

# Mistranslation of culture-specific terms in Kropf's *Kafir-English dictionary*

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This article aims at correcting some errors of mistranslation as well as giving a full explanation of some culture-specific terms which are found in Kropf's (1899) Xhosa-English dictionary. Some of the entries have been given wrong meanings, whilst others have not been described fully. Users who are not first-language speakers are misled and could be confused by some of the meanings supplied by Kropf. The focus is mainly on culture-specific terms because this is the area where Kropf experienced most problems as the terms expressed concepts of Xhosa culture which were unknown to him.

*Kwisichazi-magama sikaKropf sowe-1899 esibizwa ngokuba yiKafir-English dictionary, kukho amagama athile, ingakumbi lawo achaphazela inkcubeko kaXhosa, angachazwanga ngendlela eyiyo. Umntu osebenzisa esi sichazi-magama, sibe isiXhosa ingelolwimi lwakhe lwenkobe zingambhidisa okanye zimlahlekise ezinye iinkcazelo. Eli nqaku, ke ngoko lijolise ekulungiseni ezinye zezo mpazamo.*

## Introduction

An understanding of the source culture is important in translation as one to one translation is not always possible or, in fact, desirable. Culture is defined by Newmark (1988:94) as a way of life and its manifestations that are peculiar to a community using a particular language as its means of expression. Any concept which is peculiar to that particular culture is referred to as culture-specific. It can be a religious belief, a type of food, dress, a social custom or behaviour pattern which is not known in the other culture.

The duty of a bilingual lexicographer is to find lexical units in the target language which are equivalent to the lexical units of the source language and then to coordinate the two sets. In order to do this, a bilingual lexicographer has to be familiar with both cultures. S/he is likely to experience problems when dealing with culture-specific terms if s/he is not fully acquainted with the

'other'. According to Ulrych (1992:72), awareness of cultural differences and similarities is essential to the interpretation of meaning. Cultural differences may cause difficulties for the bilingual lexicographer, but s/he can overcome such problems if s/he is aware of the differing cultures. Mtuze (1990:30) says that there are certain cultural issues that are very difficult to put across in the other language especially if that language is a 'non-African language'. This seems to have been the problem in Kropf's (1899) *Kafir-English dictionary*. Kropf must have experienced some difficulties in translating Xhosa terms into English, particularly culture-specific words. Kropf was a German missionary who worked amongst the Xhosa in the Eastern Cape. During his missionary work he compiled a vocabulary list of isiXhosa which he was encouraged to publish at a later stage.

The advanced studies of the theory of translation undertaken by the first author have sensitized her to the problems and challenges that bilingual lexicographers are faced with. The acute awareness of these challenges inspired the author to examine the Xhosa-English dictionary by Kropf to determine Kropf's success or otherwise in dealing with these challenges.

Space constraints do not allow this article to cover all the culture-specific terms found in Kropf's dictionary. Therefore a limited number of terms are analysed which have been selected randomly and grouped under the following sub-headings: kinship terms, cultural activities or practices, food and utensils. Kropf's biography and the missionary contribution to Xhosa lexicography are briefly outlined so as to sketch the context in which he worked.

### Kropf's biographical sketch

The information on Kropf was obtained by the first author in 1991 from archival material which is kept at the SOAS library, University of London.

Johann Heinrich Albert Kropf was born on 27 March 1822 at Potsdam in Germany and died on 20 December 1910 at Stutterheim in the Eastern Cape. He was the son of Albert Kropf, a military policeman who died when his son was still small. Because his father was a soldier, young Kropf was able to receive a good school education at the Garnisonsschule in Potsdam. He later trained as a printer in the Deckersche Geheime Oberhofbuchdruckerei. He type-set a number of scientific works from different languages such as Latin, Hebrew and Greek and felt motivated to study these languages in greater depth.

Influenced by some Christian friends, Kropf decided to become a missionary and joined the Berlin missionary society. During his missionary training, he attended lectures at the University of Berlin where he studied medicine. Combining missionary work and medicine proved to be vital during his time because doctors were very scarce.

