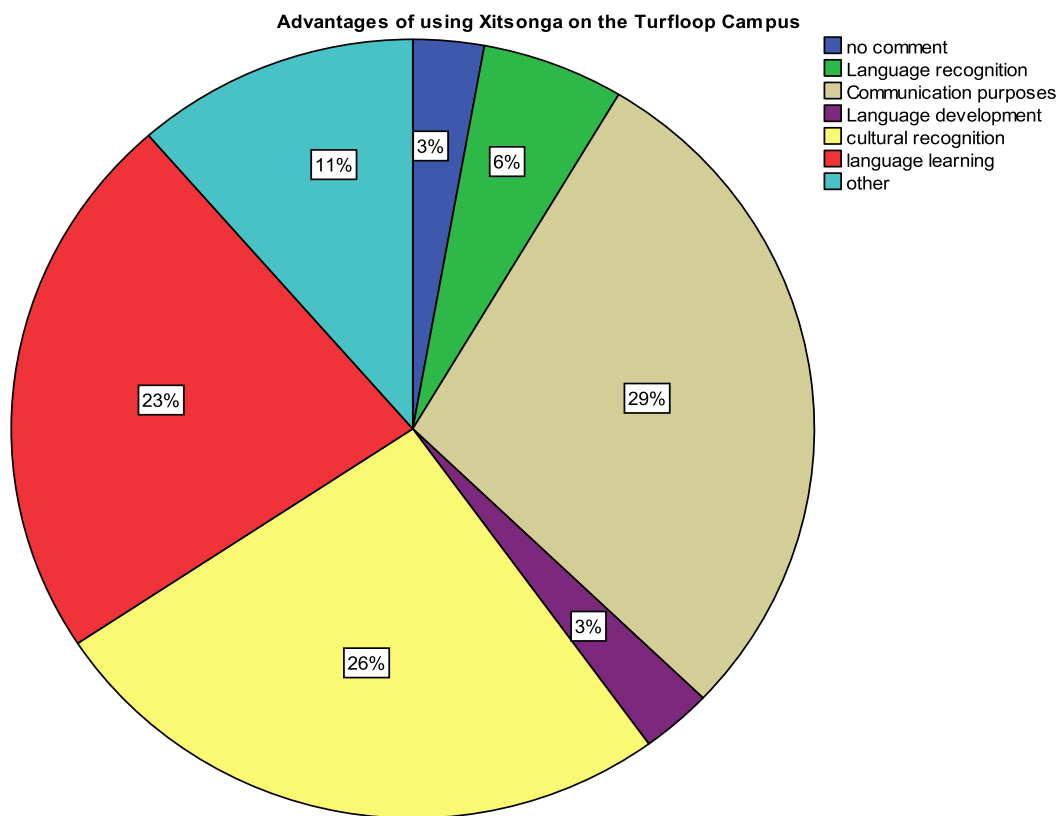


Figure 9 clearly shows that 29% of the respondents believe that they use Xitsonga for communicative purposes, 26% for cultural purposes. It further indicates that 23% use Xitsonga to learn and teach other people. Xitsonga speaking lecturers also believe that it is important to use the mother tongue, especially when they want to emphasise and make certain things clear to students in a classroom situation. However, other Xitsonga speaking staff members believe that working and communicating with students in their mother tongue

helps a lot and it saves time. Eleven percent of the respondents did not mention the advantages, and 3% believe that it is important to develop this language by using it more often.

Figure 10. The disadvantages of using Xitsonga on campus

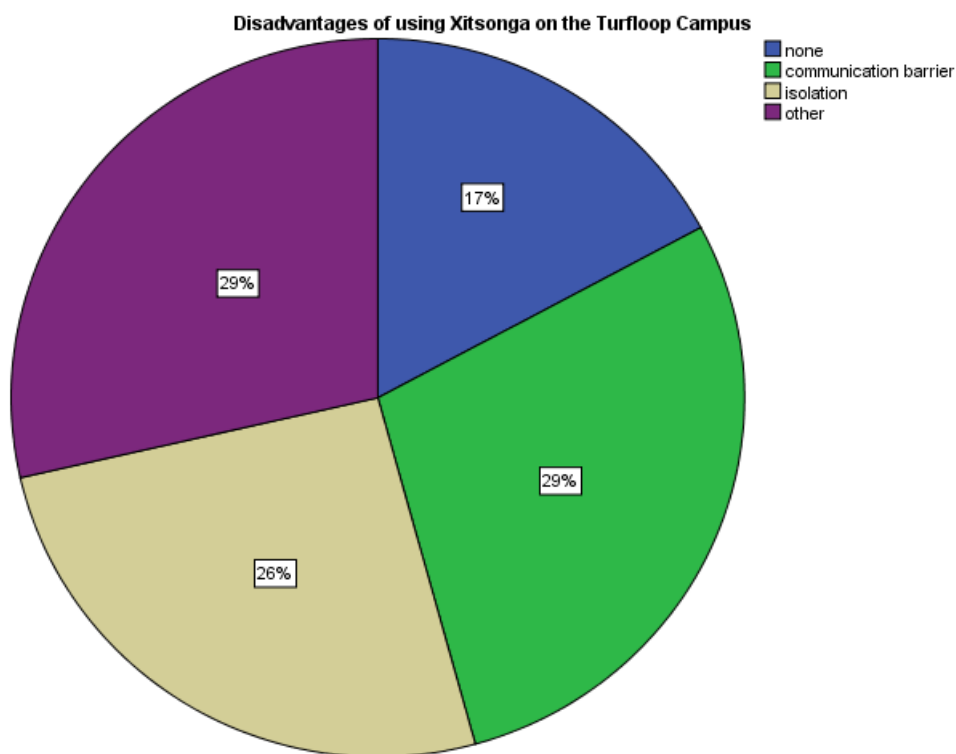


Figure 10 indicates some of the disadvantages of using Xitsonga on campus. Amongst others, 29% of the respondents believe that it will serve as a communication barrier to other ethnic groups, 26% feel that they will be discriminated against or isolated from other people, and 29% mentioned other disadvantages. Only 17% of the respondents did not comment, but they believe there might be some disadvantages.

