

**A LINGUISTIC SURVEY OF ADOPTIVES IN VENDA**

by

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**SUPERVISOR: PROF G POULOS**

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(i)

### DECLARATION

I declare that **A LINGUISTIC SURVEY OF ADOPTIVES IN VENDA** is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

*Mr M Madiba*

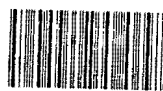
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## ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

Afr.	Afrikaans
Arab.	Arabic
Eng.	English
Ve.	Venda
NS.	Northern Sotho
Tlo.	Tlokwa
Lo.	Lobedu
Zu.	Zulu
Xho.	Xhosa
Sho.	Shona
Tso.	Tsonga
Kal.	Kalanga
Port.	Portuguese
Swah.	Swahili
<	from
>	to, becomes
/ /	phonemic form
[ ]	phonetic form
˘	low tone
ˈ	high tone
!	stress

## **SUMMARY**

This study deals with the influence of other languages on Venda. It begins by looking at the various contact situations and then analyses the adaptation of foreign linguistic forms and their impact on the Venda language.

Chapter 1 gives a historical perspective of Venda. The focus here is on the origin of the Venda language and the different contacts it has had with other languages during and after migration.

Chapter 2 analyses the adaptation of foreign linguistic forms to the Venda lexical-semantic system, while chapter 3 focuses on adoptives in relation to the Venda sound system.

Chapter 4 focuses on the grammatical (i.e morphological and syntactic) adaptation . This chapter concludes by looking at the impact of adopted linguistic forms on the Venda grammatical system.

The final chapter gives a general conclusion on the adjustment of adopted linguistic forms and their effects on the Venda language.

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## INTRODUCTION

### (i) Aims of study

It is a well-established fact in linguistics that all languages change through time. According to Thomason and Kaufman (1988:9) change in a language may occur as a result of three factors, namely:

" drift i.e. tendencies within the language to change in certain ways as a result of structural imbalances; dialect interference, both between stable, strongly differentiated dialects and between weakly differentiated dialects through the differential spread (in 'waves') of a particular change; and foreign interference".

In this study we shall be mainly concerned with the latter change i.e. change that occurs in a language as a result of the influence of another language. Therefore, the primary aim of this study is thus to describe and analyse linguistic changes which have occurred in the Venda language as a result of the influence of other languages. The influence of one language on another depends mainly on contact. "The speech communities must obviously be in fairly regular contact for borrowing to take place" (Cluver 1989:267). Although the different contact situations of the Venda language will be outlined, the main focus will be on the adaptation of foreign linguistic forms which have been adopted into the Venda language and their impact on the language. In other words, our approach will be based mainly on linguistic factors, even though certain social factors will also be taken into account when aspects of the adopted linguistic forms are explained. The adaptation of these foreign linguistic forms will be discussed at the phonological, morphological, semantic and syntactic levels.

### (ii) Definitions of the concepts and viewpoints on adoptives

In this section the key concepts used in this study are defined and different approaches to adoptives are briefly sketched in order to situate this study within a broader perspective.

(a) The term 'adoptive'

The term 'adoptive' is used in this study to refer to linguistic forms that have been adopted from other languages. The process of transfer will be called 'adoption'. These terms have been used by scholars such as Rassman (1977), Chimhundu (1982), Khumalo (1984), Cole (1990) and Poulos (1990), . However, other terms have also been used in studies on adoptives, namely, 'borrowings', 'loan-words', 'foreign acquisitions' etc. Terms such as 'interference', 'mixing', 'stealing' and 'acculturation' have also been used to refer to the process by which linguistic forms are transferred from one language to another. It appears as though there is no consensus amongst scholars on the use of any one specific term.

As already mentioned, adoptives have been referred to as 'foreign words' by some scholars, for example Serjeantson (1968). What is interesting to note is her apt realisation of the inappropriateness of such a term. She criticises its usage as follows:

"The first thing that is wrong in this book is the title. (The book is entitled: A history of foreign words in English). Very many of the words dealt with are certainly not foreign words". (Bracketing - mine)

Therefore it is perhaps a misnomer to refer to the adopted words that have assimilated into the language structure as 'foreign words'.

The terms 'borrowing' and 'loan words' have been widely used in the literature, mainly by Haugen (1950), Weinreich (1953) and many other scholars. However, scholars like Rassman (1977), Chimhundu (1982), Cole (1990) and Haugen himself have expressed their dissatisfaction with the use of these terms. Cole (1990:345) says:

"Incidentally, such lexical acquisitions are commonly referred to, even in professional linguistic circles, as 'borrowing' or 'loanwords', but having failed to find any disposition in languages ever to return such 'loaned' commodities, I prefer to term them **adoptives**. In the process of adoption they are adapted

to their new linguistic home and environment, phonologically, morphologically, and often also semantically, just as an adopted child adapts to the way of life and behaviour patterns and attitudes of its new family. Having adopted and assimilated such words from other languages, having thus granted them linguistic 'citizenship', we relatively quickly forget that they are foreign elements and believe them to be part of our own linguistic heritage".

Chimhundu (1982:XIX) finds the terms 'borrowing' and 'loan words' unacceptable for Shona due to the fact that it gives the general assumption of monolithic and homogeneous donor languages lending items to equally monolithic and homogeneous recipient languages. Although some linguists use these terms on the grounds that they have been widely used in the literature, their use seems to create the impression that the adopted linguistic forms are in the language temporarily. As long as adoptives are regarded as 'borrowed' or 'loan' words in the true sense of the word, they will never be accepted as standard forms in the recipient language.

Terms such as 'mixing' and 'interference', create the impression of a process which takes place haphazardly. The adoption of foreign words takes place in an orderly manner and does not always interfere with the recipient language structure. In most cases adopted linguistic forms conform to the grammatical structure of the adopting language. Therefore, it is not always appropriate to refer to adoption as 'mixing' or 'interference'. The use of these terms also expresses undesirability in the purist sense in that they suggest that there are certain languages which are 'pure' and others which are 'mixed' (Chimhundu 1982:XIX). The adoption of words from another language is hence seen as 'interfering with' or 'polluting' the purity of the language. The term 'acculturation' is also used to refer to the process of adoption. Acculturation is the process by which one group assimilates the cultural traits of another group (Collins Concise Dictionary). The problem with this term is that it seems to put more emphasis on culture rather than on language.

In sum the use of terms such as 'borrowings', 'loan words', 'foreign acquisitions' 'language mixing' and 'stealing' may reveal some or other prejudice toward the

process of adoption. This kind of prejudice can be regarded as a purist or conservative standpoint on language. The use of these terms will thus be avoided in this study and the term 'adoptive' is preferred. This term is derived from the verb 'adopt' which, according to Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary (1980:16), is defined as follows:

'to take by choice into a relationship'.

'to take up and practise or use as one's own'.

'to accept formally and put into effect'.

'Adoptives' will therefore be regarded as those foreign linguistic forms that have received formal acceptance and reflect widespread use in the recipient language. The advantage of this term is that it lacks the prejudices that are generally implied by the other terms discussed above. Furthermore, its use represents a somewhat liberal view of language change. The different viewpoints regarding language change and adoptives will be discussed in the following section.

#### **(b) Views on adoptives.**

The different terms discussed above reflect different viewpoints on adoptives. Here we shall look at three such viewpoints, namely, the purist, the liberal and the moderate viewpoints.

##### **The purist viewpoint**

This view is maintained by those who, according to Cheng (1985:178), "have established themselves by going the road of traditional scholarship and those who believe in purism and superior culture". Such people will try to block any influx of foreign elements into their language.

According to this view, adoption of linguistic forms from other languages is not tolerated. The views of purists notwithstanding, the crucial question is whether there

is a language, in this ever shrinking world with all its technological advancement, which can purport to be totally free from all foreign influences. Knappert (1972:2) rejects the existence of such a language and says:

"... pure races do not exist among the human species and I have never been able to discover a pure language".

Santiago (1974:328) also vigorously rejects the notion of a pure language:

"All languages are capable of borrowing from other languages. In fact, no language in the world is pure or completely free of borrowed words. Somehow a language borrows from other languages especially now that the world is shrinking so fast".

Chinese and Afrikaans are examples of languages where attempts have been made to maintain language purity, but to no avail. Afrikaans for example, resisted the influence of English but could not prevent the adoption of English words into the language. Nevertheless adoption in this language was restrained to some extent (Van Wyk 1978:49).

### **The liberal viewpoint**

The purist view is rejected by what is regarded as a more liberal view of language change. This view unlike the purist one, maintains that languages change with time since they, cannot be divorced from reality. According to this view, the adoption of linguistic forms from other languages is seen as a natural development of the language. In other words, adoption is not seen as a decaying process in a language but rather as an enrichment of the language. Thus Kunene and Sukumane (1987:116) state:

"The process of borrowing should not be looked upon as a negative device of polluting the language, but it should be considered as one of the devices that enables the language to expand itself - thus indicating that the language is complete and alive".

The attitude towards adoption determines the status which adoptives will have in that language. In languages where the purist view of language predominates, all forms of adoption are avoided. Kunene and Sukumane (1987:117) have this to say in this regard:

"The attitude towards borrowed words is one of the main factors that keeps some languages 'sterile' in this area of terminology that can be used in order to express new ideas and concepts. Thus the attitude towards borrowed words might be the cause of lexical sterility in some languages".

In languages such as English and Japanese, adoptives are given equal status to that of native words. Arlotto (1972:189) describes adoption in the English language as follows:

"English stands out as being almost unique with regard to the extent to which it has indifferently borrowed words from any language for whatever purpose. English speakers do not ordinarily worry about the notion that extensive borrowing causes their language to be corrupted or less 'pure'. In English a native word and a borrowed word may exist comfortably side by side with very similar or identical meanings".

Each of these two views discussed above has its own merits and demerits, depending on the situation of a given language. In some languages it is not possible to adopt one approach only. This then leads us to the third type of approach which is more moderate in outlook.

## **The Moderate viewpoint**

This viewpoint is described by Okonkwo (1977:322) as one which accepts purism in some areas and allows adoption in others. According to Santiago (1978) both extremes ( i.e. purist and liberal viewpoints ) are bad and can cripple the natural growth of a language.

"There must be some flexibility, an 'elbow room' for the language by way of relaxing its inflexible system of borrowing ... On the other hand, stability should also be maintained by way of putting some constraints on borrowing" (ibid. 334).

It would seem that most of the African languages, have opted for this kind of approach. Whilst use is made of the vocabulary expansion devices within the language itself, certain linguistic forms from other languages are also adopted. The advantage of this approach is that the language is able to make maximum use of both internal and external resources, and adoptives are usually accorded their rightful position when this viewpoint prevails.

### **(iii) Research methods**

#### **(a) Collection of material**

Given the fact that very little work has been done on adoptives in Venda, the first task which faced the researcher in this study was the collection of material. In an effort to arrive at a representative database a number of techniques were used, namely, informal observation, formal interviews and the examination of written materials. Each of these techniques will be briefly discussed below:



### **Informal observations**

The main focus in this study is on the spoken language rather than on the written form. It is a well supported view that change in a language is first attested in the spoken language rather than in the written form. As such, collecting data by means of informal observation is likely to yield valuable lexical material which has not yet been recorded.

Observations were made during informal meetings, with children at play, during informal conversations with people in buses, taxis, market transactions and in work situations. I also participated in some of these interactions since I am a mother-tongue speaker of the language. Through this method I was able to make some systematic observations of language change in its social context. Insights into the acceptability of innovations and frequency of use of the adopted linguistic forms were also gained in such an investigation.

### **Formal interviews**

Formal interviews were also used in selected areas. The main objective of these interviews was to get more background information of the area under investigation. People with formal linguistic knowledge were interviewed to provide some clarification on the linguistic forms existing in their area of expertise.

### **Examination of written materials.**

Various types of literature also served as sources for the collection and analysis of adoptives. These included, amongst others, literature books, dictionaries, the handbook of Venda Terminology and Orthography of the Department of Education and Training, the Thohoyandou newspaper, etc.

**(b) Treatment and analysis of the material.**

The data was scrutinized to determine the general trend underlying the ways in which the Venda language is changing. The following steps were followed in the analysis of the data:

An attempt was made to establish the source languages of the data collected. To this end, both diachronic and synchronic approaches were used. The diachronic approach assists in establishing the original forms of the adopted words whereas the synchronic approach investigates words in their present forms.

**(iv) Scope and composition of chapters**

This study deals with the influence of foreign languages on the Venda language. For any two languages to influence each other there must be some form of contact between them. This study thus begins by looking at the various contact situations and thereafter the adaptation of foreign linguistic forms and their impact on the Venda language are analysed.

In **Chapter 1**, an historical perspective of the Venda language will be given. The focus here will be on the origin of the Venda language and the different contacts it has had with other languages. The influence of the foreign languages in these different contact situations with the Venda language will be assessed.

**Chapter 2** will look at the semantic adaptation of foreign words in Venda. An attempt will also be made to discuss the adaptation of native words to express foreign concepts and ideas. The chapter will conclude by looking at the impact of the adopted words on the Venda semantics system.

In **Chapter 3**, an analysis of the adaptation of the foreign linguistic forms to the Venda sound system will be made. The effect of the adopted linguistic forms on the Venda sound system will be assessed.

**Chapter 4** deals with the grammatical (i.e. morphological and syntactic) adjustment of the adopted words in Venda. The morphological modifications of different parts of speech will be discussed and the syntactic behaviour of some of these parts of speech will also be considered.

**Chapter 5** will form the conclusion. In this chapter the general conclusions regarding changes to the Venda language due to the influence of other languages will be drawn.

**(v) Conclusion.**

The purpose of this introductory section was to set out the aims of this study, which are to analyse and describe the nature and general trends of change in Venda as a result of its contact with other languages. Different terms which have been used in the literature to refer to linguistic forms transferred from one language to another were discussed. The term 'adoptive' appears to be the most appropriate term to refer to these linguistic forms and this is the term used in this study. The process of transfer is referred to as 'adoption'. Three different viewpoints on adoptives, namely, the purist, the liberal and the moderate viewpoints, were briefly discussed and the methodology and the scope of this research were outlined.

## CHAPTER 1

### 1.0 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE VENDA

#### 1.1 Introduction

The main focus of this section will be on the history of the Venda language and its contact with other languages. The historical background of a language is essential in a study on adoptives since the latter are inextricably bound up with the history of the speech community (Hanon 1973: 389). Clark (1981:37) reiterates this view as follows:

"This aspect of vocabulary (adoptives), cannot, therefore, be studied except in parallel with history, cultural, social and even political".

Although the history of a speech community is important for a study of adoptives, only cultural-historical aspects which serve as a source of guidelines for analysing adoptives will be considered in this study. An historical record of a language or speech community can help one to infer which words were adopted from what language, approximately when and by whom. This study will therefore take the origin of the Venda people as its point of departure. Thereafter it will proceed to the migration of the Venda to their present country. The emphasis here will be on the contacts which Venda had with other languages during this period of migration. Last but not least, this study will look at the different postmigratory contacts. Postmigratory contacts arise mainly through geographical proximity and urbanisation.

#### 1.2 A brief outline of the history of Venda.

So far, very little has been written on the history of the Venda. The situation is exacerbated by the fact that even those few recordings which have been made on the history of the Venda seem to be superficial and sometimes unreliable (Ralushai 1977:22). In the absence of a good recorded history it becomes very difficult to postulate reconstructions of the historical contacts Venda had with other languages,

particularly the earlier contacts. However, it is hoped that those few recordings will go a long way in reconstructing the history of the Venda. Adoptives can also contribute in one way or another to the reconstruction of the history of a speech community. In this regard Knappert (1970:81) has the following to say :

"The total body of adoptives in a language yields a fair picture of the material and cultural acquisitions of its speakers since they settled in that part of Africa ...the lexicon of a language still gives us exact information on the stage of acculturation of its users".