In 1845 he was ordained as a missionary and was sent to the Bethal mission station in the Eastern Cape. His early years of missionary work were not very successful. He suffered from ill-

health owing to the change of climate and also disagreed with his society about dogma and missionary policy. The two frontier wars of 1846–1850 and 1850–1853 contributed to his lack of success during this period.

Immediately after the arrival of the first group of German settlers in 1857, Kropf was appointed chaplain of the German legion. He also became a counsellor and minister of the second group of German immigrants who settled in the Cape in 1858. Afterwards he became a full-time minister of the Evangelical Lutheran Church.

It is claimed that within a relatively short period Kropf acquired a sound knowledge of isiXhosa and collaborated in translating the Bible into isiXhosa, thus building on the work done by the Wesleyans who completed the translation of the New Testament in 1838 that was only published in 1846. Kropf distinguished himself as part of the group of missionaries who translated the Bible that was printed by the missionary press in Mount Coke during 1858–1859. In 1869 a committee was appointed to revise the Bible translation with Kropf as chairman. Other members of the committee were Bryce Ross, John Brownlee, J.A.Chalmers and Tiyo Soga. Kropf's contribution to the new translation earned him an honorary doctorate in divinity by the University of Berlin in 1889. This translation was not exempt from criticism but compared to the previous translations it was more idiomatic, and did much to establish isiXhosa as an educational medium.

Translating the Bible motivated Kropf to compile a vocabulary list of isiXhosa for his own use. He did not have any intention to publish it. Printing of this lexicon as a dictionary was suggested by the Board of Revisers of the Xhosa Bible. Their sole aim was to preserve the Xhosa language as Andrew Smith said at the United Missionary Conference held in King Williamstown in 1889, 'the lexicon should be printed, if only as a memorial of the Kafir language which would soon be supplanted by English' (Kropf, 1899:iii). The printing of the *Kafir-English dictionary* by Lovedale Press was started in 1895 and extended over a period of four years until its completion in 1899. Kropf's dictionary, as it became known,

was in its time one of the best in the African languages because of the ethnological information it contained. It was revised by Robert Godfrey and was published in 1915 by Lovedale Press. Kropf's bilingual dictionary, like any other dictionary, was written with the aim of meeting certain needs. One of its aims was to help non-speakers of isiXhosa, especially the missionaries of the time who wished to learn the language or improve their knowledge of it.

### **A brief exposition of missionary contribution to isiXhosa lexicography**

During the period of Kropf's arrival at the Cape there were few grammar books and only few vocabulary lists in isiXhosa. Missionary activity amongst the Xhosa began in 1799. Rev Johannes van der Kemp, who came from the London Missionary Society, was the first missionary to settle amongst the Xhosa of chief Ngqika whom they called 'Gaika' for easy pronunciation. Van der Kemp devised a specimen of the Xhosa alphabet and a word list with twenty one sections. He recommended that the sounds of isiXhosa be represented to the European ear by an alphabet consisting of twenty six letters and eight vowels. He found difficulty in placing the three clicks and found isiXhosa to be totally different from the other languages with which he was acquainted. This vocabulary comprised names of animals and their parts, African home, vegetables, food and drink, *et cetera*. Unfortunately Van der Kemp did not stay long in the country and there was no follow-up to his work until the arrival of the printing press in 1823.

John Bennie, a Glasgow missionary, arrived in the Cape at Tyhume in 1821. He is regarded as the father of isiXhosa because he was the first to reduce isiXhosa to writing when John Ross arrived with a printing press in 1823. Bennie's reading sheet, an alphabet, was published in 1824. In 1826 he published *A systematic vocabulary of the Kaffrarian language in two parts to which is prefixed an introduction to Kaffrarian grammar*. His works, *A dictionary in Kafferse and English* and *An English-Kafir dictionary*, were not published but provided the source of 1200 words

added to the second edition of Kropf's *Kafir-English dictionary* of 1915.