4.3 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS: NON-XITSONGA SPEAKING RESPONDENTS (LECTURERS, STAFF MEMBERS, AND STUDENTS AT UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO)

SECTION B: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS ON NON-XITSONGA SPEAKING RESPONDENTS

Figure 11. The highest qualification obtained by Non-Xitsonga speaking respondents.

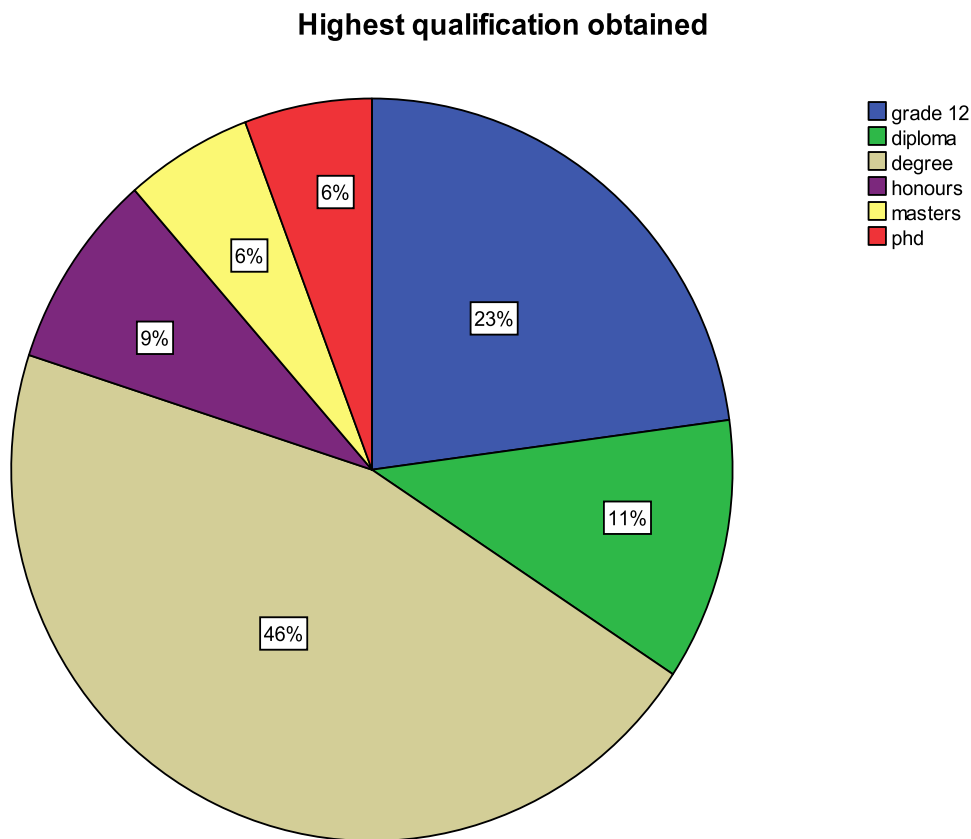


Figure 11 shows that 46% of non-Xitsonga speaking respondents have a degree as their highest qualification, followed by grade 12 with 23%, and both Masters and Doctorate with 6% each. This chart also indicates that only 11% and 9% of non-Xitsonga speaking respondents hold diploma and honours respectively. There is sufficient evidence that the majority of non-Xitsonga speaking respondents at University of Limpopo have a degree as

their highest qualification, while a minority has diploma and honours. The above results testify that the more people get educated the more they neglect the use of indigenous languages.

Figure 12. The level of study of Xitsonga speaking respondents

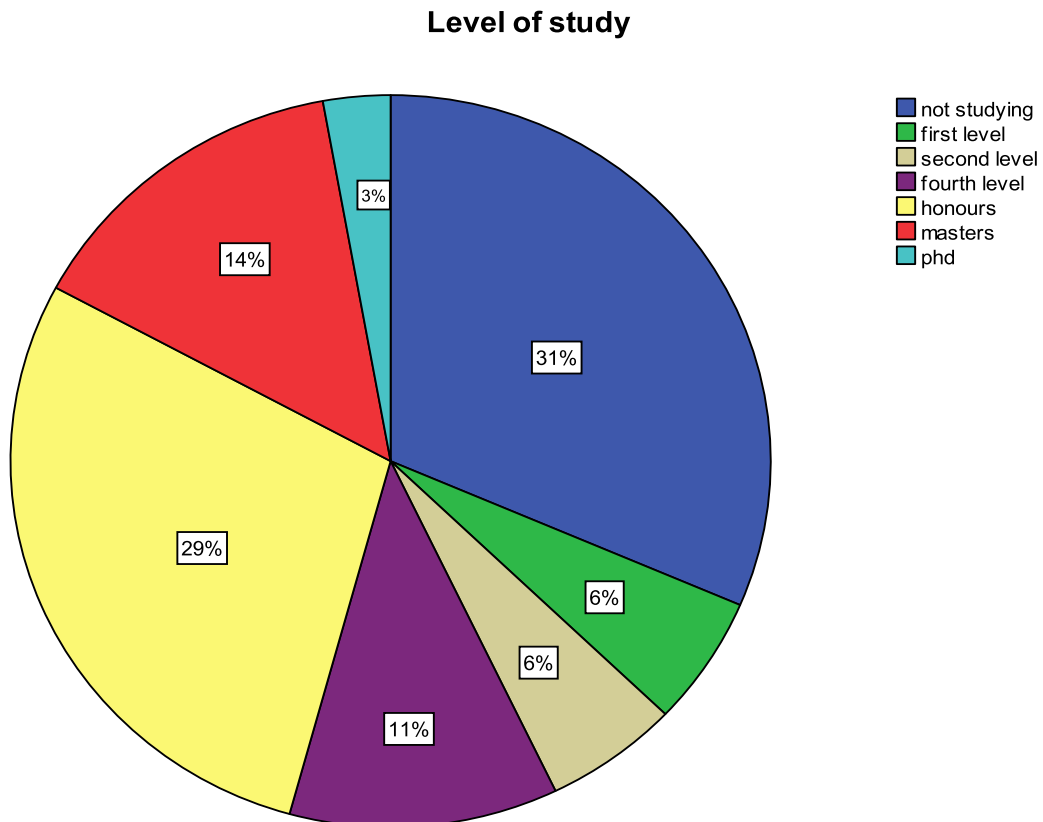


Figure 12 clearly indicates that 31% of the non-Xitsonga speaking respondents (mostly lecturers and staff members) are no longer studying. This percentage is similar to that of respondents who speak Xitsonga. However 29% ,14%, and 11% are in their Honours, Masters, and fourth level, respectively. Both 6% of the respondents are still doing first year and second year each and only 3% of these respondents are doctoral students.