This method of reconstructing the history of a speech community by means of linguistic evidence, adoptives in particular, was pioneered by Ehret. According to him "historical inferences of much more detailed and more complex kinds can be made from the diachronic analysis of adopted elements, specifically word-borrowings" (Ehret 1976:18). In most of his works dealing with the history of the Bantu languages<sup>1</sup> he used adoptives to illustrate the development of such languages (cf. Ehret 1967; 1968; 1973). These works are regarded by Phillipson (1977:110) as being of additional interest because of the light which they may throw on the transmission of the cultural traits which adoptives describe. For example, Ehret (1973:1) suggests that the names applied to cattle and sheep by many Bantu speakers were probably derived from the non-Bantu languages known collectively as Central Sudanic.

In outlining the history of the Venda language, the following aspects will be discussed and an attempt will be made to identify the role which adoptives can play in the reconstruction of these different aspects.

- i) The original migration of the Venda;
- ii) Contact during migration;
- iii) Postmigratory contacts.

---

*1. The word 'Bantu', even though it has become stigmatised in South Africa, will be used in this study on purely linguistic grounds.*

### **1.2.1 Possible original migrations of the Venda and their contact during migration.**

The origin and political history of the Venda have intrigued generations of scholars ever since missionaries like Beuster published works on the Venda (Loubser 1988:2). Traditional views differ with regard to the origin of the Venda. According to some traditions, the Venda are said to have originated from various areas, for example, from Egypt, Lower Congo, the Great Lakes area, Vhukalanga, and finally the Northern Transvaal (Ralushai 1977:22). There is no consensus amongst scholars on the place which could be regarded as the original home of the Venda. Some scholars feel very strongly that the Congo or Central Africa is the place of origin of the Venda. However, scholars like Loubser (1988; 1989) reject the Central Africa hypothesis in favour of the local origin hypothesis of the Venda. In this section an attempt will be made to scrutinize the different views on the origin of the Venda so as to establish an area which could serve as a starting point for our study of adoptives. These traditions will also be viewed against the background of the origins and migrations of the whole Bantu language family, of which Venda forms a part.

#### **1.2.1.1 Migration from Egypt**

One viewpoint is that the Venda originated in Egypt from whence they left because of civil wars following succession disputes. There are no written documents to substantiate this view. This view, is according to Ralushai (1977:23), only maintained by a few individuals such as chief Davhana and John Mulaudzi. The latter claims to have seen old Venda work of art in a big house in Egypt during his stay in North Africa during World War II.

This viewpoint of Egypt as the place of origin of the Venda seems to have emanated from the Ancient Egyptian theory of the Bantu origins which is supported by some students of Negro linguistics like Homburger (Bryant 1963:123). This theory, like that of the origin of the Venda people, seems to be decidedly weak and unconvincing. Thus Bryant (1963:127) after his intensive comparative study of the Egyptian languages and the Bantu languages, came to the following conclusion:

"All in all, then granting Egyptian certain minor similarities to Bantu, one feels that they do not suffice to convince one of even a prima facie case for Bantu relationship let alone Bantu parenthood or that there are any stronger than similar evidence producible from many other tongues, ancient or modern... Indeed it were difficult to believe that a language so infantile in its simplicity without even regular tense, mood and voice forms as was the Egyptian, could ever have borne as its offspring a system of speech so scientifically complete as is the Bantu: one cannot produce figs from thistles".

Bryant's conclusions also throw some light on our problem of the origin of the Venda. It is very clear from the above passage that there is little or no linguistic evidence which can justify the Egyptian theory. Mulaudzi's evidence, (as recorded by Ralushai 1977), based on works of art needs to be further substantiated before it is accepted. Since there is no linguistic evidence which supports this view it will be fruitless for our study of adoptives to pursue this theory further.

#### **1.2.1.2 Migration from Central Africa**

Another view on the origin of the Venda claims that the Venda originated from Central Africa. Some scholars such as Wesseman (1908) specify this place as being that of the Congo region. Thus Wesseman (1908:9-10) describes the place of origin of the Venda as follows:

"The Bawenda [Vhavenda] are probably only a part of a greater tribe whose dwellers are looked for on the Congo where according to the oldest Portuguese maps, a people of the same name is still living".

This view is also supported by people like Beuster (1879), Grundler (n.d), Theal (1916), Mathivha (1966) and many others. These people base their argument on the existence of a tribe bearing a Venda name, speaking Venda and practising customs similar to those of the Venda. The fact that the Central Africa hypothesis of the origin of the Venda seems to be based on the supposed existence of a tribe with the name

Venda raises a number of questions. In the first place there is no proof of the existence of such a tribe in Central Africa. Lestrade (1927:489) states this point as follows:

"There does not in fact exist to the writer's knowledge any Congo language which is sufficiently similar to the irreducible third of Tshivenda as to place Tshivenda in the Congo dialect".

Secondly, the origin of the name Venda may also throw some light on this problem. According to Venda oral traditions the name Venda originated from the Northern Transvaal. The Singo who immigrated to the area south of the Limpopo, adopted this title from the people whom they found in the area. However, some scholars like Mathivha (1966:9) state that the name Venda was derived from **Vele-e-nnda**, which means that "one of their leaders Vele is outside the original home which is Mashonaland" (lit. 'when Vele is outside'). I do not intend to delve deeply into these arguments. What is important here is that the name Venda seems to have originated at a much later stage in the Venda migration. This suggests that the Venda people were probably known by another name before they settled in the land south of the Limpopo. Another name by which the Venda were known was Senzi. The name Senzi originally derives from 'Zenj' (cf. Wentzel 1983:148) which was used by Arabs to refer to the Ethiopians or Abyssinians. The Arab geographers use the word 'Zinghi' to describe the interior of Ethiopia (Von Sicard 1952:112). The name Senzi seems to have been first applied to the Venda by the Lemba who according to Wentzel (1983:148) had lived among the Venda for some time long before their migration to their present country. The Lemba referred to the Venda as Senzi (i.e. the uncircumcized people) because the Venda did not practice circumcision. This name also seems to have been used for the Venda much later in their migration to the south. Thus Wentzel (1983:149) says:

"Whatever the origin of the word Senzi may be, by the time it was used by the Lemba with reference to the Venda, they obviously already had migrated south, but not yet as far south as the present country of the Venda".



From these discussions on the name Venda it becomes very clear that there is no justification to link the tribe with a Venda name which is said to exist in the Congo with the present Venda people. Even if there were a Congolese tribe with such a name, "it would not be sufficient reason to link up two tribes ethnically, certainly not as intimately as implied here" (Lestrade 1927:49).

The Central Africa theory of the origin of the Venda may perhaps be more clearly understood when viewed against the background of the Central Africa hypothesis of the origin of the Bantu languages. Most scholars seem to agree on the origin of the Bantu languages as being somewhere in Central Africa, the precise location having changed over time (cf. Greenberg 1963, 1972, Guthrie 1967, Ehret 1972 and Phillipson 1977). The original location was previously believed to be the **savannah belt** lying to the south of the equatorial forest i.e. the Congo area, but later it was established that the Bantu languages originated from an area on the north western limit of the present Bantu present distribution i.e. Central Cameroon (see Map no.1, on page 273 taken from Phillipson (1977:109) to illustrate the origin and the dispersal of the Bantu languages over some 2,000 years).

Against the background of the origin of Bantu languages, one may be tempted to accept the Central Africa theory of the origin of the Venda, more so because most of the Venda traditions seem to point to the origin of the Venda as being somewhere around the Great Lakes. Although it is not clear which lakes the different traditions point to, there is a strong possibility that the Vendas might have stayed around Lake Victoria or Lake Tanganyika before they migrated further south. Archaeological evidence also supports the fact that some Bantu tribes stayed around Lake Victoria, Lake Tanganyika and Lake Albert before migrating to the south (Phillipson 1977). The Venda might have been part of those Bantu tribes, although they were not yet called the Venda. It is to be regretted that no record is available on the migration of the Venda from these areas. As such, no contact between the Venda and other tribes in the area can be established except the contact which the Bantu tribes had with Sudanic languages. The contact between Bantu tribes and Sudanic people led to the adoption of animals such as cattle and sheep and also some pottery wares by the

former from the latter. Phillipson (1977: 111) has this to say in this regard:

"Along the first part of this route we find an area east of Lake Chad where the pottery that was made in the first millennium B.C strongly resembles Early Iron Age wares. The area is adjacent to the territory where Central Sudanic languages are spoken today. The linguistic evidence indicates that some early Bantu speaking people acquired domestic cattle and sheep, together with the words for both animals, from speakers of Central Sudanic. Did they acquire them during the eastward stage of such a detour around the equatorial forest? There is further evidence favoring this interpretation: around Lake Victoria, where the southward turn must have been made, we find the sites that have yielded Urewe ware".

It is interesting to look at the Venda names and their proto-forms for these animals. The word for cattle in Venda is **ńombe** and it has been derived from the starred Bantu word **\*gòmbè**. The word for sheep is **nngu** from the starred Bantu word **\* gú**. These Venda forms appear to be very close to those of the Proto-language. This may indicate that Venda got these forms directly from the proto-language.

### 1.2.1.3 Migration from Malawi

Some Venda traditions point to Malawi as the supposed place of origin of the Venda. This theory is supported by scholars like Lestrade (1960:v) who describes the place of origin of the Venda as follows:

"The original nucleus of tribes which forms the distinctive element in the present Vendaspeaking group had its home probably somewhere in the region now constituting the Nyasaland Protectorate."

Lestrade supports his view by citing one of the Venda scholars Mudau (1940:10) who describes the place of origin of the Venda as follows :

"...a place of great rivers and lakes, a country overflowing with water and many forests and fruit of bananas growing in many groves and tubes and peanuts in great variety".

This has been regarded by Lestrade as suggesting an area to the west of Lake Malawi or Lake Shirwa. However, Mudau never made mention of Malawi as the place of origin of the Venda. The view that the Venda originated in Malawi is also supported by scholars like Gottschling (1905), Stayt (1931), Van Warmelo (1960) and Wilson (1969). Some Venda chiefs such as Sinthumule claimed to speak the Malawian languages well (Ralushai 1977:25). This has been regarded by some scholars as evidence that the Venda originated in Malawi. According to Mullan (1969) the Venda or Senzi, as they were then called, were displaced from this area by the Malawian invaders who came into the area from the Congo region around 1600 and occupied the territory on both sides of Lake Nyasa. From this area the Venda moved southward-into Sena (an area which lies just across the Zambesi in northeastern Zimbabwe). At Sena the Venda are said to have come into contact with the Lemba and the Sotho. With regard to the contact with the Sotho, Mullan (1969:75) says:

"Speaking of Vendaland reminds us that the Bavenda appear to be related to the Basotho or that they had at least close association with one another over a lengthy period as would appear to be established by similarity of language. It is very possible that this close association took place in the Sena area, where we find not only the people of Mongaz, but also the Bakwena across the Zambezi from Mongaz".

Ralushai (1977) does not accept the view that the Venda originally migrated from Malawi. He rejects this view on the grounds that there is no substantial linguistic or historical evidence that shows that the Venda originated from Malawi. The fact that some Venda people speak Malawian languages is, according to him, not convincing enough since the Venda have contact with Malawian people in work places such as the mines. This language argument is also weakened by the fact that no study has yet been undertaken to compare Malawian languages or dialects with Venda. Perhaps

such a study may throw some light on this problem.

Archaeological researches made in Malawi (Robins 1971, 1979) have not produced any evidence to link the Malawian ceramics with those of the Venda. The only ceramics which resemble those of the Venda were found by Inskeep (1965:34-35) and they date back to A.D 1800. By that time the Venda were already in the Transvaal. Loubser (1989) regards any claims about the similarities between Malawian and Soutpansberg ceramics as superficial at best.

#### 1.2.1.4 Migration from Vhukalanga (Zimbabwe)

Various Venda traditions indicate that the Venda reached their present home across the Limpopo from a vaguely designated area called Vhukalanga (Lestrade 1927:XXI). Vhukalanga has been taken by certain scholars as referring to the present Zimbabwe. But in Venda Vhukalanga or Galanga may be used to refer to a northerly direction, which in this case can be taken to mean that the Venda came from north of the Limpopo river. Recent scholars such as Loubser (1988;1989;1991) argue that the Venda actually originated in Zimbabwe rather than central Africa. Loubser supports his argument by referring to the names of the earliest **Singo**<sup>1</sup> chiefs such as **Lozwi** (Rozvi), **Mambo**, **Dyambeu** and **Thoho-ya-ndou** which all are titles of Rozwi rulers. The Rozwi people inhabited the western part of Zimbabwe. The following Venda names also resemble those of the Rozwi, viz. **Nyadenga**, **Dombo**, **Madanda**, **Bvumbi**, **Makoni**, **Nyatsimba**, **Ndou** (Zhou). This similarity of names may be taken as an indication that the Venda had some connection with the Rozwi. The Rozwi dynasty has been well recorded in various history and historical linguistics books (e.g. Van Warmelo 1940, 1960; Lestrade 1960; Mullan 1969; Caton-Thompson 1970; Beach 1984).

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<sup>1</sup> *The origin of this name is not known. What is known is that it is a **mutupo** (totem) name of the prominent Venda group.*

Lestrade collected informative data about the Rozwi and he established that although the Venda are associated with other Shona groups like the Kalanga, they were specially connected with the Rozwi and they probably belonged to the same stock. In this regard he has the following to say:

"The accounts (i.e. reports of Transvaal Native Locations Commission of 1907-8 & 1910 mainly by Mr.C.N.Manning) mention the names of tribes with whom the original Vhavenda are said to have been in close contact, and from one of which they are stated actually to have descended. Two such names are the Banyai and the Balozwi(BaRozvi), the former allied to the Karanga group, the latter according to Mr.Manning's informant, the tribe with whom the Vhavenda were intimately connected" (Lestrade1960:XXV).

The question that arises here is whether the Venda people are an offshoot of the Rozwi or whether they were an independent tribe which later became part of the Rozwi-Changamire dynasty. According to Manning's informant the Rozwi people found the Venda already in the area and they presented them with a leopard skin saying that the Vendas were of the same original stock as they. This event has been interpreted by Lestrade (1960:XXV) as follows:

"The Leopard skin is a form of royal tribute, given by a subject to his chief, and by an inferior tribe to a superior of the same stock. If, then, we are inclined to believe that this act indicates similarity of origin between the original Vhavenda and the Balozwi, we have further evidence for believing that the Vhavenda are from a stock other than the Karanga tribes since the BaLozwi are not a Karanga people".

According to this passage it is clear that the Venda did not originate from the Rozwi. Probably the Venda had a common origin with the Rozwi, who are said to have originated from areas around Lake Tanganyika (Marodzi 1924:88). This is quite in line with the Venda traditions which point to this area as being the origin of the Venda.

This view counters the view that the Venda originated in Zimbabwe. Lestrade echoes this claim as follows:

"...the ancestral home of the original Vhavenda was not in the Karanga country but in the region considerably further north..."( 1960:XXII)

While it is most probable that the Venda did not originate in Zimbabwe, their sojourn in this area has been supported by historical and archaeological evidence. The Venda stayed in Zimbabwe for a considerable length of time (Stayt 1931:258; Wentzel 1983:152). They are said to have stayed around Matongoni Mountain (Von Sicard 1952:10). In written sources this area is often referred to as Dhlodhlo (Wentzel 1983:152) and it was also the capital of the prominent Changamire Rozwi dynasty (Loubser 1990:15). According to Wentzel, this city was built on a site which is now about 67 kilometres to the north-east of Bulawayo and the remains of its ruins can still be seen. (see Map II on page 274 of this dissertation for the location of Bulawayo).