William Binnington Boyce, a Wesleyan missionary, joined the ministry in 1829 and was appointed at Albany in the Eastern Cape. His most significant achievement was his book *A grammar of the Kaffir language* in 1834. The missionaries had long observed that the language was characterised by 'peculiarities' which caused it to differ structurally from other languages. But these peculiarities, although the subject of much thought and inquiry, continued to be shrouded in mystery until solved by William Boyce. The second editions of Boyce's grammar book of 1839 and 1844 were appended with an additional vocabulary, a phrasebook and exercises.

In 1846, *A vocabulary of the Kaffir language*, written by John Ayliff, a Wesleyan missionary, was published. He was the first missionary to have taken notice of the *hlonipha* words where married women are not supposed to pronounce any words containing syllables occurring in the names of their husbands or his male relatives or the chief's relations.

John Whittle Appleyard, a Wesleyan missionary, arrived in Cape Town in January 1840. In October of the same year he began his study of Xhosa grammar. At night he studied Boyce's grammar book and by day visited homes and communicated with locals through an interpreter. His work, *The Kaffir language: comprising a sketch of its history; which includes a general classification of South African dialects, ethnographical and geographical; remarks upon its nature and a grammar*, was published in 1850.

William Davis, a Wesleyan missionary, arrived in the Cape in 1831. He made a substantial contribution to improving Boyce's grammar of 1834. It was published in London with the title *A grammar of the Kaffir language by W.B.Boyce, 2nd edition augmented and improved with vocabulary and exercises*. His own works, *A grammar of the Kaffir language* and *A dictionary of the Kaffir language including the Xhosa and Zulu dialects*, were published in 1872. In 1877, *An English-Kafir dictionary; principally of the Xhosa Kaffir, but including also many words of the Zulu-Kaffir*

*dialect*, was published. Kropf adopted most of the material from the two dictionaries without any changes. (See Pahl, Pienaar & Ndungane, 1989; and also Pahl, Jafta & Jolobe, 1971.)

Kropf's dictionary has been one of the best bilingual dictionaries in isiXhosa. Pahl, Pienaar & Ndungane write:

'Kropf's dictionary is a masterly and scholarly work that has stood the test of more than three-quarters of a century. Kropf appears to be the first lexicographer to have fathomed and thoroughly mastered the intricacies of Xhosa phonology, including the distinction between radical, aspirated and ejective sounds ...' (1989:xxxviii)

Godfrey revised Kropf's dictionary in 1915. Meanwhile, McLaren was working on a dictionary which also appeared in 1915 that was called *A concise Kaffir-English dictionary*. In 1923 *A concise English-Kaffir dictionary* also by McLaren, appeared. According to Pahl *et al.* (1989:xxxviii) less than twenty years later Godfrey was asked to revise Kropf's dictionary a second time and to transliterate it into the new orthography but, although he had completed the work by 1946, it was never published. He claims that Godfrey's work was of an 'extensive and thorough nature and served as a valuable basis for the Fort Hare ... The greater dictionary of Xhosa'. In the next section, we discuss some problems that the bilingual lexicographer has to contend with.

### Lexicographical orientation

Al Kasimi (1977) identifies three semantic problems in bilingual lexicography: the choice of equivalents, meaning discrimination and word family recognition. For the purposes of this article only one problem is discussed, that is the choice of equivalents.

#### Choice of equivalents

A major problem confronting the bilingual lexicographer is that s/he cannot always find required equivalents of source language entries in the target language. Contributing factors to this problem are culture-bound words which refer to objects

peculiar to the culture of the source language, and scientific and technological terms which do not exist in the vernacular languages of developing countries. Though it is possible to establish translation equivalence between sentences, it is often difficult to do so between lexical items. The difficulty is caused by the fact that there is a close relationship between language and culture and, since words are symbols of a particular culture, it is not easy to establish undiluted correspondence between related words in two different languages.