Figure 13: The non-Xitsonga speaking respondents

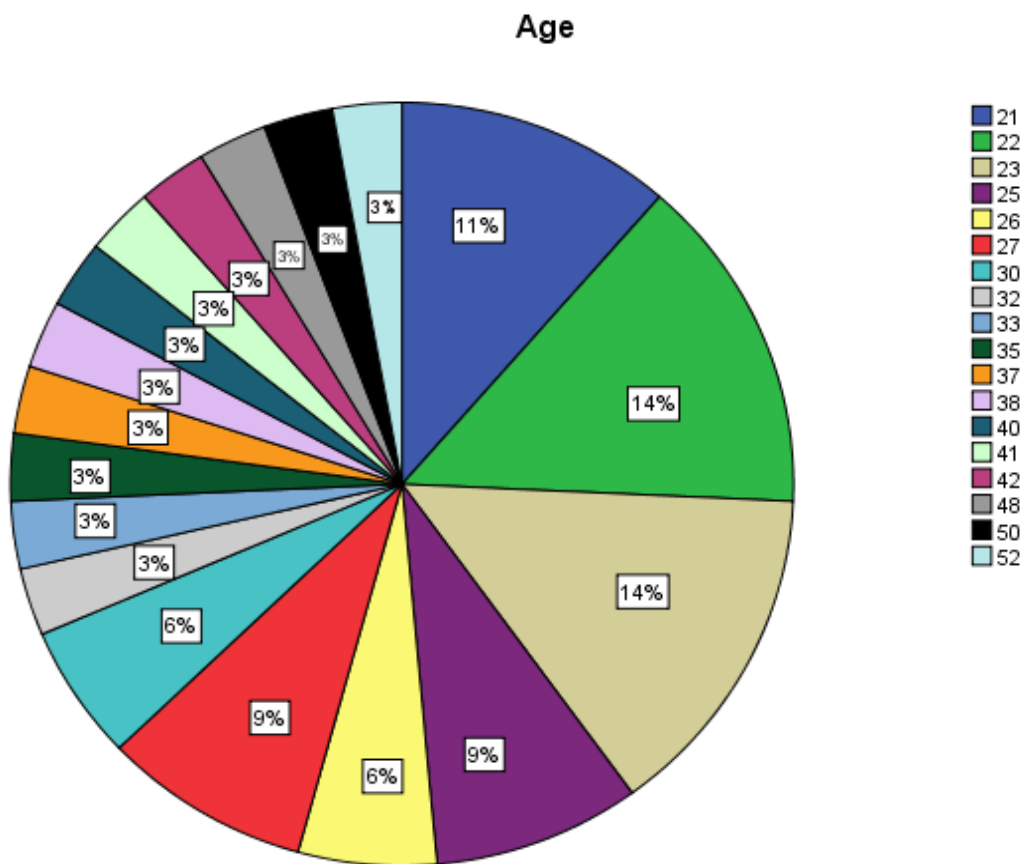


Figure 13 indicates that the oldest non-Xitsonga speaking respondent is 52 years and the youngest is 21 years. It further reveals that most of the respondents who participated in this survey are 22 and 23 years. Amongst these respondents, there are second level, third level, fourth level and honours students. The age mean statistic of non-Xitsonga speaking respondents is 29 years with age mean standard error of 1.51. It is evident that the young age group is not open to the use of indigenous language because they believe that English has more opportunities than their own African language, Xitsonga.