The sojourn of the Venda in Shona country has resulted in the Venda absorbing "a certain proportion of Shona and certainly a considerable amount of Shona culture, especially as regards language" (Lestrade 1960:1). As already mentioned, Venda appears to have been influenced more by Western Shona than by other Shona groups such as the Korekore, Manyika and others (Wentzel 1983:170-171). By Western Shona we are referring particularly to the Kalanga and Rozwi dialects. The influence of Western Shona on Venda can be clearly seen from the following words:

Venda	Western Shona (Kal.) <sup>1</sup>	Central Shona <sup>2</sup>	Proto-forms <sup>3</sup>
vhomme	vhomme	madzamai	-máyi 'mother'
-elekanya	-alakana	-rangarira	-gàn- 'think'
-ambara	-ambala	-pfeka	-yàmb- 'wear clothes'
-vhamba	-bambula	-rovera	--- 'stretch'
-edela	-ezela	-vata	-dó/kópé 'sleep'
-enda	-enda	-famba	-yènd- 'go'
-kuvhanganya	-kubunganya	-ungara	-búng- 'gather'
vhutshilo	buchilo	upenyu	-yúmi 'life'
khwidzi	mwizi	hwai	-gú 'sheep'
-kuku	-kuku	mbuya	-kúúkù 'grandparent'
malofha	malopa	ropa	-dòpà 'blood'
tshinoni	nyunyi	shiri	-nùní/-yoni 'bird'
folá	folá	fodya	-káyá 'tobacco'
inwi	imn'i/in'wi	imi	-nyu 'you'

Wentzel (1983) has written fairly extensively on the relationship between Kalanga and Venda. However, no detailed comparative studies have yet been undertaken between Venda and the Rozwi dialects or the influence of the latter on Venda with the exception of some similarities in the names of people and places pointed out in some studies. Such a detailed comparison would perhaps provide some evidence of the

<sup>1</sup> Kalanga examples were taken from Wentzel (1983) and Webber (1988).

<sup>2</sup> Central Shona examples are based on the "Standard Shona Dictionary" by Hannan (1959).

<sup>3</sup> Proto-forms listed here, and in other sections of this study, are based on "Comparative Bantu" by Guthrie (1971).

the connection between the Venda and the Rozwi. However, such a comparison cannot be easy since the Rozwi dialect has fallen into almost complete disuse. The Rozwi dialect has only been recorded in an article by Fortune (1956). He also provided an English translation of this text. A linguistic analysis of this text shows some strong similarities between Venda and Rozwi. Our focus here will only be on the features which occur between Rozwi and Venda and not with other dialects of Western Shona.

*Lembeu: Asi Lembeu wakati: "Bge halimhanye asi imni, ana vangu, cimhanyani zenyu; imi ndofira pano paManyanga." Paiva pacira, paraware gwedzimbabge paivunganyidziwa nyanga dzemhuka dzaivuya navanhu vaihoshuma kunaMambo. Akati kuvana vane: "Iwe, Cikole, cinda neShamba, musatoverezira imne"; nokuti wakanga afunga kuti Ntevere wogara vushe, ndiye otevegwa nepfumo liciuronda uyu Cikole haacahorondewa...*

*Kwakahoti gole lapera, Cikole akahoti: "Ndicatini? Ndinotini kwangu kucikukurarama here? Ko, vana vangu zo vopera nenyota nokushaya zokula, ndoburuka zangu." Ndopaakaburuka mugumo akasika paushasha wamaDziti akati: "Hayi takatumigwa kuyi: 'Mundovuya naye, musaubaya ndihovona nyanga dzidze, idzodzo dzinoyidziri muulomo mume'." Ndo kunda naye kuna-Muzilikazi ndo kundosika kukayi: "Mavuya naye here?" Vakati "Tavuya naye". Kukayi: "Vuyani naye ndimbone." Zino ndo pavakasika wovuzza kuti: Ko, za waiyi unenyanga muulomo, dziriyi?" Iye akati: "Maingorevegwa marutu navanhu." Muzilikazi akati: "Indazo kuusha kuko, vanhu vakangokurevera marutu; kakale handicakubaya nokuti ndakatorera Mambo mhuri inji, ndilo pfumo landibata" (Fortune 1956:74).*

Literary translation:

Lembeu (Seed-eater):but Lembeu said: "A stone does not run but you, my children, flee for your part, I die here at Manyanga". At the council place, at the flat rock of the court was piled up with the horns of animals which had come with people who paid tribute in meat to the Mambo. He said to his children: You, Cikore, go now by Shamva(?), do not follow one path:" because he had



thought that Ntevere inherits the kingship, it is he who is followed by an army surrounding him, this Cikore will not be surrounded.

When the year was up Cikore said: "What shall I do? I say does my place still prosper? Tell me, since my children are perishing of thirst and for lack of food, I'm going down." Then it was he who went down from the hill and reached the camp of the Nguni. The Nguni said: "No, we were sent with instructions: "You come with him you must not kill him so that I may see his tusks, the ones which are said to be in his mouth." And they took him to Mzilikazi and arrived and it was said: "Have you come with him?." They said: "We have come with him." It was said: "Come with him that I may see him." Then it was when they arrived he questioned, saying: "Tell me, since you were said to have tusks in the mouth, where are they?" He said: "You were just told lies by people." Mzilikazi said: "Go you to your village, the people just told lies about you; further I shall not attack you because I took many families off the Mambo, it is the army which held me" (Fortune 1956:80-1).

The first outstanding similarity is that of names. In this text there are Rozwi names which are similar to Venda names, e.g. **Lembeu**, **Mambo** and **Ntevhene** (cf. **Ntevheleni**). However, some of these names do also occur in other Shona dialects, **Mambo** for example, is used to refer to a chief. The similarity between Rozwi and Venda names has already been mentioned and will not be discussed further

Another feature which distinguishes Venda and Rozwi from other Western Shona dialects like Kalanga, Lilima, Nambya, etc., is their use of the *r* sound. From the text given above it appears that this sound was used interchangeably with *l*, and this is also a characteristic of Venda. Kalanga does not make use of the *r* sound.

Venda and Rozwi are also distinguished from other dialects of Western Shona by their use of the formative *-chi-* in the participial present. This can be seen from words such as *liciuronda* cf. *Veli tshi u londa* 'when it followed you.' Other dialects of Western Shona do not make use of this formative.

In this text there are many words which are similar to Venda eg. **nyanga** (cf. **Ve. nanga** 'horns'). Further examples are listed below:

pfumo	cf. Ve. pfumo	'assegai'
ronda	cf. Ve. -londa	'follow'
gole	cf. Ve. gole	'cloud'
-tumigwa	cf. Ve. -rumiwa	'to be sent'
mhuri	cf. Ve. phuli	'slaves'
-baya	cf. Ve. -baya	'injure'

These words, with the exception of **-tumigwa** and **mhuri**, are the same in other Shona dialects. Another slight difference is the sound **l** in **gole** which in other dialects like Karanga, Zezuru, Manyika, is written as an **r**. An attempt was not made here to distinguish the Rozwi lexicon from that of Kalanga. Such an endeavour would not be easy since there are not enough records of the Rozwi language. Although Venda shares some linguistic features with Rozwi it differs from it in other ways. In the Rozwi text given here, one cannot fail to note this difference. For example, the use of the formative **ci-** in Rozwi words like **cimhanyani**, **cinda**, etc. is different from Venda. In Venda imperatives are never formed in this way. Differences are also realised in the lexicon, phonology and the syntax of these two languages. These differences show that although Venda has been influenced by Rozwi, the influence is not so great that Venda can justifiably be regarded as an offshoot of Rozwi.

Traditions indicate that the Singo separated from the Rozwi and went south as a result of dissension (Motenda 1940:52). Alpers (1970:217) has the following to say with regard to the departure of the Venda from Zimbabwe:

"The Venda crossed the Limpopo at the end of the seventeenth century, almost in flight from the warring Changamire Dombo".

It seems that the Venda broke away from the Rozwi around the 1680s (Loubser 1989:58). From Matongoni (Dhiodhi

Matongoni after a disaster struck the city, presumably fire. They were led to the south by Tshilume, son of the God King Mwali. On the way they are said to have been protected by their sacred drum, Ngoma-Lungundu. Wentzel (1983:154) describes their movement to the south as follows:

"Tshilume did however, not guide his people on a straight route to the Limpopo. They moved via Chibi (Tshivhi)'s country, where they stayed for about three years. Here they were in close contact with the Karanga (whence the many borrowings from Karanga). From Chibi's country the Venda moved via Buxwa (Vhuxwa) in the present Belingwe (Mbelengwa) district".

At Vhuxwa (Mbelengwa) the Venda came into contact with the Lemba (Refer to Map II on page 274 of this dissertation for the different places given above). From Vhuxwa the Venda together with the Lemba who joined them crossed the Limpopo into the Northern Transvaal. It is interesting to note that the sojourn of the Venda in Southern Zimbabwe is marked by 'a great many place-names and sib-names in Vendaland today identical with place names and sib-names in Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe)' (Caton-Thompson 1970:250). This includes place names such as **Makonde, Thengwe, Mutale (Mutare) Nwanedi (Nuanetsi)**, etc.

Concerning the date of arrival of the Venda in this land south of the Limpopo, there is considerable difference of opinions. Their date of their arrival seems to range from the end of the 17th century to the beginning of the 18th century. (cf. Stayt 1931; Wentzel 1983; Loubser 1988; 1989)

In the Transvaal the Venda came into contact with other groups such as the Sotho, Shona groups such as the Lembethu and Twanamba, and at a much later stage they also came into contact with languages like Tsonga, Zulu, English and Afrikaans. Much about the Venda contact with these languages will be discussed later in the section on postmigratory contacts (cf. section 1.2.2).

### 1.2.1.5 The Northern Transvaal as a place of origin

Recent research studies on the origin of the Venda have indicated that their origin may be local rather than Central Africa or any other area north of the Limpopo mentioned in the previous sections. This view is propounded mainly by Loubser (cf. Loubser 1988; 1989; 1990; 1991). Loubser has done an intensive study on the ethnoarchaeology of the Venda people in South Africa. In his study of the origin of the Venda he integrated oral traditions, archaeology and ethnography to evaluate the competing hypotheses about Venda origins and political history. The need for this kind of an approach to the study of the history of the Venda has been expressed by scholars like Ralushai (1977) and Wentzel (1983). For languages like Venda with no good recorded history such archaeological findings can be of great assistance.

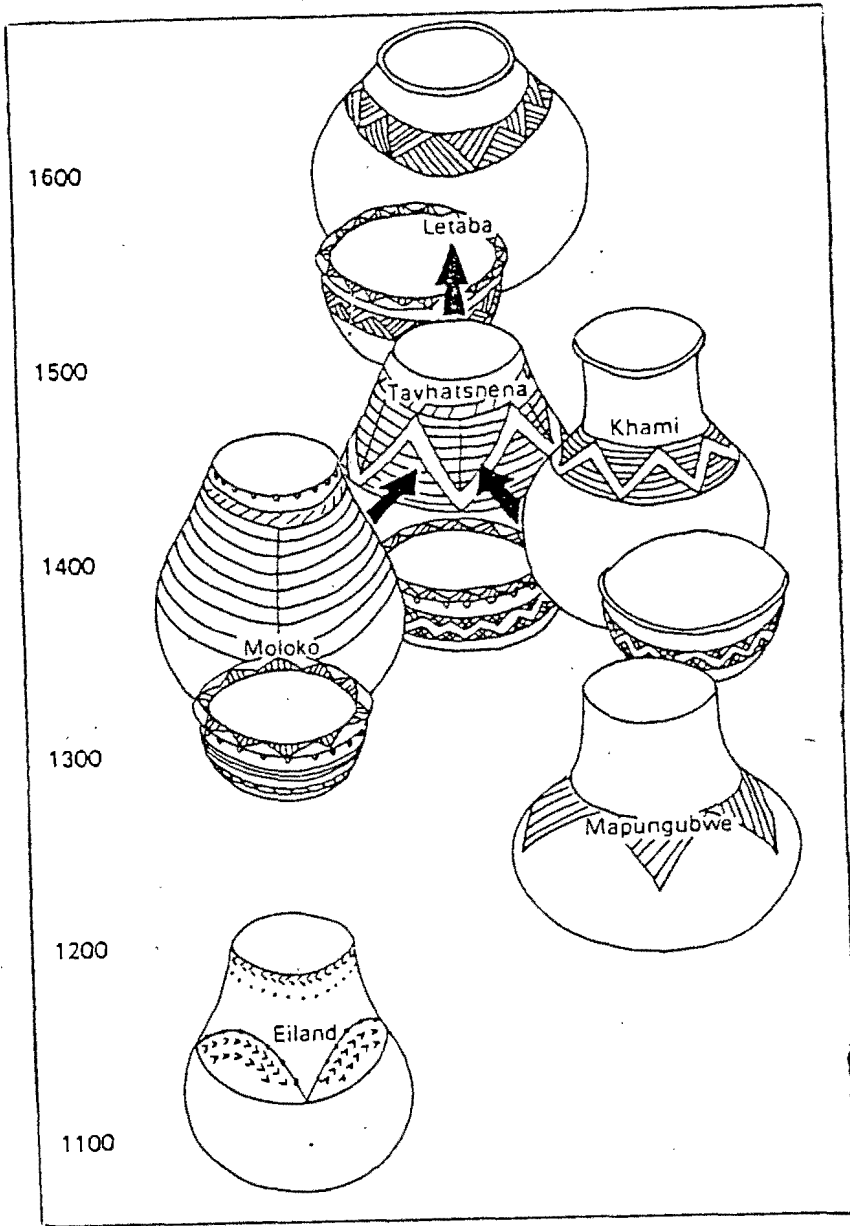
Perhaps before we discuss Loubser's view on the origin of the Venda it may be necessary to look at the people he regards as the 'real' Venda. According to him the real Venda originated from the Northern Transvaal, while other groups like the Singo migrated much later into the area. The Singo are the most documented of all Venda groups. This is mainly because of the very significant role they played in the history of the Venda. This group seems to be the one that broke away from the Changamire Rozwi dynasty. The names of their leaders like **Dimbanyika**, **Thohoyandou**, **Vele-la-Mbeu** suggest such connections. These connections were discussed in the previous sections (cf. section 2.2.1.4).

Venda traditions unambiguously show that the Singo took the Venda title from the people they found in the area despite the claim by some Singo informants that this name was brought into the Northern Transvaal by their ancestors. According to Motenda (1940) the original inhabitants of this land are the Ngona such as the Raphulu clan. He has the following to say in this regard:

"according to tradition the true or real Venda are those of Raphulu. They are the original inhabitants of Venda" (Motenda 1940:154).

Whether or not the Raphulu people are the first inhabitants is not the issue here, the fact is that when the Singo arrived in this land they found some people already in the area. Most traditions on Venda point to this fact.

Loubser excavated different areas in Venda which were occupied by early Vendas. These include areas like Mapungubwe Hill, Tshitaka-tsha Makoleni, Vhunyela, Princes Hill, Mutamba, Verulam, Tavhatshena, Tshirululuni, Begwa, Manavhela and Nkgaru. He compared the ceramic styles, settlement patterns and 'mitsheto' patterns found in these areas. The Mapungubwe ceramic style marks the earlier Shona settlement south of the Limpopo while the Khami ceramics show the arrival of new Shona dynasties from Zimbabwe. In the south of the Soutpansberg the earliest ceramic style found was the Eiland followed by Moloko. Both are Sotho styles and they show the presence of the Sotho speaking people in the land south of the Limpopo long before the Venda. Excavations in some areas has shown the overlap between Khami and Moloko ceramic styles. This overlapping "indicates the close interaction between Shona and Sotho speakers, then the development of Tavhatshena and Letaba Venda language". (Loubser 1989:58). This therefore suggests that the Venda language is a result of a fusion between Sotho and Shona. Loubser (1991:396) gives the following schematic representation of the ceramic sequence which was discussed above :



After comparing these ceramic styles, Loubser (1991:339) came to the following conclusion:

"The culture history of the Soutpansberg thus supports the view that the Venda had a local origin involving more than one ethnic group".

Although Loubser describes the fusion of the Shona and Sotho ceramic styles so well, it is to be regretted that he cannot establish how other aspects like language came to

be fused. Perhaps Loubser's view on the Venda language as an amalgamation of Sotho and Shona can be attested by the affinities which Venda is said to share with these languages. Lestrade (1932:21) has this to say in this regard:

"...Venda grammar and phonology are similar to Shona, particularly Western Shona, while Venda vocabulary has its greatest equivalent in Sotho".