Cultural differences are precise, for example, in words related to kinship, technology, ecology and many others. The terms *cousin* and *uncle* are clear examples of kinship terms which show cultural differences in English and isiXhosa. In Fischer (1992:129) *cousin* is entered as follows:

**cousin**, n. (*where parents are brothers*) **umntakwethu**; (*where parents are brother and sister*) **umza**; (*where parents are sisters*) **ukanina** (u-oo-)

Compare this entry with Kropf (1899:482), who fails to give a full description: *um-Za*, n. 1. *A cousin*.

The degree of cultural loading in kinship terms is higher in isiXhosa than in English. According to Chaffey, the term degree of cultural loading refers to

'the amount of culture-specific knowledge or information a language user must have in order to be able to understand what we might loosely call the full meaning of a lexical item' (1992:148).

In isiXhosa the words *cousin* and *uncle* refer to a number of relationships whereas in the English culture only one word is used to express different relationships. Here are some of the reasons why two related items may exist in some languages:

A lexical unit in one language may not have a corresponding lexical unit in another language. The meaning of that lexical unit may be expressed by a syntactic device in the other language. For example, the word *ilobola* does not have a corresponding lexical unit in English. Kropf says *ilobola* is 'dowry or cattle given to a father in compensation for the loss of a daughter on marriage'. The explanation he gives is unsatisfactory:

'The idea lying at the root of this custom is that the father suffers loss by the marriage of a daughter. He is deprived of her assistance and has a just claim for compensation. This custom furnished also a guarantee that the woman would be kindly treated after marriage. If she had just cause for complaint, she could return to her friends, who demanded one or more cattle, before she was allowed to go back to her husband. To make payment of this kind is called *ukulobola*' (Kropf, 1899:219).

*Dowry* is defined in the *World book dictionary* (1992) as:

'property or money that a woman brings to her husband when she marries him. Dowry ... is not to be conceived as an inducement to marriage but as a device the bride's family seek to aid their daughter's husband to set up an economically stable household'.

It is clear from the above definition of *dowry*, that *ilobola* is not the same as *dowry*. The *ilobola* is not given to the wife and it is also not payment for the bride. It forms the basis of building a relationship between the two families and that is why there are negotiations between the two families before the *ilobola* is agreed upon. Since the term *ilobola* does not have a corresponding lexical unit in English, the term *dowry* makes sense to the target reader though it does not have the same propositional meaning as *ilobola*.

Two different languages may have different grammatical patterns to determine certain aspects of experience. In English a greeting is expressed according to time, for example *good morning*, *good day*, *good afternoon* and *good evening*. In isiXhosa the greeting is the same, *molo*, irrespective of time of day. *Molo* is the singular form which is used when one person is being greeted; the plural form is *molweni*. Kropf (1899:237) has not fully described this entry, to him *molo* means *good morning* as can be observed in the entry below. The user is clearly misinformed.

'*Molo! Good morning! Molweni! good morning to you*' (Kropf 1899:237).

From the above one observes that culture-bound words pose a problem for the bilingual lexicographer. For example, a source culture word may express a concept which is unknown in the target culture, the notion of cultural loading also causes problems. Kropf, a German by birth, must have experienced problems translating Xhosa terms in English, particularly culture-specific terms as shown in the discussion below.

### Factors contributing to mistranslation in Kropf (1899)

Nida (1961:27), who has written extensively on Bible translation, recommends that even if a lexicographer had a long experience with the foreign language, s/he should seek the constant help of a native informant of that language to weed out improper usage and avoid translationese. In Kropf's case this strategy was only partly successful. According to him his primary sources were the works of other missionaries:

'When I arrived in Kaffraria in 1845, the only vocabulary of the language of the people that I could at first obtain was a small Kafir-German one ... I thereupon set to work to find what missionaries of other churches had done in this direction. A small but trustworthy vocabulary, partly printed and partly in manuscript, compiled by the Rev. John Bennie in 1830 came into my hands. Later I became acquainted with Dr Van der Kemp's "*Woordenlijst of 1801*". In 1872 appeared a "*Dictionary of the Kaffir language, including Xhosa and Zulu dialects*", by Rev.W.J. Davis. In compiling a vocabulary of the language for my own use ... I derived more or less help from each of these sources' (Kropf, 1899: iii).