Figure 14. Gender of non-Xitsonga speaking respondents

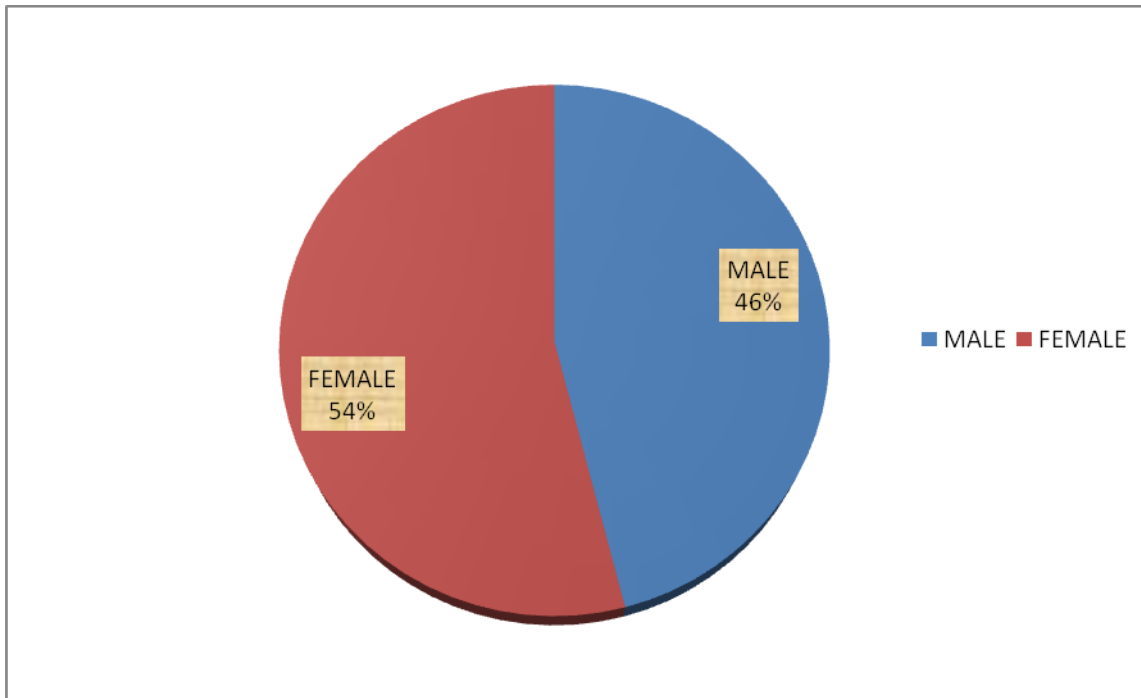


Figure 14 shows that the majority of the non-Xitsonga speaking respondents at the University of Limpopo are women making up 54%, while only 46% of the respondents are men. This ratio is due to simple random sampling that was employed in this study, where each and every Non-Xitsonga speaking respondent had an equal opportunity to be included in the sample.

Figure 15. The feelings of non-Xitsonga speaking respondents about Xitsonga as one of the languages at University of Limpopo.

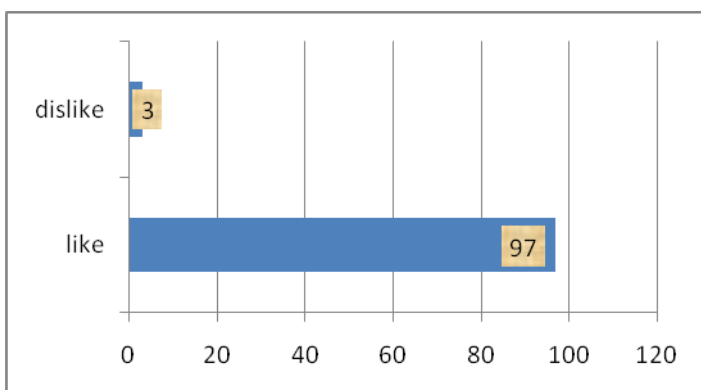


Figure 15 shows that 97% of the non-Xitsonga speaking respondents want Xitsonga as one of the languages at the University of Limpopo, while only 3% dislike that. It is believed that this 3% is from people who still lack information about African (official) languages and hence the awareness campaigns still need to be intensified.

Figure 16. Status of friends who speak Xitsonga which non-Xitsonga speaking respondents have

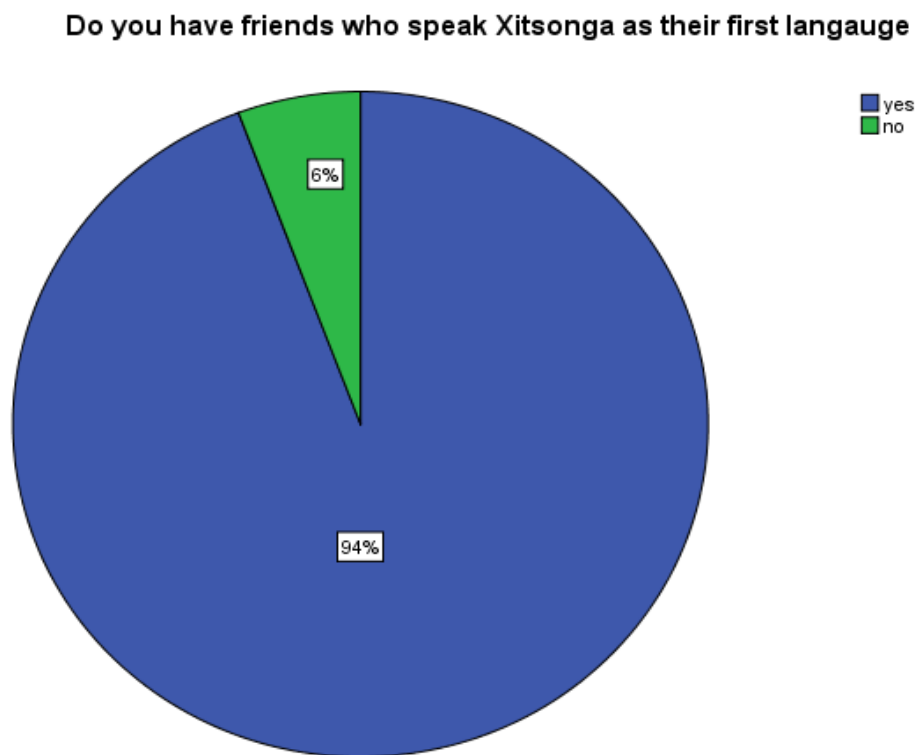


Figure 16 shows clearly that 94% of other ethnic groups (Pedi's, Venda's, Tswana's, Swati's and Zulu's) do have friends who speak Xitsonga and that is why most of them would want to see Xitsonga as one of the languages at the University of Limpopo. Only 6% claim not to have Xitsonga-speaking friends. There is sufficient evidence that non-Xitsonga speaking people have a good relationship with people who speak Xitsonga. This indicates that the university society supports multilingualism, and that non-speakers of Xitsonga language are willing to learn the language.

Table B1. Are non-Xitsonga speaking respondents proud of having friends who speak Xitsonga as their first language?

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-----------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid yes | 33 | 94.3 | 94.3 | 94.3 |
| no | 2 | 5.7 | 5.7 | 100.0 |
| Total | 35 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Table B1 shows very clearly that few of non-Xitsonga speaking respondents at the University of Limpopo are not proud to have friends who speak Xitsonga. Maybe this is compulsory for them to be friends due to unavoidable teamwork situations. Most of non-Xitsonga speaking respondents clearly indicated that they were very proud to have friends who speak Xitsonga as their first language.