These affinities may be regarded as paralleling those found by archaeologists between Venda pottery and adjacent Sotho and Shona styles (Schofield 1937, Sinton-Schoetter 1971, Loubser 1988,1989). The dual character of Venda has created problems to many linguistic scholars. Scholars such as Jones-Phillipson (1972:201) tried to account for this problem in the following manner:

"In general, the evidence in respect to terms of domesticity seems to suggest that there may be some link between Venda and the Shona group on the female side. The link with the Sotho groups on the other hand, appears to be on the male since a number of the terms refer to hunting and cattle keeping. One cannot interpret this kind of fact with certainty, but one way to account for it would be to suppose that at some period or other, the Venda acquired Shona-speaking wives and on the other hand, that some Venda-speaking wives were acquired by the Sotho".

Jones-Phillipson also seems to suggest that the affinities which exist between Venda and other languages like Sotho and Shona is a result of a fusion of some kind which happened in the distant past. Her explanation seems to be confirmed by Loubser's archaeological findings:

"Traditions hint at intermarriage between the Sotho under Raphulu and the Shona speaking Tshivhula dynasty. Significantly, this interaction is indicated by the occurrence of Moloko and Khami ceramics on the same sites...Intermarriages must have been intensive because Moloko and Khami elements appear together on vessels" (Loubser 1991:418).

Much on the affinity between Venda and these languages (Sotho and Shona) will be discussed later in this chapter.

#### **1.2.1.6. Summary of the origins of Venda**

In the foregoing discussion an attempt was made to establish the place of origin of the Venda. Different theories on the origin of the Venda were discussed. Some views, such as the Egyptian hypothesis, were found to be unacceptable. A view which seems to hold water is the one which states that the Venda originated in Central Africa. However, the problem with this view is the lack of historical evidence to support its claim. Even though oral traditions point to Central Africa as the place of origin of the Venda, these traditions seem to be very ambiguous. This view is only acceptable when viewed against the original migration of the Bantu languages. Archaeological research has also shown that the Bantu speaking people did indeed stay in Central Africa, particularly around Lake Victoria and Lake Tanganyika. Linguistic researches also point to the nucleus of all the Bantu languages as somewhere in Central Africa. This therefore shows that the Venda may have originated from this place too. Studies on the Venda language have also revealed that the Venda language has unique linguistic features (i.e. words and sounds) which are not found in any of the languages spoken in the region. These linguistic features are regarded by some linguists as an indication that the Venda originated in Central Africa.

Other views such as those of the Venda migration from Malawi and Zimbabwe were also discussed. If one takes Central Africa as the place of origin of the Venda one would regard these places, i.e. Malawi and Zimbabwe, as mere milestones in the migration of the Venda to the south. If the Venda originated from these places it would mean that they are a branch of one of the Bantu group which migrated from Central Africa. So far there is not enough evidence of a language which can be regarded as a parent of Venda. One last interesting view is the one which states that the Venda originated from the Northern Transvaal. The proponents of this view accept that some groups which today form part of the Venda tribe, the Singo for example, immigrated to the Northern Transvaal from the north. This view is substantiated by



the fact that the interaction of groups like the Sotho-Tswana and the Shona south of the Limpopo somewhere in the distant past resulted in a new group which spoke a mixed language of the two groups. This newly emerged language had a great impact on the speech of groups such as the Singo who arrived much later in the Transvaal. Therefore what the Venda language looks like today is not only due to its place of origin, but also due to the interactions which took place before and after the arrival of the Singo in the land south of the Limpopo.

### 1.2.2 Postmigratory contacts.

The settlement of the Venda on the land south of the Limpopo opened a new chapter in the history of the Venda language. However, the earliest postmigratory contacts are obscured by the fact that very little is known about the nature of the language which was spoken when the Singo arrived in the area and also the language which was spoken by the Singo themselves. According to Mudau (1940:73-74)

"The language spoken at this time (i.e. when the Singo arrived) was, they say, the same as that spoken today viz. the Tshivenda which has absorbed all various forms of speech of the Lembethu, Twanamba, Senzi and Lemba. It was of course not quite identical with present day Tshivenda, here were certain differences. Thus the Ngoni used **u dida** for strike **lusese** for tribe, **mukhaha** for milk where we use other words today".

With regard to the language spoken by the Singo when they migrated to Venda Motenda (1940:53-54) has this to say:

"As for their language, when they left Rhodesia the invaders had spoken Tshikaranga. However, amongst the captives only the men and aged persons were killed, whilst the women and girls and small children were spared and became slaves of the royal kraal, others being divided amongst the great ones of the land. From this time onwards these people began to abandon their

language because they had married so many women of the Venda. In course of time, the Tshikaranga language disappeared and only Tshivenda survived".

However, Motenda's interpretation of events is rejected by Ralushai (1977:44), who says:

"As to the argument that the Ramabulanas used to speak Kalanga and not Venda, I found no confirmation of this. For centuries I was told, the Venda language has been in existence on both sides of the river Limpopo. The presence of Kalanga words in Venda does not necessarily mean that whoever lived in Rhodesia must have been a Kalanga".

From the foregoing discussion it would appear that more research is needed in order to either confirm or reject Mudau and Motenda's views. However, the only certainty that exists is the contact which Venda currently has with the languages spoken in the area. At present, beside Shona, Venda can be said to be in contact with Northern Sotho, Tsonga, Zulu, English and Afrikaans.

Venda contact with these languages occurred or is still occurring in different ways. In the first place the contact can be said to occur through geographical proximity. Tsonga, Shona and Northern Sotho are good examples of languages which are in contact with Venda through geographical proximity. Venda contact with English and Afrikaans present a very interesting case of contact. This is because of the fact that although some of the Venda people have direct contact with the speakers of these languages, other people who have never had any contact with speakers of these languages seem to have been influenced mainly through the diffusion of cultural material, concepts or ideas from these languages.

The intensity of contact and the degree of bilingualism play an important role in the adoption of linguistic forms in a contact situation. The most intense kind of contact may be said to exist in fully bilingual and/or multilingual communities. In such situations lexical items but also phonological and grammatical rules may come to be

shared by the languages in question. In the following sections the different contacts which Venda has with other languages during the postmigratory period in this region will be discussed.

### 1.2.2.1 Shona

Venda has been considerably influenced by Shona, Kalanga in particular. This is indicated by Shona words and grammatical forms in Venda (Wentzel 1983, Loubser 1988). The influence of Shona on Venda seems to have occurred in different ways. Some linguists regard the presence of the Shona component in Venda as a result of the fact that Venda originated from the fusion of Shona and Sotho. Aspects of this issue were discussed in the previous section. Other linguists regard the influence of Shona as the result of language contact. The contact between Shona and Venda can be seen to have occurred in different ways. Wentzel (1983:169) has this to say in this regard:

"Venda did not only have its major contact with dialects of this cluster of Shona group in the distant past in what is now known as Zimbabwe, but this contact was continued through the years".

In other words, Venda had contact with Shona during migration and even after the Venda's settlement in the land south of the Limpopo. The contact between Venda and Shona during the migration period was discussed at some length in the previous sections. It was during their stay in Zimbabwe that the Venda accumulated many Shona forms into their language. In this section, however, the focus will be on the postmigratory contacts. The contact between Venda and Shona continued in many different ways after the Venda migration. In the first place it should be borne in mind that when the Venda (Singo) arrived on the land south of the Limpopo they found some of the dialects of the Western Shona cluster already in the area. These were the Lembethu and Twanamba dialects. Although these Shona groups were defeated and subjected to the rule of their conquerors, the influence of their language on Venda remained a factor (Wentzel 1983:126).

Venda contact with Shona also occurs as a result of geographical proximity. Wentzel (1983:126) describes this contact as follows:

"The geographical closeness is so much more obvious if we take into consideration that between 10% and 20% of all Venda speakers still live to the North of the Limpopo river in Zimbabwe...Here they live in direct contact with the Karanga speaking Shona peoples".

The contact between the Venda north of Limpopo and those to the south did not stop despite the establishment of the Limpopo river as the colonial border. Thus Mathivha (1972:19) says that "the Venda always ran to Mashonaland whenever there was trouble from outside in Vendaleland."

It is this interaction between the Vendas on both sides of the Limpopō which keeps on bringing fresh Shona words into the Venda spoken to the south of the Limpopo.

Some of the influence is due to religious contact. The Mbedzi of Malungudzi (Zimbabwe) and Vhumbedzi (Venda) attend their religious thanksgiving ceremonies either at Mianzwi (Venda) or Malungudzi together (Ralushai 1977:17).

The contact between Shona and Venda also occurs as a result of urbanisation. In areas like Messina one finds a conglomeration of many population groups including the Shona and the Venda. Venda spoken in this area, which is regarded by some scholars as the melting pot of different cultures, is also influenced by Shona.

The influence of Shona on Venda, as already mentioned, can be realised at the lexical and grammatical levels. With regard to lexical items, it is interesting to note that most of the words which are a clear case of adoption are very often not found in everyday discourse, instead they are found in proverbs, riddles, praises, folktales, traditional songs and such like (cf. sections (a) - (f) below). Most of these Shona adoptives are regarded by the Venda not as foreign forms, as is the case with words from other languages, but as "the original" Venda. The fact that most of the Shona words are no

longer found in everyday Venda discourse may be regarded as an indication of the fact that although Venda was at one stage heavily influenced by Shona, this influence has slowly diminished. This influence can be traced back to the contact of the Venda with the Shona groups during their migration to the south. The fact that many of these Shona forms are no longer used in Venda may show a shift in contact to the languages of the South-Eastern Zone, Sotho in particular.

**(a) Proverbs with words of Shona origin**

The following proverbs have words of Shona origin. These words have been written in bold.

- i) U tshi **dza** muro wa muvhuda ranga u ya tshilaloni.  
"When you think little of the gravy made from a hare, go and look at the size of its lair."
- ii) Mutshimbili u wana **riombe**, mavhele a wanwa nga nzula.  
"A wanderer will always get cattle and maize from a settler."
- iii) Tshe wa **da** iwe tshilavhi na murundo wa phofu u do vhuya wa nwa.  
"What you set your mind on, you chip, you even drink an eland urine."
- iv) Mungona mubikwa na **ive**, iva la vhibva mungona a sala.  
"A Mungona boiled with a rock, when the rock is soft he is still as before."
- v) Nyavhumbwa wa **dagaila** wa kanda vho u vhumbaho.  
"Creature of another [placed in power by another] when you start getting full of yourself [ too prosperous ] you trample on those that raised you."
- vi) Muima woga shaka ndi nnyi?  
"You who stand alone, who is your relative?"

From the above proverbs, the following Western Shona adoptives are illustrated:

ṅombe	cf.-kholomo	`cattle'
-da	cf.-funa	`love/like'
ive	cf.-tombo	`stone'
-dagaila	cf.-tonga	`boast'
-woga	cf.-u wothe	`alone'

### (b) Shona words found in Venda praises

The following praises are for Mwali or Raluvhimba, the God-King of the Venda who according to Stayt (1931:230), "is supposed to live somewhere in the heavens and is to be connected with all astronomical and physical phenomena". The praises are as follows:

- i) Muvhusa-**denga**. `The Ruler of Heaven'
  - ii) Ngwani**wapo**. `The One who was found there'
  - iii) **Ntangiwakugala**. `The First to settle'
  - iv) **Tshidzatshapo**. `He who was there'
- (cf. Sho.Chidzachapo)

The parts of the praises written in bold are of Shona (Western Shona) origin.

### (c) Shona forms found in Venda riddles

Shona forms are also found in Venda riddles, even though there are a few of them, e.g. :

Tsha nkunda **ndilipo**. "Something which I couldn't get even though I am there."

**Ndilipo** is a Shona construction with typical Western Shona forms, the use of **I** for example.

**(d) Shona forms in traditional Venda songs**

Some Venda traditional songs have some Shona forms. Consider the following examples:

- i) Potjilo  
 Hangala  
 Hangala  
**Nda tema**  
**Temiso**  
 Tshinoni  
**Tshagala**  
 Mutanda  
 Mandule  
 Gunu-wee

From this song the following Shona forms are illustrated:

**-tema** (cut), **-temiso** (cause to cut), **-gala** (sit)

- ii) Funguvhu.  
 Funguvhu tanzwa mulomo  
 Tanzwa mulomo  
 Ri kone ri tshi la rothe  
 Ri tshi la rothe  
**Vhomme vha ka enda pi**  
**Vha ka enda pi**  
 Vho lima davha la khombe  
 Vho lima davha la khombe

Vho lima ndima nngana  
 Ndimā nngana  
 Vho lima ndima ntharu  
 Ndimā ntharu  
 Ya vhuṅa ndi ya u fhedza  
 Ndi ya u fhedza

"Crow, wash your mouth  
 So that we may eat together.  
 Where have the mothers gone to?  
 They have gone for compulsory davha  
 How many acres have they tilled?  
 They have tilled three acres.  
 The fourth is the last."

From this song the following forms are illustrated:

-enda, ka, pi (go, past tense marker, where ) and the construction **Vha ka enda pi** (Where have they gone to) which is typically Shona.

#### **(e) Shona words in Venda folktales**

Shona words are also found in Venda folktales. Here they are only found in the song which forms the core of the folktale. Consider the following two songs from two folktales in **Ngano dza vha kale**.

- i) **Mukegulu we a vha a sa funi ṅwana wawe a tshi mala**  
 (The old lady who did not want her son to marry)

In this folktale we find the following song which is a dialogue between the son and his old mother.

" Wa vhuya-vhuya Lutsindi,



Wa vhuya-vhuya Lutsindi,  
 Vhaeni vha nga za pano;  
 Vha na n̄weli, vha na mapa;  
 Tshawe ndi tshilili tsho ga

(Come back Lutsindi  
 Come back Lutsindi  
 Visitors may come  
 They have n̄weli, they have mapa.  
 Yours is just a lonely cry)

The son then replies by singing as follows:

"Nda te ndi nga ngeno,  
 Nda farwa nga tshithavhi,  
 Nda te ndi nga ngeno  
 Nda wana ku mitundo..."

(I tried one side, and I felt pain on my side I tried on the other side, it was urine)

The mother concludes by singing and she says

"Ewe,ewe, Lutsindi|  
 Zwithu zwangu ndi a tsenga..."

(Yes, yes Lutsindi  
 My things I leave)

And then the child says

"Tsengani zwanu maye

Vha do sala vha no thenga zwavho

(Fine, you may leave mom. They will remain with me)

ii) Mukukulume na dongololo

(The cock and the millipede.)

The song found in this folktale is a dialogue between a cock, a millipede and a hen. The hen starts the song as follows:

"Nandi vhomukulume|

Nandi vhdongololo

Nalwo muthu nalwo|"

(Hey Mr Cock, hey Mr Millepede/ Go with it, go with it)

The cock and the millipede reply by singing as follows

"Pembela **ndi ku pe nombe** ahaa|

Pembela **ndi ku pe nombe** ahaa|"

(Dance excitedly so that I should give you cattle

Dance excitedly so that I should give you cattle)

The parts written in bold in these songs are Shona forms.

(f) **Shona forms in some Venda speech communities**

Some Shona forms are only found in certain sections of the Venda speech community. These forms are found in areas previously occupied by speakers of Shona dialects such as Lembethu and Twanamba or areas which are geographically still in contact

with Shona. In areas like Mutele and Tshikundamalema one still finds some remnants of Shona forms. One can still find words such as the following:

-pipa	cf. Ve.vhifha	`ugly'
xwilo	cf. Ve.tshikhau	`short-cut'
sona	cf. Ve.runga	`neat'
ninzwi	cf. Ve.murudi	`kind of vegetable'
-pe	cf. Ve.-fha	`give'
-ti	cf. Ve.ri	`say/do this'

Sentence constructions which are typically Shona are also found in these areas, e.g.

<b>Ńwana a no gala pano.</b>	`A child stays here'
<b>Ndi no do la vhuswa.</b>	`I will eat porridge'
<b>U no gala zwau henepa</b>	`Stay here'

It is interesting to note the use of the formative **no** in these constructions. The formative **no** in Shona is basically a present marker in the conjugation of the verb. In Shona, except in Kalanga, it occurs in the present tense only, but in Western Shona/Kalanga, it occurs in the future form as well (Wentzel 1983:165-166). Venda also makes use of this formative. It appears that of all the languages of the South-Eastern Zone Venda is the only one which makes use of this formative, and this may show its connection with Shona. In Venda the formative **no** is used in relative constructions and verbal forms. With regard to the latter it is used in the present tense as well as the perfect tense but with an aspect meaning.