Again, judging from the time when the dictionary was compiled, there is no doubt that he relied on listening when the language was spoken, rather than on informants who were conversant in both languages; so chances of miscommunication abound. The negative attitude of the missionaries towards the Xhosa culture is another contributing factor. It should always be remembered that the

aim of the missionaries was not to develop the language as such but to spread the gospel, and that is noticeable when one studies the development of the Xhosa language and literature closely (see also Satyo, 1993:63–89 and Ntuli & Swanepoel, 1993). The missionary focus was on translating religious literature and the approach in schools was the third language approach though the language was taught to first language speakers.

Which strategies could the bilingual lexicographer employ to assist him or her in finding suitable equivalents? The following strategies have been recorded for transferring culture in translated texts and could be useful to bilingual lexicographers because their task involves a large extent of translation.

### Strategies for transferring culture in translation

Translation scholars such as Newmark (1988), Williams (1990) and Baker (1992) suggest a variety of translation strategies which can be used to transfer culture when encountering culture-specific words or culture-bound concepts. The strategies are as follows:

#### (i) Cultural equivalent

A cultural equivalent involves substituting a target language term for a source language term. Williams (1990:56) finds this strategy to be of great importance because it can render a translation more 'readily acceptable and comprehensible to the readership'. According to Newmark (1988: 82) cultural equivalent is an **approximate translation** where a source language cultural word is translated by a target language cultural word. For example, Kropf (1899:483) gives an approximate translation of *umza* as *cousin* although not every *cousin* is *umza* in isiXhosa.

#### (ii) Descriptive equivalent

According to Williams (1990:55), using a descriptive equivalent involves the explanation of a source culture-specific term which does not have an equivalent in the target culture. This strategy also seems very useful to the bilingual lexicogra-

pher. Though Kropf has made use of this strategy, in some instances he has given wrong descriptions as will be observed in the columns below.

#### (iii) Functional equivalent

A functional equivalent involves the use of a culturally neutral term to define a source language culture-specific term. It offers a useful strategy for culture-specific terms which have no obvious equivalent in the target culture (Newmark, 1988: 83; Williams, 1990:58). For example the term *backbencher* can be used as an example. A backbencher is a member of the British House of Commons who is not one of the leaders of his party or any person of similar status in a legislative patterned on the British House of Commons. There is no such shared practice in the Xhosa culture. The term can be translated as *amalungu epalemente* (members of parliament) because that would make sense to the target reader even if the term does not mean much.

#### (iv) Cultural substitution

According to Baker (1992:31), cultural substitution involves replacing a culture-specific item or expression with a target language item or expression which does not have the same propositional meaning but is likely to have a similar impact on the target reader. For example, Kropf (1899:219) used this strategy when he translated *ilobola*. *Dowry* does not convey the same meaning as *ilobola*, but it makes sense to the target reader because both *ilobola* and *dowry* are associated with giving in marriage. This strategy gives the target language user a concept with which s/he can identify.

#### (v) Translating using a loan word or loan word plus explanation

According to Baker (1992:34), this strategy is relevant when dealing with culture-specific items, modern concepts and buzz words. This is one strategy which a bilingual lexicographer can use successfully when dealing with culture-specific terms. It is a strategy which is commonly used by scholars and translators in African languages. The

term *imbongi* (an oral poet) is used as a loan word in English texts as shown in the examples below:

'On public occasions **imbongi** had not only to praise the chief but also to criticise him' (Jordan, 1973:112).

'**Imbongi** plays a very important role among the Xhosa speaking people' (Jafta, 1978:59).

'This set of impressions suggests that the **imbongi** was a poet markedly distinct from others in the community' (Opland, 1983:60).