Table B2. Reasons why non-Xitsonga speaking respondents are proud or not proud of having friends who speak Xitsonga as their first language

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-----------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid No comment | 6 | 17.1 | 17.1 | 17.1 |
| Language acquisition | 12 | 34.3 | 34.3 | 51.4 |
| Cultural tolerance | 8 | 22.9 | 22.9 | 74.3 |
| Relatives | 2 | 5.7 | 5.7 | 80.0 |
| Friendliness | 4 | 11.4 | 11.4 | 91.4 |
| Personality | 1 | 2.9 | 2.9 | 94.3 |
| Language preservation | 1 | 2.9 | 2.9 | 97.1 |

| | | | | |
|---------------|----|-------|-------|-------|
| Mother tongue | 1 | 2.9 | 2.9 | 100.0 |
| Total | 35 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

From Table B2, we learn that there are various reasons why non-Xitsonga speaking respondents are proud to have friends who speak Xitsonga as their first language. Amongst other significant variables, language acquisition, cultural tolerance, friendliness and relatives appeared to be at the top resulting in a score of 34%, 23%, 11% and 6% respectively. It is true most that non-speakers of the language felt encouraged to learn Xitsonga language because they wanted to form part of the Xitsonga society that is known to have specialised kind of ubuntu, humanity.

Figure 17. Circumstances in which Xitsonga speaking friends use Xitsonga

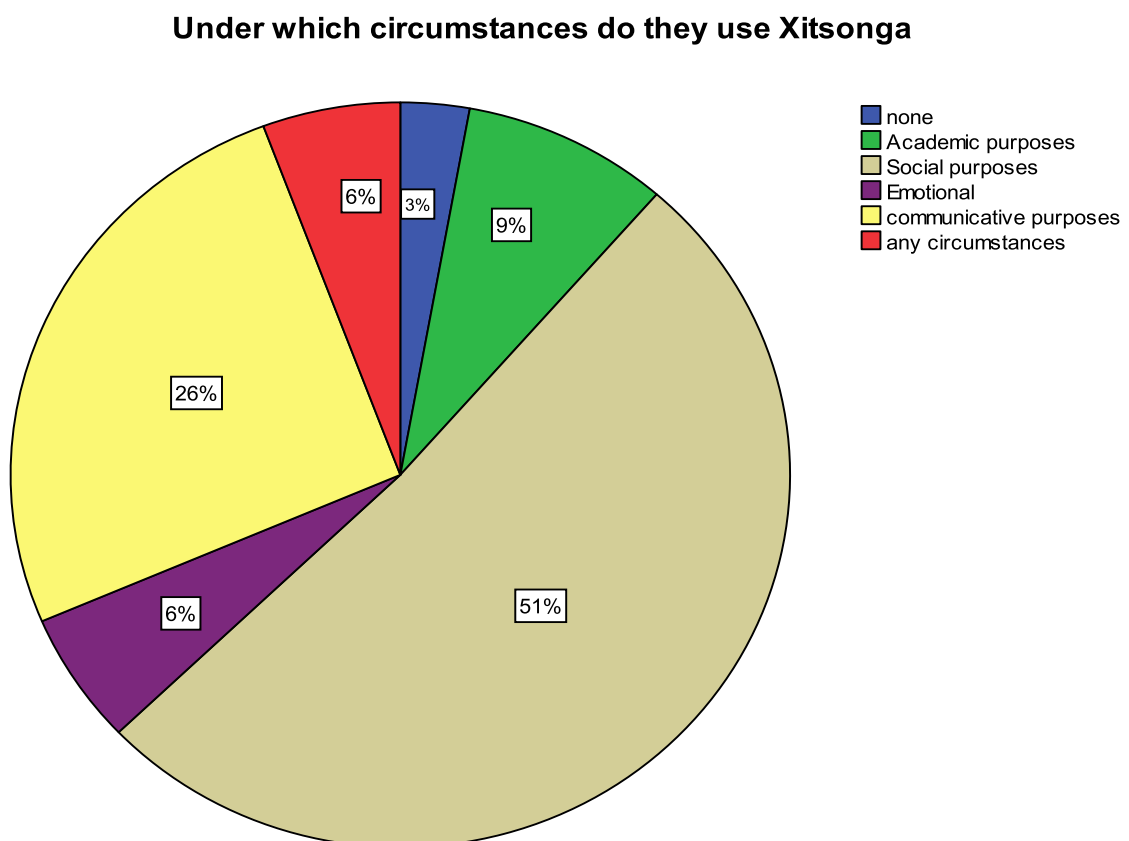


Figure 17 clearly indicates that 51% of the Xitsonga speaking respondents use Xitsonga as an official language for social purposes, 26% of the respondents use it for communicative purposes and 9% for academic purposes. The study also revealed that 6% of Xitsonga speaking people use their mother tongue when they are angry or very happy in order to express their feelings fully, six percent use it under any circumstances and 3% for other purposes. The reason why there is a small percentage of academic and communicative purposes is that English is still used as the medium of instruction at the university of Limpopo.

Figure 18. The feelings of non-Xitsonga speaking respondents about Xitsonga as a medium of instruction at university level