There are also words in Venda which came from languages like Portuguese, Arabic and Swahili. It is interesting to note that these words are also found in Shona. Consider the following examples:

foia	: Sh.fodya	< Port. fohla	`tobacco'
pesa	: Sh.pesa	< Port. peca	`piece of cloth'

mali	: Sh.mari	< Arab. mal	'money'
mbanzhe	: Sh.mbanje	< Arab. bhan	'dagga'
khanzu	: Sh.hanzu	< Arab. hanzu : Swah. kanzu.	"clothes"
ndalama	: Sh.ndarama	<Greek.drachma	'money'
ngalavha	: Sh.ngarava	< Greek.karabos	'ship'

(Knappert 1970:88; Jone-Philipson 1972:167-8)

These words are undoubtedly adoptives in Venda. If we take words like like **ndalama**, **mali** and **ngalavha**, we note that these words denote things which were foreign to the Venda. These specific words, as indicated above, came from Arabic and Greek respectively. A comparison of these original forms and their adapted form in Venda suggests that Venda did not adopt them directly from their source language. Phonetically there is no justification for words like Greek **drachma** and **karabos** to be adopted as **ndalama** and **ngalavha**. This suggests that some intermediate languages were involved before these words were taken into Venda. Shona seems to be the language from which Venda adopted these words. There seems to be very close similarities between these words and their counterparts in Shona. If we compare the Portuguese and Western Shona words for 'tobacco', namely, **fohla** and **folo** respectively, it is very unlikely that Venda adopted this word directly from Portuguese. Instead, the Venda seemed to have adopted the word **folo** from the Rozwi who uses the same form. We do not intend here to establish the route of each word given above. We hope the examples we have given here are enough to show how these words were adopted into Venda via Shona.

A comparison of Shona and Venda vocabulary reveals a number of words which are common in both languages. Some of these words are not found in languages which belong to the same zone as Venda. The following words are found in both Shona and Venda and they are exactly the same in shape and meaning.

Venda	Shona	Sotho	
mutupo	mutupo	seano	'totem'
madekwana	madekwana	mantšiboa	'evening'

ngano	ngano	nonwane	`folktales`
ndalama	ndarama	tšhelete	`money`
mangolomela	mangoromera	-----	`supernatural power`
mvumi	mvumi	maru	`dark clouds`
gole	gore	leru	`cloud`
-guma	-guma	-fela	`end`
-bika	-bika	-apea	`cook`
-pina	-pina	-----	`growl at menacingly`
-ponda	-ponda	-bolaya	`kill`
-suma	-suma	-bega	`report`
-tumbuka	-tumbuka	-thoma	`originate`
-peta	-peta	-koba	`bend`
-lala	-rara	-robala	`sleep`
-gala	-gara	-dula	`sit`
-baya	-baya	-gobatša	`injure`
-dza	dza	-belaela	`doubt`
-tema	-tema	-sega	`cut`

Words such as these create a problem in distinguishing adoptives from cognates. According to Knappert (1970:81) "similarity, close resemblance between two words in two otherwise unrelated languages is not in itself a proof of borrowing."

While this does not dismiss the fact that affinity may be brought by adoption, it helps to show that there are other factors that can bring about similarities in the languages in question. In his 90-word core vocabulary list, Ehret (1972:12) has established that besides adoption, Venda shares several words with Shona which are common retentions of earlier Bantu words. Therefore it is important to check whether a word is not a retention of an earlier Bantu form before declaring it an adoptive form. Consider the following examples:

C B	Venda	Shona
-nùní/-nyòní	tshin <sup>o</sup> ni	nyunyi (W.Sh.`bird'
-nyótà	ḍora	nyota `thirst'
-búlà	mvula	mvula (W.Sh.)`rain'
-búa	mbwa	mbwa `dog'
-kádi	-kadzi	-kadzi `female'
-dúmè	-lume	-rume `male'
-nàmà	n <sup>o</sup> ama	nyama `meat'
-yáti	n <sup>o</sup> ari	nyati `buffalo'
-yókà	n <sup>o</sup> owa	nyoka `snake'
tàngá	danga	danga `kraal'
-tòpè	dope	dope `mud'
-kányá	foia	fodya `tobacco'
-búdi	mbudzi	mbudzi `goat'
-yáká	n <sup>o</sup> waha	mwaka `year'
-gú	nngu	gwai `sheep'
-jàdà	n <sup>o</sup> dala	zhara `hunger'
-jògù	n <sup>o</sup> dou	zhou `elephant'
-júbà	ḍuvha	zuva `sun'
-gùbú	mvuvhu	vubu `hippopotamus'
-júki	n <sup>o</sup> tshi	nyuchi `bees'
-gòmbè	n <sup>o</sup> ombe	n'ombe `cattle'
-gùdùbè	nguluvhe	nguruve `pig'
-gùènà	ngwena	ngwena `crocodile'
-gùè	nngwe	nngwe `tiger/leopard'
-pòngó	thongo	nhongo `he-goat'
-gúpá	gufha	gupa `tick'

This similarity may be brought about by the fact that the languages in question may adopt a word from the same source. Names for cattle and sheep are similar in most of the African languages, as the examples below attest to the fact that the Africans got cattle from the Sudanic groups.

cattle from the Sudanic groups.

nngu	(Venda)	'sheep'
nku	(Sotho-Tswana)	
imvu	(Zulu)	
hwai	(Shona)	

In trying to resolve the problem of distinguishing adoptives from cognates Knappert (1970:83) provides three criteria that can be used to determine words which are adoptives in a language:

"..the shape of a word (its morphophonemic form), its meaning and the extent of its distribution i.e. the extent to which similar forms are found in neighbouring languages."

First, we shall look at the shape of the words or morphophonemic form criterion. Words which show unusual morphophonemic form are very often of foreign origin. In Venda there are words whose forms are similar to Shona. If one takes words like **ntangiwakugala**, **ndilipo** and **muhwadzamai** one cannot fail to notice that the shape of these words is typically Shona rather than Venda. The following are further examples of words or parts of words with a typically Shona form:

pano	cf. fhanó	'here'
-pi	cf. -fhi	'where'
-pipa	cf. -vhifha	'be ugle'
henepa	cf. hene <sup>h</sup> fa	'here'
-za	cf. - <sup>h</sup> da	'come'
maye	cf. mme	'mother'
wangu	cf. zwanga	'mine'
nyoka	cf. <sup>h</sup> nowa	'snake'

proto-forms instead of adoptives. The reason why these forms may be regarded as Shona adoptives is due not only to their shape but also to the context or constructions in which they have been used. Even though these words are no longer found in day to day speech, they are still found in Venda proverbs, riddles, traditional songs and folktales, as was shown at the beginning of this section dealing with the influence of Shona on Venda. Thus although the morphophonemic criterion may help in the identification of adoptives in a language, it alone is too narrow because the oldest adoptives which have been completely assimilated into the language may not be recognizable from form alone. Therefore there could be many Shona adoptives in Venda which cannot be identified by using only this criterion.

The second method of identifying adoptives is based on semantic criteria. In this method one should "make classified lists of words within certain categories of meaning - such as tools, clothes, fruits, spices, weapons, furniture, parts of the house, metals, cereals - and to study these words in all the languages of a given area." (Knappert 1970:80). According to him adoptives will be found in these categories in almost all the languages. If one takes a word like **pfumo** (assegai), which is an example of a traditional weapon, one finds that it only occurs in Venda 's neighbouring Sotho languages (i.e. Northern Sotho, Tswana and Southern Sotho) and not in Nguni and Tsonga languages. e.g. :

Venda	Shona	Sotho	Tsonga	Zulu	Xhosa
pfumo	pfumo	lerumo	tlhari	umkhonto	umukhonto

Although we have given one example here, it illustrates a very interesting point. This word is the same in all of Venda's neighbouring languages except Tsonga. Its non-occurrence in languages like Tsonga could be explained by the fact that Tsonga came to the area at a much later stage. Nguni languages are geographically far removed from Venda. This may suggest that the Venda adopted this word from Shona and then spread it to their immediate neighbours, the Northern Sothos and Tswanas. The form of this word in the Sotho and Venda languages is more or less the same.



The third criterion which Knappert suggests is the distribution of the suspected words in the neighbouring languages. In adopting this criterion one should identify the suspected (on the basis of morphophonemic and semantic criteria) and compare them with similar words with similar meaning in other neighbouring languages. If these words are found in a whole chain of neighbouring languages then there is a good chance that such words are adoptives. This criterion has a number of problems that renders it inefficient for the identification of adoptives. First, words change their shape and meaning when they are taken over by other languages. Therefore the adopted words which have completely assimilated to the adopting language may not necessarily be identified by means of this criterion. The second problem with this criterion is that words can be the same in neighbouring languages due to their common origin. If one takes African languages like Venda, Shona, Sotho, Zulu, Xhosa, and many others it is evident that these languages have many words in common due to their common origin. This can be clearly seen from the following examples:

Venda	Shona.	Sotho	Tsonga	Zulu	CB
danga	danga	lešaka	shanga	isibaya	-tàngá `kraal'
mvula	mvura	pula	mpfula	imvula	-búlà `rain'
mbwa	mbwa	mpša	mbyana	inja	-búa `dog'
nari	nyati	nare	nyarhi	inyathi	-yáti `buffallo'

The words given above are similar due to common origin and should not be confused with adoptives. Nevertheless, there are certain adoptives that could be identified by means of this third criterion. In Venda there are many words adopted from English and Afrikaans which are also found in other African languages spoken in the region:

Afr.winkel	cf. NS.lebenkele	: XH.ivenkile	: Ve.vhengele	`shop'
Eng.steamer	cf. NS.setimela	: XH.isitimela	: Ve.tshidimela.	`train'
Afr.plaas	cf. NS.polase	: XH.ipulazi	: Ve.bulasi	`farm'

The words given above are similar not because their source languages have originated from one common language, but simply because of adoption.

The criteria discussed above, however, can obviously not lead to the identification of all adoptives in a language. Knappert (1970:80) himself concludes by saying

"In spite of all our efforts to trace probable loanwords to their potential originals in the giver-languages, there is a large number of words the origin of which will remain undecided or at least unproven..".

### 1.2.2.2 Northern Sotho

Venda shows some significant influence from Sotho. The influence of Sotho on Venda occurred in different ways as already stated in (cf.1.2.1.5). According to Loubser (1988,1989,1991) the Sotho component in Venda may be explained by the fact that Venda originated from an amalgamation of Sotho and Shona. In this section we shall be looking at the influence of Sotho on Venda during the postmigratory period. This covers the time from when the Venda settled south of the Limpopo up to the present day. Of the Sotho language group Northern Sotho is the one that seems to have had a transparent influence on Venda. In referring to Northern Sotho one should take cognizance of the different dialects of this language. These dialects include, amongst others, Tlokwa, Lobedu, Hananwa and Pedi. Venda has been influenced by some of these dialects through geographical contact (Van Warmelo 1935; Ralushai 1977). Kruger (1965:10) describes the contact between Venda and Northern Sotho as follows:

"Hierdie (Venda) is 'n buurtaal van Sotho dialekte wat op die noordelike grens van Sotho-gebied voorkom. Moontlike beïnvloeding kon op die Lobedu, Tlokwa, Hananwa en Birwa dialekte van Noord Sotho plaasgevind het".

In this passage, Kruger brings two important points to light. First, the influence of Venda on Northern Sotho or vice versa should be seen as a result of geographical proximity. (The proximity between Venda and Northern Sotho dialects such as Tlokwa and Lobedu can be seen from Map III on page 275 of this dissertation). Secondly, different Northern Sotho dialects should be taken into consideration when the influence of Northern Sotho on Venda is discussed. An attempt will be made here to show how

the Northern Sotho dialects impacted the different sections of the Venda speech community.

#### 1.2.2.2.1 Tlokwa

The Tlokwa are found to the West and South-West of Venda. (Refer to Map III for Tlokwa). They are or have been in contact with the Western Venda. Van Warmelo (1935:117) describes their contact with the Venda as follows: "...the Western Venda or most of them have not escaped Sotho influence..." With regard to the Venda to the South-West of Venda he says:

"In the South-West, too, the Venda have been affected in both language and culture by prolonged and fairly close contact with northernmost Sotho tribes, mostly Tlokwa".

It is an established fact that the Venda have been in contact with the Tlokwa for a considerable length of time. The Venda contact with the Tlokwa occurred in different ways. Mokgokong (1966:19) describes the Venda - Tlokwa contact as follows:

"At first the Tlokwa lived peacefully with the Venda who then occupied the country which now belongs to the Tlokwa. They accepted Venda customs and traditions, a point which is borne out by the fact that to this day the Tlokwa have retained Venda names of places, rivers and mountains. In fact Tlokwa vocabulary abounds in 22 words of Venda extraction which are not found in other dialects such as Pedi."

The following examples illustrate the impact of Venda on Tlokwa

<b>N.Sotho</b>	<b>Tlokwa</b>	<b>Venda</b>	
naga	lesako	shango	`country'
mošate	mosata	musanda	`chief's place'
belega	pepa	beba	`give birth'
thaba	thakgala	takala	`be happy'
bolela	apa	amba	`speak'
nnyane	thoko	thukhu	`small'

On the other hand Tlokwa has also influenced Venda, particularly the Venda spoken to the West or South-West of Venda. The former includes areas like Sinthumule and Kutame and the latter areas like Mulima. However, it is difficult to locate all the points of contact between these languages since the boundaries have shifted greatly following political upheavals. Thus Ralushai (1977:198) says:

"Before the 1969 mass removals and resettlement of people on ethnic lines, Ha-Mashamba and Ha-Mulima were highly mixed areas consisting of the Maguvhu-tswana (Northern-Sotho speaking people who are not regarded as true Northern Sotho speaking but as a hybrid of Venda and Northern Sotho), Shangana-Tsonga and the Venda. The contact between the Tlokwa and Venda in areas like Mulima, Kutame and Sinthumule is presently no longer intensive as before these resettlements. Therefore the use of the modern maps may be misleading since they do not reflect on the previous contacts".

The influence of Tlokwa on Venda, particularly in those areas which are or have been in contact with Tlokwa, vary from the lexical to tonal level. In these areas one finds a lot of words from Tlokwa which are not found in other areas which do not adjoin Tlokwa. Consider the following examples:

Tlokwa	W.Venda	Standard Ve.	
ipshina	phina	takala	`enjoy oneself'
swaba	swavha	shona	`be winkled'
tokwane	-tukwana	-tuku	`small one'
basimana	vhasimana	vhatukana	`young boys'
nyaka	nyaga	toda	`look for'
bomma	vhomma	vhomme	`mothers'
tia	día	rwa	`beat'
tswenya	tswenya	dina	`disturb'
ntsha	ntsha	bvisa/tusa	`take out'
fokola	fogola	lwala	`be sick'
lebala	livhala	hangwa	`forget'

The influence of Tlokwa on Venda is also realised in cultural aspects such as initiation. Initiation schools like **musevhetho** and **murundu** were introduced to the Venda by the Sotho, Tlokwa and Lobedu in particular. Thus the songs in these initiation schools are predominantly Sotho. The Tlokwa forms can be clearly seen from the following Venda **musevhetho** song:

**Vhasimana** vha Vhudogwa  
vha fhorwa vho lingenea

Ri a reda, **ki redela li nnani** tshakha-khale

**Ri apara kuvho ka pedi**

nnwe mathatha wa mathatha

**Ki apere** nguvho ka pedi.

Vhana a vho ngo mu laya

Vho mu lukutshedza.