In the following example, Jordan has used a loan word plus explanation:

'The converted has lost **ubuntu** – (generosity, respect for man irrespective of position)' (1973:55).

Of the above translation strategies, translation by loan word or loan word plus explanation and descriptive equivalent appear to be most useful to the bilingual lexicographer. Kropf used descriptive equivalent as strategy, but unfortunately some of the explanations are incorrect and therefore not acceptable.

### An analysis of culture-specific terms in Kropf's dictionary

The entries which are analysed below were selected randomly. They are classified into three groups: kinship terms, cultural activities and practices and food and utensils. Kropf's dictionary is still written in the old orthography and for the sake of uniformity the entries used in this study are written in the present orthography. The translation strategy which has been used is the descriptive approach because most of the terms do not have equivalents in the target culture.

#### Kinship terms

The following observations have been made regarding the entries of kinship terms: the translation equivalent *sister* for *udade* is correct, but the explanation (as used by men only) is incorrect. The explanations given for *umkhwe* and *unyana* are also incorrect and unacceptable. The explanation of *ubukhwe* – *where a man's father in law lives* shows some sexual bias because the man is

recognised as the only owner of the home. Kropf's description lacks consistency because when he gives the literal meaning of the idiomatic expression *lise nasebukhweni bezinja* he calls *ubukhwe* a *mother in law's place*. *Umkhwenya* is an unknown term. He must have mistaken it for *umlanya* – a brother in law. The correct term is *umkhwenyana* (son in law). The term *umkhwenyana* is formed from (*um*)-*khwe* plus *-nyana* and means 'the son of the in law'. The use of the possessive pronoun *my* in cases such as *my grandmother*, *my maternal uncle* is inappropriate. It would be acceptable when placed in brackets. The terms *uninazala wesifazi* and *uninazala wesidoda* do not exist in isiXhosa. (Refer to entry 7; corrected version.)

#### Kropf versus corrected version

1. **u-Dade** n.1. Sister (as used by men only) (p. 70).  
**u-Dade** n. Sister (as used by both men and women).
2. **um-Khwe** n.1. A married man is **unyana** to his wife's parents and **umkhwe** to his wife's brothers and sisters; his wife's brothers are **abakhwe** to him (p. 207).  
**um-Khwe** n. A man's father in law. A man is **umkhwenyana** to his wife's parents and **umlanya** to his wife's brothers and sisters; his wife's brothers are **abalanya** to him. He is **unyana** to his own parents.
3. **ubu-Khwe** n.7. .... the place where a man's father in law lives; ... Phr. *lise nasebukhweni bezinja*, the sky cleared even at the dogs' mother in law, i.e. the sky is perfectly clear without any cloud (p. 207).  
**ubu-Khwe** n. the place where a man's parents in law live; Idiomatic expression; *lise nasebukhweni bezinja*; lit. meaning; the sky is clear even at the dogs' parents in law. fig. meaning; as given by Kropf.
4. **um-Khwenya** n.1. Em. Brother in law. Polite expression by which the full brothers and sisters of a married woman call her husband, but not used by the other children of a polygamist; see **um-Khwe**. The dimin. **umkhwenyana** is used reproachfully (p. 208).

The word **umkhwenya** is unknown. The explanation given is unfounded. The known word is **um-Khwenyana**, n. a son in law. The noun **umkhwenyana** is formed from **um-khwe** plus **(u-)nyana**. (Refer to entry 2; corrected version.) The brothers and sisters of a married woman call their sister's husband **umlanya**.

5. **u-Makhulu** n.1. My grandmother. In old Kafir used also for grandfather; if a distinction had to be made, he was called **umakhulu osidoda** (p. 228).

**u-Makhulu** n; grandmother; formed from **mama** (mother) and **-khulu** (big/great). Grandfather is **utatomkhulu**; formed from **tata** (father) and **-khulu** (big or great). In Xhosa grandfather was never called **umakhulu**.

6. **u-Malume** n.1. My maternal uncle, my mother's elder brother, who becomes after the death of my mother's father the possessor of his married sister's dowry and protector of her children. The children only call him by this name (p. 228).