How do you feel about Xitsonga as a medium of instruction at University level

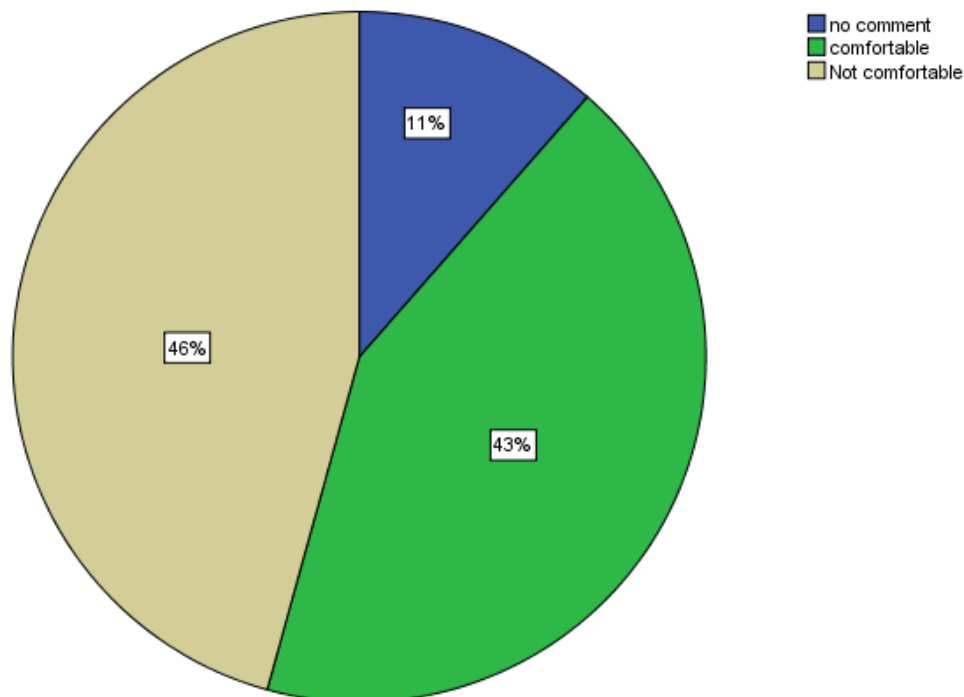


Figure 18 shows that 46% of non-Xitsonga speaking respondents (lecturers, staff members and students) are not be comfortable to see Xitsonga being used as medium of instruction at

university level despite the fact that they like Xitsonga as one of the languages . Only 43% of these respondents are comfortable that Xitsonga must be used as a medium of instruction, instead of English, at university level. Most of these non-Xitsonga speaking respondents indicated that if Xitsonga was used a medium of instruction at this level, it would have a negative impact on other people who do not speak this language as their mother tongue and therefore English has to continue to be used as a medium of instruction.

Figure 19. Suggestions made by Non-Xitsonga speaking respondents to improve the use of Xitsonga on campus

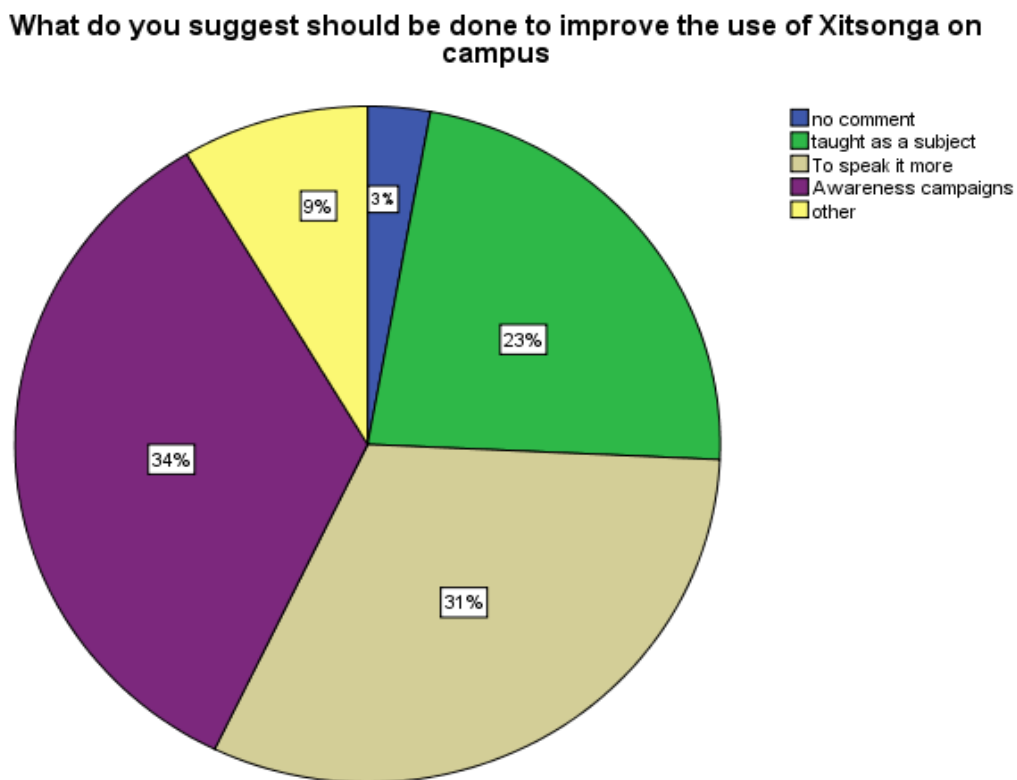


Figure 19 shows that 31% of non-Xitsonga speaking respondents at University of Limpopo suggest that people have to spend their time speaking Xitsonga to improve its use of on Campus. However, 34% suggested Xitsonga awareness campaigns must be intensified as this may improve the use of this language. Amongst other suggestions, 23% of non-Xitsonga

speaking respondents believe that teaching Xitsonga as a subject may be a good solution in improving the usage of the language.

Figure 20 . The views of respondents on replacement of English with Xitsonga as a medium of instruction at the University of Limpopo

Would you like Xitsonga to replace English as the medium of instruction for academic purposes?

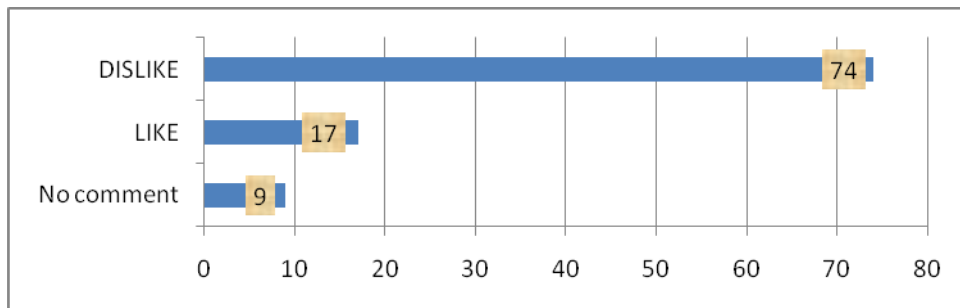


Figure 20 shows that 74% of non-Xitsonga respondents (lecturers, staff members and students) at the university of Limpopo do not support that Xitsonga should replace English as the medium of instruction. Hence, English has to be used at the university because of the different ethnic groups existing on the campus. However, 17% of these non-Xitsonga speaking respondents wish that Xitsonga could be a medium of instruction at the University of Limpopo, while 9% did not comment.