( Van Warmelo 1960:93-94)

(The lads of Vhodogwa

Have been snipped off of length

I put on two dresses  
 The children did not teach her correctly,  
 they have intentionally led her astray. )

From this song we find the following Tlokwa words:

vhasimana (NS.bašimane)	cf.	Ve. vhatukana	'boys'
ki a reda (NS.ke a reta )	cf.	Ve. ri a renda	'I praise'
apara (NS.apara)	cf.	Ve. ambara	'clothes'
ka pedi (NS.tše pedi)	cf.	Ve.nga mbili	'two'

#### 1.2.2.2 Lobedu.

Lobedu is one of the Northern Sotho dialects which is spoken in areas which border Venda in the South (see Map no III on page 275 of this dissertation). The Lobedu migrated from Zimbabwe and it appears they arrived in the land south of the Limpopo before the Venda (Singo). According to Krige (1937:329) the Lobedu people migrated from the Kalanga area about the middle of the seventeenth century.

Krige (1937) identifies different groups of the Lobedu viz. the 'kolobe of Mohale' (the Pigs of Mohale), the 'kolobe of Sephoko' and 'the kolobe Mmamaila'. The identification of these groups is essential in as far as contact with Venda is concerned. In this study we shall be looking at the last group, i.e. the 'kolobe of Mmamaila' since this is the one which had intensive contact with Venda. Krige (1937:330-1) describes the migration and the contact of this group with the Venda as follows:

"The 'kolobe' of Mmamaila, who have retained more Lobedu elements of culture than those of Sekhopo, left Bolobedu, according to reliable traditions, at an earlier date (c.1750) than Sekhopo and Rakwadu. They moved northwards into a country then called Thobela, which they say was uninhabited.

They were offered hospitality by the Venda in the Ndzelele [Nzhelele] valley...They appear to have completely dominated the Venda of Moila who still go to them and not to Modjadji (the Queen of Bolobedu) for rain and with whom close ties of marriage as well as of tribulation during Zwazi raids(1848-54) exist".

It is clear from this passage that the Venda had intensive contact with Lobedu after the middle of the eighteenth century. To date the areas which are close to Lobedu are those of Magoro and Nngwekhulu.

Contact between Venda and Lobedu also came about through marriages, musical expeditions, trade, initiation schools, political upheavals and the Venda practice of coming to Modjadji to supplicate for rain. This past association is attested by the notable similarities in their languages, customs and material culture (Ralushai (1977:155; Davison 1984:45 ).

(a) Trade.

Trade between the Venda and the Lobedu seems to have been mainly in pottery. This is shown by the fact that a number of Venda pottery terms have equivalents in Lobedu e.g.

thidelo "large smooth pebble from river bed used as polishing tool ."

phomo "black stone like graphite which is mixed with water and smeared on spots"

nkho "large beer pot"

These names are exactly the same in Venda and Lobedu. It is not easy to establish the direction of adoption for these words, but it seems that Venda might have adopted these names from Lobedu. This is because of the fact that pottery in Lobedu seems to be more advanced than in Venda. There are more types of pottery in Lobedu than

in Venda. For example, types of pots such as **modzheha**, **phafa**, **kheritswana**, **lebeda**, **lesabelo**, **khetsikhayo** etc. are not found in Venda.

(b) Marriage.

Intermarriages between the Venda and the Lobedu have probably contributed to the adoption of Lobedu words in Venda. The following kinship words appear to have been adopted from Lobedu:

Lo.molamo	mulamu	cf.malume	`brother-in-law'
Lo.ngwetši	ñwedzhi	cf.muselwa	`newly-wed-lady'
Lo.mohadibo	muhalivho	cf.muvhuye	`sister-in-law'
Lo.bohweni	vhuhweni	cf.ha vhomakhulu	`in-law's place'

Although the words given above are said to have been adopted from Lobedu, they are also found in other Northern Sotho dialects. However, the pronunciation of these words in Lobedu is very similar to that of Venda. Therefore, these words were probably adopted from Lobedu.

(c) Miscellaneous examples

The following are further examples of words which are common between Lobedu and Venda

khelemo	cf.Ve.tshilimo	`summer'
lethabula	cf.Ve.luṭavula	`spring'
maria	cf.Ve.vhuria	`winter'
mosada	cf.Ve.musanda	`chief's place'
ho seda	cf.Ve.u siṅḁa	`to grind mealies'
bomakgolokoko	cf.Ve.vhomakhulukuku	`ancestors'



It is interesting to note here that although some of these words are found in other dialects of Northern Sotho, their sounds are closer to Venda than in those other dialects. However, it is not easy to establish how these similarities came about, whether it was through a common source in Zimbabwe or through adoption. The only certainty that exists relates to the influence of the Venda sound system on the Lobedu forms.

Although an attempt was made here to show how the different Northern Sotho dialects have influenced Venda there are certain adoptives which are best assigned to standard Northern Sotho as it is today rather than to a particular dialect:

<b>VENDA</b>		<b>N.SOTHO</b>	<b>TLOKWA</b>	
gwineha	<	konega	koneha	'backslide'
phuthego	<	phuthego	phutheho	'congregation'
lovhedza	<	kolobetša	kolobetsa	'baptise'
ngosha	<	koša	kosa	'hymn or song'
phuluso	<	phološo	pholoso	'salvation'

These words refer to religious activities. This may be taken as an indication that they were introduced to Venda by the missionaries who are known to have played a very important role in the development of the language. Missionaries like Beuster worked with the Northern Sotho people before coming to Venda and they might therefore have acquired the above Northern Sotho words during that time. The influence of the missionaries on the Venda language will be discussed later in this chapter (cf. 1.2.3.5).

#### **1.2.2.2.3 Other cognates between Venda and Sotho**

The study of adoptives from Northern Sotho is complicated by the many cognates which exist between the two languages. It therefore becomes very difficult to distinguish some of these cognates from adoptives. In our discussion of the cognates between Shona and Venda an attempt was made to establish some criteria which may

help in distinguishing between adoptives and cognates. Some of these criteria will be used in this section. Let's begin by looking at the following examples:

CB	Venda	N.Sotho	
-gòmbè	kholomo	NS.kgomo	`cattle'
-	phulu	NS.pholo	`ox'
-	mboho	NS.poo	`bull'
-	thole	NS.sethole	`heifer'
-	namana	NS.namane	`calf'
-díbà	mafhi	NS.maswi	`milk'
-kám-	hama	NS.gama	`to milk'
-nàmà	nama	NS.nama	`meat'
-búdi	mbudzi	NS.pudi	`goat'
-búà	mmbwa	NS.mpša	`dog'
-kúkú	khuhu	NS.kgogo	`chicken'
-gùdùbè	nguluvhe	NS.kolobe	`pig'
-gú	nngu	NS.nku	`sheep'

The words given above are names of domestic animals. It is interesting to note that most of these words have proto-forms. This suggests that the similarity of these words is due to a common origin rather than to adoption. But the problem still remains with those words which have no proto-forms. The question is whether or not to treat these words as adoptives and if so, to establish the direction of adoption. First we shall look at the first question. There is no doubt that words like **kholomo**, **mafhi**, **phulu**, **mboho**, etc. have been adopted from Sotho. This becomes clear if one looks at a word like **kholomo**. It seems that cattle keeping was originally reserved for royal people among the Vendas. Consequently, the commoners obtained cattle from the Sothos, and as such they call their cattle **kholomo**, after the source, instead of using the Venda name for cattle which is **ńombe**. But what is surprising is the dominance of these cattle names over those that are of Venda origin. The Venda term **ńombe**, for example, seems to be losing frequent use. Other words which pertain to cattle, e.g **mafhi**, were also adopted with the word **kholomo** and are now used alongside **mukhaha**, which is

similar to Shona. This might also be the case with words like **phulu** and **mboho**.

Cognates are also found in words pertaining to wild animals (including birds and insects). Consider the following examples:

CB	Venda	N.Sotho	
-cimbà	ndau	NS.tau	`lion'
-jògù	nd <u>o</u>	NS.tlou	`elephant'
-tùigà	th <u>u</u> da	NS.thutlwa	`giraffee'
-búdu	phunguhwe	NS.phukubje	`jackal'
-yáti	n <u>a</u> ri	NS.nare	`buffalo'
-yókà	n <u>o</u> wa	NS.noga	`snake'
-gùèná	ngwena	NS.kwena	`crockodile'
-gùè	nngwe	NS.nkwe	`leopard'
-yíbà	liiv <u>h</u> a	NS.leeba	`dove'
-nùngí	nungu	NS.noko	`porcupine'
-gìgè	nzie	NS.tšie	`locust'
-kàmbà	khamba	NS.khudu	`tortoise'
-	ntsa	NS.phuthi	`duiker'
-	phithi	NS.phuthi	`red duiker'
-	phala	NS.phala	`impala'
-	mu <u>v</u> h <u>u</u> da	NS.mmutla	`hare'
-	mbi <u>d</u> i	NS.pitsi	`zebra'
-	pf <u>e</u> ne	NS.tšhwene	`baboon'

From the examples given above it is very clear that Venda shares a strong affinity with Northern Sotho in so far as names of wild animals are concerned. This affinity can be ascribed to a common origin since most of these words have proto-forms. However, words like **muvhuda**, **ndau**, **ntsa**, **khamba**, **mbidi** and **pfene** present a very interesting case for our study. A word like **ndau** has a proto-form which is not similar to it. Instead it shows close similarity to the Sotho form. In this case it can be regarded as a Sotho adoptive. Words like **muvhuda**, **mbidi** and **pfene** are similar in both Venda

and Northern Sotho and have no proto-forms. This may suggest that the Venda people adopted these words from the Sothos since the latter are said to have settled in the area before the Vendas. Venda also seem to have certain names of animals which are not found in Northern Sotho, e.g. **ntsa** and **khamba**. The word **khamba** resembles its proto-form. And this illustrate the fact that Venda retained some of the proto-forms for names of animals which other languages like Northern Sotho do not have.

There are other words which are common between the two languages besides names of animals. First, we shall consider the words with proto-forms:

CB	Venda	N.Sotho	
-yàdìm-	-adzima	-adima	`borrow/ lend'
-tég	-renga	reka	`buy'
-bàdí	vhadzi	lebadí	`scar'
-búdá	mvula	pula	`rain'
-pòkù	bofu	sefofu	`a blind'
-tákó	shahu	lerago	`a buttock'
-pód-	fhola	folá	`be healed'
-dòmò	mulomo	molomo	`mouth'
-yémm-	-ima	ema	`stand'
-bépò	phepho `cold'	phefo	`wind'
gínà	dzina	leina	`name'
gùbò	nguvho	kobo	`cloth'
-jàdà	ndàla	tlala	`hunger'
-jìdà	ndìla	tsela	`path'
-jú	ndú	ntlo	`house'
-kàdé	kale	kgale	`long ago'
-kèndè	dzhende	lerete	`testis'

From the examples given above it appears Venda retained the proto-forms rather than adopting these words from the Sotho languages. If one compares the proto-Bantu forms with those of Venda one realises that the sound shift in some of these words

agrees well with what has been established by Guthrie and other linguists on the Venda proto-Bantu reflexes. From the examples given above the following shifts have occurred:

<b>C B.</b>	* p > fh	e.g	* -pód-	>	-fhola
	* k > f	e.g	* -pòkù	>	bofu
	* k > h	e.g	* -tákó	>	rahu
	* k > tsh	e.g	* -kèndè	>	-tshende)
	* k > k	e.g	* -kàdé	>	kale
	* t > r	e.g	* -tég	>	renga

These reflexes attest to the fact that although the words above are similar to Sotho they are in fact proto-Bantu retentions rather than adoptives. The fact that Venda retained certain words from proto-Bantu can also be seen from the following examples:

<b>CB</b>	<b>Venda</b>	<b>N.Sotho</b>	
-júbà	duvha	letšatši	`sun'
-dòpà	malofha	madi	`blood'
-cúé	khovhe	hlapi	`fish'
-yímb-	imba	-opela	`sing'
yímbò	nyimbo	koša	`song'
-dòngó	dongo(shubi)	mmu	`soil'
-tóngà	thonga	patla	`stick'
-dèngè	mulenzhe	leoto	`leg'
-yàmbò	nyambo	taba	`affair'

Even though these examples have nothing to do with the affinity between Venda and Northern Sotho, they demonstrate that Venda has retained certain proto-Bantu forms which Northern Sotho does not have. And this in turn adds weight to our argument that the similarity between some of the words in these languages is due to a common origin rather than to adoption.

Although we have attempted to explain some of the cognates between Venda and Northern Sotho there are others which we cannot account for. These words either have proto-forms which are different or they do not have proto-forms at all. We shall first look at those words with proto-forms:

CB	Venda	N.Sotho	
-búk-	-alafha	-alafa	`cure'
-dìàd-	-dzula	-dula	`sit'
-démád-	-huvhala	-gobala	`get injured'
bàdi	mulovha	maloba	`yesterday or few days ago'
dègù	halwa	bjalwa	`beer'
-kéb-	-lumelisa	-dumediša	`greet'

To explain some of the words like **halwa** and **-lumelisa** one needs to take into account the social and cultural history of the speech community. In the case of a word like **halwa** it is important to check which speakers of the two languages originally used this product. It seems that this name originated with the Sotho people. This is mainly because of its occurrence in other languages of the South-Eastern Zone viz. Zulu, Xhosa, Tswana, and Sotho. The Venda probably adopted this word from the Sotho whom they found already in the area when they arrived from the north. With regard to the word **lumelisa** it is important to note that there is another word for this in Venda, viz. **vusa**. The word **-vusa** seems to be the real Venda word. Some of the old people, particularly those far from the areas which have been influenced by Sotho rarely use the word **lumelisa**. This suggests that the word **lumelisa** was adopted from Sotho. There are many other words whose origin can be identified in this way, but this will need a study which is based on the etymology of words only.

From the foregoing discussion an attempt was made to show the influence of Sotho, particularly Northern Sotho, on Venda. Northern Sotho dialects which have influenced Venda were identified and their influence discussed. The influence of these dialects is easy to identify, especially at the lexical level. The problem of identification occurs in words which are common in these two languages yet do not seem to be clear cases

of adoption. Scholars have attempted to explain the affinity between Venda and Sotho in different ways. Scholars such as Loubser (1988; 1989) would regard this affinity as an indication of the fact that Venda originated as a result of a fusion between Shona and Sotho. However, what we have found from this study suggests a case of influence rather than that of amalgamation. The fact that Venda has many words in common with Northern Sotho does not mean that Venda originated from that language. To date Venda also shows a very great influence from Afrikaans and English and yet this does not necessarily mean that it originated from these languages. The fact that Venda originated as an amalgamation of Sotho and Shona can be disputed on the grounds of the many words we have given in this section which either show close resemblances with their proto-forms and not with Sotho or those words which occur in Venda and not in Sotho.

Some scholars account for this similarity by looking at a common origin. This seems to be the main cause of the affinity which exists between Venda and the Sotho languages. Many examples given in this section attest to this fact. However, in some cases the affinity between Venda and Sotho is a result of adoption as was indicated earlier.

### **1.2.2.3 Tsonga**

The influence of Tsonga on Venda can be attributed to contact between the two languages. The close contact between Venda and Tsonga can be traced as far back as 1835 when significant numbers of Tsongas moved to the North-Eastern Transvaal. However it is not intended here to give a detailed history of the Tsonga migration to the Northern Transvaal. According to Van Warmelo (1935:93) the Tsonga came over the border in small parties and settled down wherever they could. Some of them settled in Venda areas like Hatshivhasa and Mphaphuli. Amongst those who settled in Mphaphuli's areas are Xikundu, Mhinga and Xigalo (see Map IV on page 276 of this dissertation). As the number of Tsongas increased, particularly in the North-East and South of Venda (Refer to Map III for the contact between the Venda and the Tsonga in the south), they started to impact on the Venda speech community in many ways.

Van Warmelo (1935:117) describes the settlement of the Tsonga to the south of Venda as follows:

"This Venda population to the South of the Zoutpansberg was partly driven out and partly absorbed by the influx of the vaTonga (Tsonga) who drove a wedge in between the Venda of the Zoutpansberg and the Sotho of the present districts of Groot Spelenken and Duiwelskloof. But a number of the Venda remained though the waves of Tsonga immigration surged all around them "

However, the description of the contact between Venda and Tsonga made by Van Warmelo in this passage seems to have changed drastically after the 1968/69 removals which saw hundreds of Tsonga removed voluntarily or involuntarily to the land today called Gazankulu. These removals were an attempt by the South African government to group people according to ethnic affiliation. At that stage the Vendas had been living happily with the Tsonga with whom they shared the territory for a hundred years. Their children attended the same schools in some areas and there was extensive inter-marrying between them (Desmond 1969:146). The removal of the Tsongas from Venda reduced the contact between the two population groups to border areas. However, in some areas the boundary between Venda and Gazankulu has never been clearly demarcated. As a result some strips or islands of either the Venda or Tsonga remained in each other's territory. Tsonga areas like Elim, Valdezia and Bungeni form a strip of land which juts into Venda country.