**u-Malume** n. maternal uncle; anyone of the mother's brothers is **umalume**. The other information given is irrelevant. There is no responsibility attached to the title.

7. **u-Ninazala** n.1. The mother in law: **wesifazi**, of the wife; **wesidoda**, of the husband (p. 271).

**u-Ninazala** n. (her, their) mother in law. The mother in law of the husband is **umkhwekazi**; there are no such terms as **uninazala wesifazi** or **uninazala wesidoda**.

8. **um-Za** n.1. A cousin (p. 483).

**um-Za** n.1. A cousin, where parents are brother and sister.

### Cultural activities or practices

Some of the explanations given by Kropf are blatantly wrong, while others are unsatisfactory. The following entries have been selected. Kropf gives three descriptions of *ilima* but none of them is adequate. He first describes *ilima* as a *gathering of people* who have come to *help a woman hoe her garden*, secondly he says it is a *group of men*

*coming to plough*, and thirdly a *gathering of people to weed a garden*. *Ilima* is a group of people who come to work at the request of anybody who makes an appeal and they do *any type of work* for no pay. The host prepares a meal for them. *Ukungoma* is an unknown verb in isiXhosa. (Refer to entry 11; corrected version). Kropf explains *inqo- loqho* as a *man* who understands all kinds of work whereas it is a *ritual* to drive away locusts. Kropf describes *intonjane* which is a *ritual* where a young girl is prepared for adulthood as a *heathen custom*. This shows the attitude of the missionaries towards the African culture in general and Xhosa in particular. Most of the explanations given below are taken from Jafta (1978), who describes some of these practices in her study.

### Kropf versus corrected version

9. **i-lima** n.2. Orig. a number of people who came to help a lately-married woman, at her invitation, to hoe her garden and who were entertained by her husband by having an ox killed for them; now a gathering of men each with his own oxen coming to plough a field, or a gathering of people to weed a garden (p. 216).

**i-lima** n. It is common practice among the Xhosa people to appeal for help whenever a person cannot cope with some work. The people assisting form a group an **ibhoxo** or **ilima**. They work for no pay (Jafta, 1978:28).

10. **um-Xhentso** n.6. The doctor's dance (p. 470). **um-Xhentso** n. a traditional dance.

11. **uku-Ngoma** v.t. to sing (p. 263).

**uku-Ngoma** unknown; To sing is **ukuvuma** (when singing a traditional song). In other words **ukuvuma** means singing without being governed by notes. It is **ukucula** when singing **iculo**-a modern song. By modern song is meant a hymn or any song with staff notation.

12. **ingoma** n. a song of praise (p.263).

**ingoma** n. a song (mainly traditional).

13. **i-Nqoloqho** n. a man who understands all kinds of work (p. 285).

**i-Nqoloqho** n. A ritual that is observed to drive away locusts which attack vegetation and crops during times of drought. The word



**inqoloqho** is related to **ukunqoloqha** meaning to 'search and expunge'. The searching and expunging is called **inqoloqho**.

The girls who participate in the actual 'driving out' are also called **inqoloqho** (Jafta, 1978: 21).

14. **in-Tonjane** n.3. from **uku-Thomba**. A heathen custom of a very lascivious character, in which public rejoicings and indecent dances take place in the celebration of a girl's having arrived at the age of puberty (p. 418).

**in-Tonjane**. The word **intonjane** has a common root with the word **ukuthomba** which originally meant 'to get the first menstruation'. **Intonjane** is a ritual which is observed by a young girl who had had her menstruation in order to prepare her for her adult role as a woman and mother of children. After the **intonjane** ritual, the girl could be given away in marriage (Jafta, 1978:23).