Figure 21. Advantages of Using Xitsonga on campus

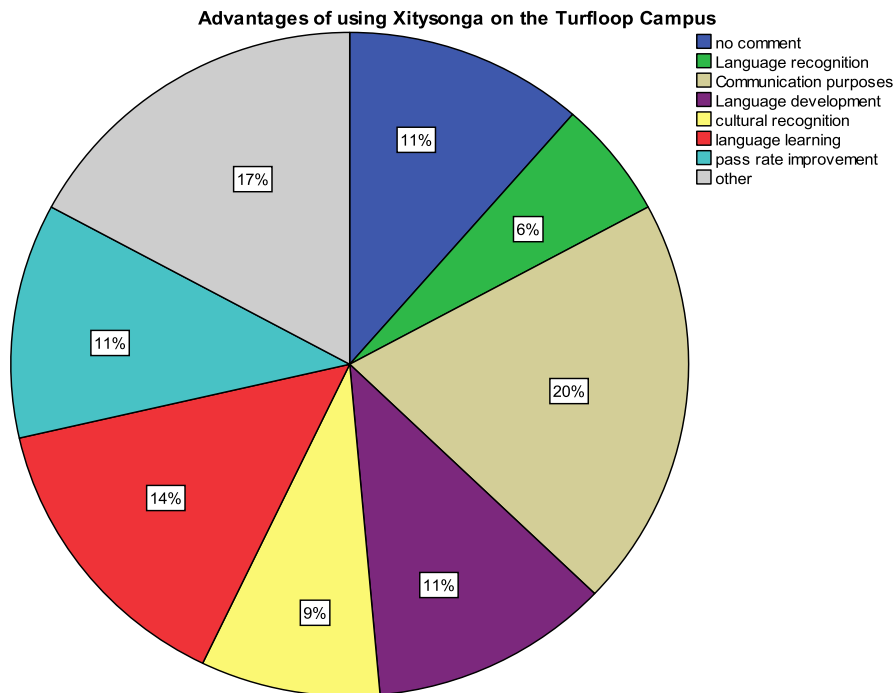


Figure 21 shows that 20% of the respondents believe that they use Xitsonga for communicative purposes, 9% for cultural purposes and hence other people can easily learn from them. It further indicates that 14% use Xitsonga to learn and teach other people. Non-Xitsonga speaking respondents think some lecturers believe that it is important to use mother tongue, especially when they want to emphasise and make certain things clearer to students when giving lectures. However, other non-Xitsonga speaking staff members believe that working and communicating with students in their mother tongue helps a lot and saves time. Eleven percent of the respondents suggest that the use of Xitsonga can increase the pass rate of Xitsonga speaking students, and 6% believe that it is important to develop this language by using it more often.

Figure 22. Disadvantages of using Xitsonga on the Turfloop Campus

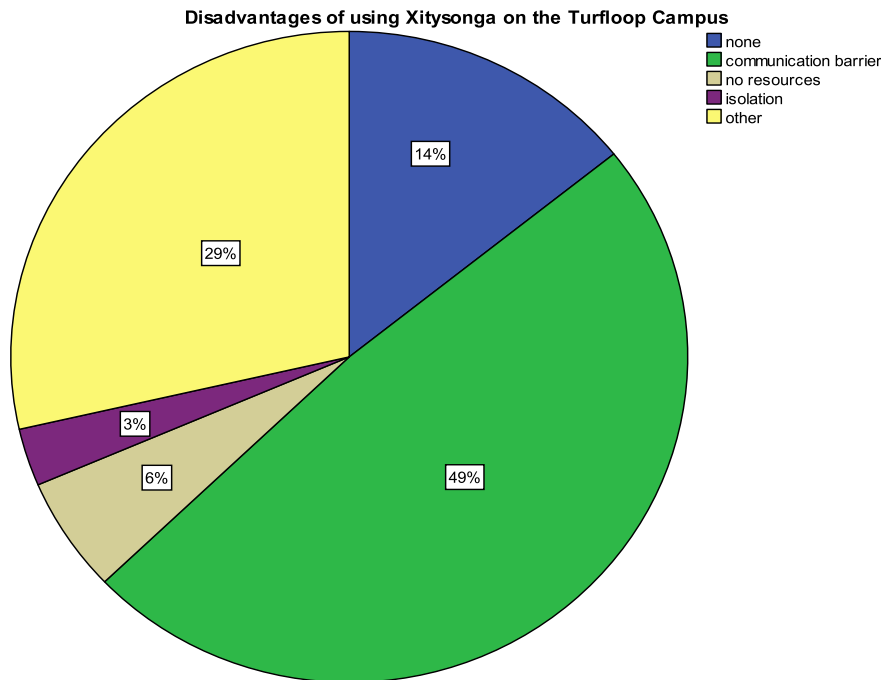


Figure 22 indicates some of the disadvantages of using Xitsonga on campus. Amongst others, 49% of the respondents believe that it will serve as communication barrier to other ethnic groups, 3% think that they will be isolated from other people, and 6% think that it will be difficult to get resources for transformation. Twenty-nine percent of the non-Xitsonga speaking respondents did not mention only disadvantages, while only 14% believe that there are no disadvantages.

4.4 Summary

This study on the use of Xitsonga at University of Limpopo Turfloop Campus revealed a number of important aspects related to the use of this language at university as a medium of level, both as a social language and instruction. Amongst other things they include the following:

Both Xitsonga and non-Xitsonga speaking respondents (lecturers, staff members and students) would not want not be proud to see Xitsonga being used as a medium of instruction at University level despite the fact that they are Tsonga. These respondents do support the fact that Xitsonga must be used as the medium of instruction, instead of English, at university level. Most of these Xitsonga speaking respondents indicated that if Xitsonga was used as medium of instruction at university level, it would have a negative impact on other people who do not speak this language as their mother tongue. Hence, English has to continue to be used as medium of instruction.