In his research on Tsonga dialects, Baumbach (1970:59) established that certain Tsonga dialects had been influenced by Venda. He describes this influence as follows:

"In Venda word die dentale konsonante as foneem gebruik en as daar in aanmerking geneem word dat daar veral in die Suidelike, Suid-Oostelike en Oostelike gedeeltes van Vendaland, 'n baie groot mate van ondermekaarwoning tussen Vendas en Tsongas bestaan, kan 'n beskouing van taalbeïnvloeding (in hierdie geval kan in eensydige beïnvloeding van Venda na



Tsonga met sekerheid aanvaar word. Verder as die getal Tsongas wat as onderdane van sekere Venda kapteins in Vendaleland woon, in aanmerking geneem word, kom die politiese faktor ook in die gedrang en dit speel 'n baie definitiewe rol by taalinvloeding".

This influence of Venda on Tsonga is found in Xiluleke of Makuleke and Mhinga. These areas border with Venda on the East or South-East. The Venda spoken in these border areas is also influenced by Tsonga.

The influence of Tsonga on Venda, as already mentioned, is very intense in the south. This include areas like Tshimbupfe, Masia, Nngwekhulu, Magoro, Mashau and Muila. Van Warmelo (1937:81) describes the language situation in these areas as follows:

"Their Venda language and tradition were swamped by numbers. All their children grew up bi- and trilingual.

The influence of Tsonga on Venda can be illustrated by the following examples:

dzhomela	Tso. dzhomela	`kalabash'
tshilibana	Tso. xirimbane	`iron-trap'
matshomane	Tso. macomane	`a kind of worship'
tshidzholo	Tso. xidzholo	`kalabash-clay'
mathwasane	Tso. thwasani	`person undergoing divine training'
mungome	Tso. mungoma	`diviner'
manzhozi	Tso. mandlozi	`divine-spirits'
thandanda	Tso. thandanda	`tambourine'
mungana cf. khonani	Tso. mungane	`friend'

It is interesting to note that these examples denote different cultural aspects. The word **tshidzholo** shows the influence of Tsonga on Venda music. Words such as **matshomane**, **mathwasane**, **mungome**, **manzhozi**, **thandanda** show Tsonga

influence on the religious sphere of Venda culture. Venda has also adopted a number of words pertaining to utensils. Words like *dzhomela* and *tshilibana* are good examples of this.

In some areas the contact between Venda and Tsonga is so intense that, besides the many adopted lexical forms, Tsonga influence is realised at other grammatical levels such as semantics and syntax. These aspects will receive attention later, in the chapters that will follow. Nevertheless we will only give a few examples of some of these aspects.

Madukana ndo <b>ma</b> vhona mulovha.	'I saw the boys yesterday'
Maḁi <b>ma</b> khou elela.	'The water is flowing'
Ndo <b>ma</b> ḁa haḁa maswiri.	'I ate those oranges'
Halwa vhuḁa <b>byo</b> tevhuwa.	'That beer has been spilled out'

When one looks at these examples one is fascinated by the use of the *ma* form which in this case has a concordial function. The use of this form is typically Tsonga since in Venda there is no such concord and instead, the concord *a* is used. The use of *byo* instead of *ho* also shows the influence of Tsonga on Venda grammar and sounds.

#### 1.2.2.4 Nguni

Venda has also been influenced by Nguni languages such as Zulu and Ndebele. But what is surprising is that geographically speaking, Venda is far removed from areas where these languages are spoken. The historical contact with Nguni languages which can still be recalled by elderly Vendas that of Mzilikazi's raids during the 1930s. Mzilikazi and his men (called Mabunyu i.e. 'naked' in Venda) raided Venda on their way to Mashonaland. It was during this time that the Venda adopted a few Nguni words pertaining to military and political fields. This fact is also attested by Jones-Phillipson, who after comparing Venda and the Nguni languages, came to the following conclusion:

"Historically the S.40 (Nguni) group have displayed dominance militarily and politically over surrounding groups".

The military dominance of the Nguni groups over Venda can be illustrated by the following examples:

Ve.tshitangu	<	Zu.isihlangu	'shield'
Ve.mmbi	<	Zu impi	'army'

Some of the Venda names still bear resemblances to Nguni. The name **Mulangaphuma** is said to have originated from the Zulu phrase **ilangaliphuma** (When the sun rises).

The more significant contact between Venda and Nguni, Zulu in particular, came about through urbanisation. Urbanisation can be divided into two phases. The first one is the mining period following the discovery of diamonds in Kimberley and gold at the Witwatersrand during the 1860s and 1880s respectively. The second phase is that of industrialisation.

The discovery of diamonds and gold attracted many people to the minefields. Thus Van Jaarsveld (1975:159) says:

"Kimberley (1871), Johannesburg and Witwatersrand initially exerted the biggest attraction. Blacks living on a subsistence economy in the reserves occasionally went to the diamond and gold fields for two or three months to supplement their incomes and then went home again".

The Vendas were no an exception to this. According to Van Warmelo (1940:59) by 1895 there was already a significant number of Venda men working in the mines. When Makhado died in 1895 Mphephu, who was to be his successor was at Kimberley having gone there to seek work with a group of his age-grade and some elders. It is therefore assumed that in the mines the Venda came into contact with

Nguni groups such as the Zulus. The Zulu language seems to be the one which was most dominant in the minefields. Its dominance was not due to large numbers of Zulus in the minefields but due rather to Fanagalo which was the lingua franca of the mines. Fanagalo is described by Ngcongwane (1983:62) as "a pidgin language used extensively in the mines and other industries in South Africa". Cole (1953:2) describes its role in the mines as follows:

"...Fanagalo soon became established as the means of communication between European employers or overseers and Bantu labourers...Indeed without some lingua franca the gold mines would be faced with an almost insuperable language problem for they employ Bantu labourers speaking forty or more different languages from as far afield as Angola, Northern Rhodesia, Nyasaland and Tanganyika".

Fanagalo was also taught in the mines. Cole (1953:2) has this to say in this regard:

"On many mines new recruits are regularly put through a course of Fanagalo before being sent underground and others learn it while undergoing training in their various duties but learn it they must before becoming effective workers"

It is clear from this passage that all the people who went to work on the mines were forced to learn Fanagalo. Fanagalo seems to be dominated by Zulu forms. Cole (1953:1) describes its composition as follows:

"Its vocabulary is roughly 70% Nguni (mainly Zulu), 24% English and 6% Afrikaans."

The fact that Nguni, Zulu in particular, forms the main component of Fanagalo may perhaps explain the influence of Nguni on Venda. Venda appears to have accumulated substantial Nguni vocabulary via Fanagalo. The migrant labourers continued to take the knowledge of Zulu that they had learnt from Fanagalo back to

their own territories. Of course most of the Africans at that time could not hesitate to use Fanagalo words outside the workplace since "they were convinced that they were speaking the language of the white man which is so different from their own" (Cole 1953:7).

The following adoptives from Zulu refer mainly to mining and they seem to have been adopted into Venda via Fanagalo.

mugodi	Zu.umgodi	`mine'
ngolovane	Zu.ingolovane	`mine-trolley'
ngozi	Zu.ingozi	`accident'
tshova	Zu.chova	`push'
khwela	Zu.khwela	`board'
phakhamisa	Zu.phakhamisa	`lift-up'
tshona	Zu.chona	`go down'
khathala	Zu.khathala	`ired/worry'
kavhanga	Zu.cabanga	`think'

The influence of Nguni on Venda also came about through industrialisation. As in the mines, many Vendas flocked to industries. In most industries Fanagalo was the medium of communication, particularly in those early days (cf. Ngcongwane 1983:70). Therefore Nguni elements were adopted into Venda through Fanagalo in industries. Beside the influence of Nguni on Venda via Fanagalo, the Venda sometimes had direct contact with Nguni groups such as Zulu. In this way Venda was influenced directly from interaction with these people. It should also be realized that in some areas "Zulu is about the widest (sic.) used black language" (Ngcongwane 1983:71). Areas like Johannesburg are a good example of this fact. Today the interaction between these groups is very common in the townships and work situations. Intermarriage between the Zulus or any other Nguni group and the Venda is very common in urban areas these days. Thus the Venda speaks of *mutshato*, which is an adoptive from the Zulu *umshado* (wedding).

The following are further examples of adoptives from Nguni languages

A.	mabalane	cf.muñwaleli	Zu.umabalane	`clerk'
	nduna	cf.gota	Zu.induna	`foreman'
B.	Mugivhela		Zu.umgqibelo	`Saturday'
	tshikhathi	cf.tshifhinga	Zu.isikhathi	`time'
C.	mutshato	cf.mbingano	Zu.umshado	`wedding'
D.	tshifevhi	cf.phombwe	Zu.isifebe	`a loose woman'
	tshidakwa		Zu.isidakwa	`drunkard'
	tshigevhenga	cf.tshira	Zu.isigebengu	`criminal'
	tshivhotshwa		Zu.isibotshwa	`prisoner'
E.	gokoko		Zu.ikokoko	`water-bucket'
F.	-zama	cf.linga	Zu.-zama	`try'
	-tshaela	cf.laula	Zu.-chaela	`drive'
	-phumelela	cf.wedza	Zu.-phumelela	`succeeds'
	-hola	cf.lambedzwa	Zu.-khola	`get paid'
	-thela		Zu.-thela	`pay tax'

The examples given above show that Nguni forms have been adopted into different spheres in Venda. Adoptives under **B** have mainly to do with time. The word **Mugivhela** is used to refer to the sixth day of the week and is from the Zulu word **uMgqibelo**. In Zulu this word has been derived from the stem **-gqibela** and it means the last working day. The word **Mugivhela** seems to be of recent origin. Before the advent of westernisation people used to work throughout the week. The introduction of christianity and the modern labour system led to the choice of the seventh day of the week as a day of rest, and the sixth day as the last working day of the week. This word was probably brought to the Venda speech community

either by missionaries or those who went to work in urban areas. The word **tshikhathi** was probably also adopted from Zulu. The word for 'time' in Venda is **tshifhinga**. The adoptive **mutshato** in **C** as already indicated, shows the influence of Zulu in the sphere of marriage in Venda. The adoptives under **D** are very interesting since they show social problems that were common in urban areas and but not in Venda. The word **gokoko** under **E** shows that names of some of the utensils were adopted from Zulu or Nguni groups. The last group of adoptives has mainly to do with diverse activities. Some of these have counterparts in Venda e.g. the Venda verb stem **-linga** is used for **-zama**. However, word forms like **-hola** and **-thela** have no equivalents since they denote activities that are foreign to Venda.

#### 1.2.2.5 English and Afrikaans

Venda, like many other African languages of South Africa, has been considerably influenced by English and Afrikaans. The influence of these languages on Venda is mainly a result of westernization. This section will therefore attempt to show how the Venda, after their settlement in the land south of the Limpopo, came to be influenced by Western culture (civilization) which in turn affected their language.

Whereas some African languages came into contact with European languages as early as the seventeenth century, Venda only seems to have had significant contact with these languages during the nineteenth century (Blacking 1967:6). The Venda are therefore among the last people to have come into contact with European languages. Nevertheless, Venda has adopted linguistic forms from these languages very extensively. To provide a better background on how Venda came to be influenced by these languages, different contact situations will be looked at. The first contact to be discussed will be the contact with the Voortrekkers, then the role of the missionaries, labour migration and lastly contact through conquest.

The first contact with European languages such as Afrikaans was a result of the Great Trek (ibid. 6). Some of the trek movements, the trek movement under Louis

Trichardt for example, went as far as the Zoutpansberg mountains in the Venda area, hence their contact with the Venda. The Voortrekkers settled on Venda soil around 1838 and then established towns such as Schoemansdal and Louis Trichardt. The Venda tried to resist the settlement of these foreigners in their country but in vain. When the Voortrekkers had settled on Venda soil, they used to interfere with the Vendas in one way or another. Blacking (1967:6) tells of the interaction between Louis Trichardt and some Venda chiefs. According to him Louis Trichardt was very often induced to interfere in a dispute between two factions led by the sons of a deceased chief. However, these contacts had little influence on Venda since the Venda 'were antagonistic to European settlement' (Mathivha 1985:11)

The missionaries who came to Venda during the 1870s also played an important role in the influence of European languages on Venda. In this study we do not intend to describe all the missionary activities in detail, but to make a brief survey of their contribution to the influence of English and Afrikaans on Venda. The first missionaries to come to Venda were from the Berlin Missionary Society. Although they were German speakers they contributed greatly to the influence of English and Afrikaans on Venda. The influence of German language on Venda seems to be very minimal. Only a few examples of words in Venda can be traced back to the German language. It is very difficult to distinguish between words adopted from Afrikaans and those from German. The word **m<sup>u</sup>neri** which is regarded as an Afrikaans adoptive, might have been adopted from Afrikaans via German. (Personal communication with Z. Mutsila). This may be supported by the fact that Venda has the word **tsh<sup>u</sup>neri** (**hair-style-fashion achieved by cutting away at one level right round**, Van Warmelo 1989:412) which is not found in Afrikaans. This was the hair-cut style of the Germans. Today this hair-cut is called the **German cut**. It appears that missionaries who came to Venda, Beuster for example, also had a background of Afrikaans and English from the Sotho areas where they worked before they came to Venda. The role of the missionaries in the influence of English and Afrikaans on Venda was in culture. Their activities caused a gross change in the Venda culture. The missionaries all over Africa are known to have converted



more people to Western civilization than to Christianity. To the missionaries civilization and Christianity seemed to go together. Thus Mathivha (1985:74) quoting from Livingstone says:

"Neither civilization nor Christianity can be promoted alone. In fact they are inseparable... Wherever a missionary lives, traders are sure to come, they are mutually dependent, and each aids the other".

In their mission of spreading the gospel or converting people to Christianity, the missionaries seemed to have destroyed much of the cultural material of the Venda people which they regarded as heathenism. By so doing they left a vacuum in the culture of the people and this paved the way for the influence of Western civilization on the Venda. Mathivha (ibid.74) levels criticism against the missionary activities in the following way:

"...it should be stated that the greatest mistake the missionaries made was in the breaking down of all the organizations and customs of the black people without waiting to discriminate between good and bad... As it was, they often destroyed what they were not able to rebuild and left many of the black men in a worse state than they had been in before".