#### Food and utensils

When examining the entries below, it is clear that Kropf at times provides incorrect explanations. For example: *Ingobozi* is a basket made of *reeds* not of *elastic*. *Isigwampa* is a type of *stiff porridge* not a *stew* in which wild vegetables and home ground maize meal are the main ingredients. Not every wild plant is regarded as a vegetable. A distinction is made between nutritious plants and poisonous ones. *Ukhuko* is a mat made of reeds and is used *mainly* for *sitting* not for *sleeping*. *Umqa wentyabontyi* is made of watermelon and home ground maize meal. It is a type of *stiff porridge*. It cannot be likened to a *soup*. *Everybody* qualifies to eat *umphothulo*. It is not prepared for *toothless people* as alleged by Kropf.

#### Kropf versus corrected version

15. **in-Gobozi** n. a large, elastic basket for storing corn (p. 122).

**in-Gobozi** n. A basket made of reeds. It varies in size. It is used to carry maize, sorghum, pumpkins, beans *et cetera* especially during harvest time.

16. **isi-Gwampa** n.4. A vegetable stew in which the points of a young pumpkin have been cut up (p.139).

**isi-Gwampa** n. It is a type of stiff porridge which is made of wild vegetables and home-ground maize-meal.

17. **in-Tluzo** n.3. A sieve, strainer, filter; the residue which remains from filtering, straining or sifting; sediment, dregs, bran, pollard (p. 163).

**in-Tluzo** n. It is a tubular strainer which is made of reeds. It is used specifically to sieve Xhosa beer called **umqombothi**. The residue which remains from filtering is called **iintsi-pho**.

18. **u-Khuko** n. A sleeping mat; a bed (p.197).

**u-Khuko** n. A mat made of reeds. It is used mainly for sitting women. The idiomatic expression which says; *umahambehlala ukhuko lwabatshakazi* shows its purpose; **umahambehlala** means to sit everywhere; **ukhuko lwabatshakazi** means a mat for the brides. In Xhosa culture a bride is supposed to bring her own mat and she has to carry it around the homestead because she cannot sit on other people's mats. Men do not sit on **ukhuko**.

**Ukhuko** can be used as a sleeping mat but that is not its main function.

19. **um Phothulo** n.6. Boiled corn ground for toothless persons (p. 338).

**um-Phothulo** n. Cooked corn or maize ground for everybody to make **umvubo**.

20. **um-Qa** n.6. Stiff porridge: **umqa wentyabontyi**, water-melon soup (p. 344).

**um-Qa** n. A type of stiff porridge made of pumpkin and home ground maize-meal. **Umqa wentyabontyi** is a type of stiff porridge made of water-melon and home ground maize-meal.

21. **um-Vubo** n. 6. Boiled maize, Kafir-corn or bread mixed with amasi for food (p.454).

**umVubo**, n. Cooked maize or corn is ground first and is mixed with **amasi** to make **umvubo**. Bread and **umphokoqo** can also be used to make **umvubo**.

## Conclusion

The primary factor that contributed to mistranslations in Kropf's *Xhosa-English dictionary* is that he was dealing with a culture which differs completely from European culture. Since translation is both an interlingual activity and an intercultural activity, it is a *sine qua non* that a bilingual lexicographer need not only be proficient in the two languages but s/he must also be familiar with the two cultures. This entails that s/he must be aware of the habits, behaviour and other practices shared by these cultures and what is foreign to them. Such knowledge will enable him or her to deal with any cultural gaps that may arise and to carry out any modifications in the target language (Ulrych, 1992). Unfortunately the missionaries were not primarily interested in knowing and understanding the Xhosa culture. Their religious agenda caused them to view it as an uncivilized culture that cut across Christian principles. They aimed at influencing the Xhosa to accept an international way of life that would be acceptable in the so-called civilized world.

This study, therefore, is an attempt to fill in the gap which was identified by Kropf (1899:iv) as his work was being published. Kropf was aware of the shortcomings in his work and urged future missionaries to build on this foundation a better and enduring structure. Again, if one considers the process of transformation and the advancement of multilingualism which is taking place in South Africa, this study will afford speakers of other languages an opportunity of acquiring a better understanding of the Xhosa language and culture.

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