Fifty-one percent of the Xitsonga speaking respondents use Xitsonga as an official language for social purposes, 26% of the respondents use it for communicative purposes, 9% for academic purposes. The study also revealed that 6% of Xitsonga speaking people use their mother tongue when they are angry or very happy in order to express their feelings fully. Six percent use it under any circumstances and 3% use the language for other purposes. The other reason why there is a small percentage for academic and communicate purposes is that English is still used as the medium of instruction at the university.

CHAPTER 5

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

This study concentrated comprehensively on the examination of the use of Xitsonga at the University of Limpopo, Turfloop campus. The study strove to discover if Xitsonga community in the University of Limpopo Turfloop campus hold positive or negative attitude towards the use of their language for academic, communicative and social purposes. This chapter will conclude the study and give recommendations.

5.2 THE EXPOSITION OF CHAPTERS

Chapter 1 introduced the study by giving the background to the study. It laid out the researcher's aims and objective, indicating the significance of the study, the scope of the study and the method which was implemented when collecting and analysing the data. The research design was indicated so was the organisation of chapters of the study.

Chapter 2 dealt with literature review of language attitude and language policy, as both these aspects were relevant in the analyses of the use of Xitsonga at the University of Limpopo, Turfloop campus. Literature about language attitude was discussed first followed by the literature of language policy.

Chapter 3 handled the history and the literary achievement in Xitsonga. The chapter concentrated on the origin of Vatsonga and Xitsonga, and codification of Xitsonga. It explained why Xitsonga is offered in various Universities and also indicated the literary achievement of Xitsonga. This was done in order to encourage Vatsonga to know and

appreciate their history so that they may be aware of where they are going as far as their language is concerned. The other reason was to encourage Vatsonga to write literature using their own language in order to contribute in the development, promotion and revitalisation of their language as far as school books are concerned.

Chapter 4 dealt with the interpretation of results. The groups which participated in the study were indicated, the descriptive statistics of Xitsonga respondents were indicated and analysed. There were three categories of Xitsonga respondents which were: lecturers, general staff members and students of the University of Limpopo Turfloop campus. The chapter indicated the tools which were used to analyse the data which are SPSS Statistics 17.0 and Microsoft excel 2007. The descriptive statistics of non-Xitsonga respondents were also indicated and analysed. There were also three categories of non-Xitsonga respondents which were: Lecturers, general staff members and students of the University of Limpopo Turfloop campus. Finally, the summary of results was presented.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

- People must be encouraged to love Xitsonga language especially the youth because they are the future of South Africa.
- It is important that Xitsonga speakers are encouraged to use their language in all instances in order to reduce the negative attitude towards their language.
- If the speakers of Xitsonga first accept that Xitsonga must be used as medium of instruction it will make the University of Limpopo management to see the need for more language practitioners such as lexicographers, terminologisst, translators and interpreters.
- Workshops can be used to change the negative attitude of the youth towards their language.

- If Vatsonga can be encouraged to write more books and terminology lists, the use of Xitsonga on campus will certainly improve.
- If Xitsonga can be used as the medium of instruction it will reduce the failure rate of students because they will be in a position to understand the content of their study.
- Xitsonga speakers must be proud about their language, something which will make other language users to be interested in learning the language.
- Xitsonga speakers such as lecturers, staff members and students are encouraged to communicate using Xitsonga. By doing this they will be able to understand each other better and save their time.
- Workshops and cultural activities must be held in order to promote Xitsonga as language and the culture of its people.

5.4 CONCLUSION

This study was conducted only at the University of Limpopo Turfloop Campus and there is still a need for undertaking this type of study nationally and internationally to enhance the development of Xitsonga, thus promoting multilingualism.

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A. Xitsonga speaking respondents

**Questionnaire used on research on the use of Xitsonga at the University of Limpopo
Turfloop Campus**

You are requested to answer the questions truthfully as what you say will be used to determine the success or otherwise of this study on the use of Xitsonga at the University of Limpopo Turfloop, Campus. What you say will be kept confidential.

Please fill in the required information

1. Highest qualification obtained:.....
2. Occupation:.....
3. If still studying, state the level:.....
4. Age:.....
5. Gender:.....

Please complete this section

6. Do you like Xitsonga as your first language?
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7. If you answered “yes” or “no” to the above question, explain.
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8. When do you use Xitsonga most often?

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9. How do you feel about Xitsonga as a medium of instruction at university level?

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10. What do you think about your peers who would not like to use Xitsonga as their medium of instruction?

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11. What can be done to change their attitude?

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12. What do you suggest should be done to improve the use of Xitsonga on campus?

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13. Would you like Xitsonga to replace English as the medium of instruction for academic purposes? Give reasons for your answer.

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14. Are you proud to be a Mutsonga? Give reasons for your answer.

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15. What are the advantages of using Xitsonga on campus?

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16. What are the disadvantages of using Xitsonga on campus?

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Thank you for your time and co-operation.

B. Non-Xitsonga speaking respondents

**Questionnaire used on research on the use of Xitsonga at the University of Limpopo
Turfloop Campus**

You are requested to answer the questions truthfully as what you say will be used to determine the success or otherwise of this study on the use of Xitsonga at the University of Limpopo, Turfloop Campus. What you say will be kept confidential.

Please fill in the required information

1. Highest qualification obtained:.....
2. Occupation:.....
3. If still studying, state the level:.....
4. Age:
5. Gender.....

Please complete this section

6. Do you like Xitsonga as one of the languages at the University of Limpopo?
.....
7. If you answered “yes” or “no” to the above question, explain.
.....
.....

.....
8. Do you have friends who speak Xitsonga as their first language?

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9. Are you proud to have friends who speak Xitsonga as their first language? Give reasons for your answer

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10. Under which circumstance do they use Xitsonga?

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11. How do you feel about Xitsonga as a medium of instruction at university level?

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12. What do you think about your peers who would not like to use Xitsonga as their medium of instruction?

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13. What do you suggest should be done to improve the use of Xitsonga on campus?

.....
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14. Would you like Xitsonga to replace English as the medium of instruction for academic purposes? Give reasons for your answer.

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15. What are the advantages of using Xitsonga on the campus?

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16. What are the disadvantages of using Xitsonga on the campus?

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Thank you for your time and co-operation.