Many of the Venda people have, for better or for worse, accepted Western civilization in the name of Christianity. Many western materials such as clothes replaced the traditional cultural materials of which the missionaries disapproved. Through westernization and perhaps the influence of the missionaries, the Venda people came to use foreign materials such as clothes which in turn brought a significant number of foreign words to Venda. Consider the following examples:

vhurukhu	Afr.broek	`trousers'
hemmbe	Afr.hemp	`shirt'
tshikete	Eng.skirt	
rokho	Afr.rok	`dress'

badzhi	Afr.baadjie	'jacket'
tshikhipha	Eng.skipper	

The missionaries became directly involved with the Venda language. In the first place the need to translate the Bible into Venda compelled them to codify the language. This was followed by the translation of the Bible. Many words of Afrikaans and English origin are still found in the Bible or in other Christian activities. Consider the following examples:

kereke	Afr. kerk	'church'
evangeli	Eng. evangelical	
bivhili	Afr. Bybel	'Bible'
mūneri	Afr. meneer	'Mr '
muporofita	Eng. prophet	
mufarisei	Eng. pharisee	
paseka	Eng. passover	
themmbele	Eng. temple	
mubishopho	Eng. bishop	
veine	Eng. vine	
mudikoni	Afr.diaken	'deacon'

The influence of English and Afrikaans on Venda also came as a result of urbanisation. The discovery of diamonds and gold in Kimberley and on the Witwatersrand respectively saw the flocking of many people including the Venda into the minefields. In the mines migrant labourers seemed to have accumulated English and Afrikaans vocabulary through Fanagalo. It was mentioned in the previous section that English and Afrikaans constitute about 30% of Fanagalo. Therefore the migrant labourers can also be regarded as the agents of words from these two foreign languages into Venda. On their return home they did not only have a broadened vocabulary but they also had new ideas and commodities of foreign origin. Cole (1953:4-5) gives a list of English and Afrikaans words found in Fanagalo and some of these words have found their way into Venda. He gives the

following examples:

tshikurufu	Fan. sikulufu	Afr. skroef	'screw'
bongisi	Fan. bontshis	Afr. boontjies	'beans'
tshikolodo	Fan. skwelete	Afr. skuld	'debt'
mbitshana	Fan. bitshan	Afr. bietjie	'little'
phaiphi	Fan. payip	Eng. pipe	
fosholo	Fan. foshol	Eng. shovel	
nyuwane	Fan. nyuwan	Eng. new one	
-badela	Fan. batala	Afr. betaal	'pay'
-laisa	Fan. layisha	Afr. laai	'load'
-mosha	Fan. mosha	Afr. mors	'waste'
-basoba	Fan. basop	Afr. pas op	'watch'
-tshipa	Fan. tshipisa	Eng. cheap	
-tshova	Fan. shova	Eng. shove	

It is interesting to note that Venda adoptives from English and Afrikaans seem to be closer to Fanagalo than the forms in the original source languages. This may suggest that Venda adopted these words via Fanagalo. In Fanagalo the structure of most of the words adopted from English and Afrikaans has been modified. For instance, vowels have been added to some of the words which end with a consonant, e.g. **sikulufu**, **skwelete**, **-batala**, **chipisa**, and **mosha**. Details of sound differences will be discussed later in Chapter 3. This made it easier for the Venda to adopt these modified Fanagalo words rather than from their source language. Words like **fosholo** and **mosha** clearly show the adoption of these words via Fanagalo. There is no reason for Venda to adopt the forms as **fosholo** and **mosha** instead of **shovele** and **morosa**. This shows that Venda got these words from Fanagalo, otherwise their form would have been modified differently.

The influence of English and Afrikaans on Venda became greater after the conquest of the Venda by the Europeans. The Vendas who for so long resisted the

control of the Europeans were finally defeated during the Mphaphu-Boer war of 1899 (Blacking 1967:16).

The subjection of the Venda to foreign rule affected their language in many ways. What happened after the conquest could be paralleled with what Serjeantson (1935:1-2) says of English:

"When one nation subdues another which speaks a different language the conquerors if their object has been political power rather than settlement may constitute an authority or ruling class which is in point of view of number much in the minority compared with the whole body of the conquered people. In cases like this it is usually the native language that survives though the incoming dialect (language) will very probably transfer to the native language vocabulary words which expresses its own methods of governments and other cultural words".

Just as Serjeantson put it, the conquerors of the Venda people established their form of government over the Venda after conquest. The first people to establish a foreign rule over the Venda were the British who by then had occupied the Boer Republics following the Anglo-Boer war of 1899. They divided the Venda country into districts. These districts were ruled by **commissioners**, hence the adoptive **khomishinari**. Policemen were also stationed in different districts to help maintain peace and order. This resulted in adoptives such as **pholisa**, **phikhaphu**, etc. It seems it was during this time that most of the words relating to money e.g **hafukoroni**, **bonndo**, **disheleni**, **tiki**, **peni**, etc. came into frequent use in the Venda speech community. The influence of Afrikaans seems to have gained momentum after the Boers regained control of the Transvaal with the Limpopo as its border to the North. Venda became part of the Union Government. It was under the rule of the Union government that Venda became greatly influenced by the European languages. The changes that took place in Venda after it was subjected to European dominion were not different to those of other areas where the Europeans established their control. Thus Lestrade (1967:106) says:

"Native culture in South Africa is everywhere in contact with ever-widening channels of European civilization which are gradually but effectively modifying its traditional manifestation. It is interesting to note that English and Afrikaans\* became the bearer of the new and powerful culture, the key to the white man's supremacy, the secret to his superiority".

In other words, English and Afrikaans were accorded a higher status compared to Venda. Prestige-wise Venda was reduced to a lower status. Such a position has put Venda under severe pressure to adjust to the level of these foreign languages with regard to the communicative needs of its speakers. It is this state of affairs which has resulted in the adoption of many words from these foreign languages.

The influence of English and Afrikaans has also been accelerated by schooling. These languages became the official languages after the Union government took over control of schools from the missionaries. The learning of these languages by pupils makes it easier for them to transfer certain forms from these languages to their language. Some of the subjects they study, science for example, are full of concepts which have no equivalents in Venda. Therefore words from the foreign languages which have no equivalents in Venda are very often adopted into the language. Consider the following examples that have to do with science:

okisedzheni	`oxygen'
saintsi	`science'
pharafeni	`paraffin'
veini	`vine'
khomphiutha	`computer'
bailodzhi	`biology'
tshipiriti	`spirit'
fanele	`funnel'

In a nutshell, the political conquest of the Venda by the Europeans, together with the missionary effort, education, administrative action and above all the introduction

of new economic systems has inevitably changed the role and the nature of Venda and also led to the adoption of many words from English and Afrikaans. The adoptives from these languages also reflect these different spheres of influence. Adoptives that have to do with religious activities of the missionaries have already been given. Therefore only adoptives that has to do with administration, education, and the new economic system will be given below:

**a) Government (administration and judiciary)**

phalamennde	Eng. parliament
hulumennde	Eng. government
muphurisidennde	Eng. president
khabinete	Eng. cabinet
minisiṭa	Eng. minister
khothe	Eng. court
dzhadzhi	Eng. judge
axennde	Eng. agent
tshipikara	Eng. speaker
madzhisitirata	Eng. magistrate
pholisa	Eng. police
burigadia	Eng. brigadier
kaputeni	Afr. kaptein 'captain'

These examples show the dominance of English in these fields of administration and the judiciary.

**b) Education.**

tshikolo	Afr. skool	'school'
bugu	Afr. boek	'book'
maraga	Afr. mark	'market'
bambiri	Afr. papier	'paper,

desike	Eng. desk
ravha	Eng. rubber.
thitshere	Eng. teacher
tshoko	Eng. chalk
bulupheni	Eng. blue-pen
phirisipala	Eng. principal
tshipikitere	Eng. inspector
kholishi	Eng. college
yunivesithi	Eng. university

From these examples it is clear that both English and Afrikaans have had a great influence on the the field of education.

### c) Economic system

indasi <sup>ti</sup> ri	Eng. industry
ikonomi	Eng. economy
tshelede	Afr. geld      `money'
bisimusi	Eng. business
bannga	Afr. bank      `bank'
vhengele	Afr. winkel    `shop'
shopho	Eng. shop
bonndo	Afr. pond      `pound'
tiki <sup>ti</sup>	Afr. tiekie    `ticky'
disheleni	Eng. ten-shillings
hafukoroni	Eng. half-a-crown
rannda	Afr. rand      `rand'
bulasi	Afr. plaas     `farm'
maini	Eng. mine

These examples show the influence of English and Afrikaans on different economic fields of the Venda. The influence ranges from business institutions, money,

mining, industries to farming. Whereas English seems to dominate in industrial and mining terms, Afrikaans dominates in farming terms. A very interesting case is that of the monetary system. Venda shows the influence of both English and Afrikaans in this sphere. These words for money are used interchangeably even today.

#### d) Transport and communication

The influence of English and Afrikaans on Venda can be clearly seen in these two areas. Most of the vehicles used for transport nowadays, cars, trains, motorbikes, and aeroplanes for example, were not available before the Venda came into contact with the Europeans. The introduction of these vehicles to Venda brought a number of foreign words to the language:

lori	Eng.lorry	
modoro	Afr.motor	`motor-car'
thirakha	Eng.truck	
baisigira	Eng.bicycle	
gariki	Afr.karretjie	`wagon'
thireni	Afr.trein	`train'
vulamashini	Eng.flying machine.	
bisi	Eng.bus	
thekhisi	Eng.taxi	

The following adoptives have mainly to do with modern communication.

thefoni	Eng.telephone	
theligramu	Eng.telegram	
poswo	Afr.pos	`post'
vhurifhi	Afr.brief	`letter'



### e) Clothing

This aspect was discussed in the section on the influence of the missionaries in the Venda culture. However, westernization also played a very important role in this regard. The introduction of western types of clothes to the Venda led to the adoption of many foreign words from English and Afrikaans into Venda.

dzhasi	Afr.jas	'jacket'
tshinorovhagi	Afr.onderbaadjie	'waist coat'
sogisi	Afr.sokkies	'stockings'
bulausu	Eng.blouse	
gebisi	Eng.cap	
vese	Eng.vest	
tshuniki	Eng.tunic	
dugu	Afr.doek	'handkerchief'.

### f) Foods and household

The contact between Venda and English and Afrikaans has led to the adoption of many words from these languages pertaining to food and households:

#### i) Foods

vhurotho	Afr.brood	'bread'
khekhe	Eng.cake	
tshizi	Eng.cheese	
legere	Afr.lekker	'sweet'
raisi	Eng.rice	
khasitede	Eng.custard	
bivi	Eng.beef	

*ii) Drinks*

tie	Afr.tee	`tea'
kofi	Afr.koffie	`coffee'
bia	Eng.beer	
nyamunaithi	Eng.lemonade	

**g) Business, professions and institutions**

The contact of the Venda with Europeans has in one way or another transformed Venda society. New forms of business came into existence in the Venda society.

The following adoptives designated such businesses:

vhengele	Afr.winkel	shop'
tshitolo	Eng.store	
butshara	Eng.butcher	
khefi	Eng.cafe	
hodela	Afr.hotel	`hotel'
holosele	Eng.wholesale	
makete	Eng.market	

New professions also came into the Venda society due to their contact with the Europeans. Let's look at the following examples:

vhunese	Eng.nursing	
vhukhanikhe	Eng.mechanics	
vhudokotela	Afr.doktor	`doctor'
vhulekhitshara	Eng.lectureship	
vhupurofesa	Eng.professorship	
vhuthitshara	Eng.teaching	
vhuhweta	Eng.waiter	

Institutions such as schools, colleges, universities, hospitals, etc. were introduced by the Europeans and have resulted in adoptives such as *tshikolo* (cf. Afr.skool), *kholishi* (cf. Eng. college), *yunivesithi* (cf. Eng.university).

#### h) Sport and social entertainment

The westernization of the Venda can also be seen in the domains of sport and social entertainment. Most of the things in these domains were introduced by the Europeans and names of these activities were then adopted into Venda:

##### *j) Sports*

<i>bola</i>	Eng.ball
<i>tshese</i>	Eng.chess
<i>thenisi</i>	Eng.tennis
<i>hoki</i>	Eng.hockey
<i>dzhavelina</i>	Eng.javelin

##### *ii) Modern entertainments*

<i>radio</i>	Afr.radio	'radio'
<i>thelevisheni</i>	Eng.television	
<i>baisikopo</i>	Afr.bioskoop	'bioscope'
<i>ogeni</i>	Eng.organ	
<i>giramafoni</i>	Eng.gramophone	

##### *i) Agriculture and husbandry*

The influence of English and Afrikaans on Venda can also be found in the domains of agriculture and husbandry. The contact of the Venda with the Europeans has transformed Venda traditional ways of farming. Modern farming methods were accompanied by many foreign words which denote new farming methods, plants

and equipment for farming. Consider the following examples:

bulasi	Afr.plaas	`farm'
mogeni	Eng.morgen	
manyoro	Eng.manure	
deretere	Afr.trekker	`tractor'

New plants includes amongst others, the following:

khavhishi	Eng.cabbage	
nyala	Eng.onion	
tamatisi	Afr.tamaties	`tomato'
tshipinisi	Eng.spinach	
gorou	Afr.koring	`wheat'
ndabula	Afr.aartappel	`potatoes'
muberegisi	Afr.perskeboom	`peach tree'
munngo	Eng.mango tree	
muapula	Eng.apple tree	

The following domestic animals were introduced to the Venda :

donngi	Afr.donkie	`donkey'
bere	Afr.perd	`horse'
meila	Eng.mule	
gamela	Afr.kameel	`camel'

### 1.3 Conclusion

In this chapter the original migrations of the Venda and their contact with other population groups were discussed:

With regard to the origin of the Venda, different theories were discussed. There are

two main opposing views on the origin of the Venda, namely the Central Africa origin and the local origin hypothesis. An attempt was made in this study to reconcile these two opposing views. It appears that some Venda groups, such as the Singo, originated from Central Africa while the earliest Venda people (the so-called 'real' Venda) have originated locally as a result of the interactions or amalgamations between the Sotho-Tswana and the Shona speaking groups who inhabited the area before the arrival of groups such as the Singo.

The contacts of the Venda with other population groups during migration also discussed. The main focus here was on the Singo group since it forms a big group and has a well-recorded history compared to other Venda groups. However, the study of the Singo migration to this part of the country is obscured by the lack of evidence as to their place of origin. Although some scholars maintain that this group originated in Central Africa, it is not possible to trace the migration of this group before it reached the country today called Zimbabwe. It is in this area where the picture of their migration becomes clearer. Here they came into contact with the Western Shona groups and the Karangas. Their contact with these Shona groups is supported by linguistic, archaeological as well as historical evidence.

This chapter concluded by looking at the postmigratory contacts, i.e. the contacts which the Venda had with other population groups after their settlement in the land south of the Limpopo. Here it was established that when the Singo arrived in the area south of the Limpopo they found the Venda groups that were already in the area in contact with other languages spoken in the region, namely, Lembethu, Twanamba and Sotho. Thus the different Venda groups came into contact with both Shona and Sotho languages. With regard to the latter the contact continued mainly with the Northern Sotho groups such as the Tlokwa and Lobedu. The arrival of the Tsonga in the 1830s added another contact situation to Venda. Through urbanisation the Venda came into contact with other languages like Zulu, English and Afrikaans. Contact with the latter two languages was mainly due to westernization. These languages have influenced Venda in different domains. Some of these influences were discussed in this chapter. From this discussion it

has become clear that the influence of other African languages, viz. Sotho, Zulu, Tsonga and Shona on Venda is mainly in cultural aspects such as music, marriage, initiations and religion. While English and Afrikaans have also influenced the Venda culture to a certain extent, they made an impact on the language in other semantic domains such as education, science, technology, government (including administration), politics, sport, entertainment, telecommunication and others.

## CHAPTER 2

### 2.0 LEXICO-SEMANTIC ADAPTATION

#### 2.1 Introduction

The focus of this chapter will be on lexical and semantic adoption. These processes are often viewed as twin processes since the adoptive elements may themselves undergo changes of meanings in their adopted language' (Chimhundu 1982:2). The main emphasis in this chapter will be on the semantic adaptation of foreign words to Venda. However, other aspects of lexical adoption like the factors which lead to lexical adoption will also be discussed. The discussion on semantic adaptation will also include meaning changes to native words.

#### 2.2 Lexical adoption

The lexicon of a language is more open to foreign influence than other grammatical levels. Thus Arlotto (1972:184) says:

"Words can be taken very freely from one language into another, with very little, if any, effect on the rest of the grammar or lexicon of the borrowing language. The vocabulary or lexicon is the most unstable part of any language, and words may be picked up or discarded as a given community feels the need".

Weinreich (1953) regards the lexicon as a domain of adoption par excellence. Lexical adoption was discussed in the previous chapter at some length, where it became clear that Venda has been considerably influenced by other languages in as far as the lexicon is concerned. In this chapter we shall be looking at the factors which contribute to the adoption of lexical items in a language. The lexical items adopted into Venda may, as was indicated in the previous chapter, be divided into semantic domains.

## 2.2.1 Reasons for lexical adoption

The first significant question in the study of adoptives is what motivates lexical adoption. Linguists have in many studies given different reasons for lexical adoption. In his book, **Languages in contact**, Weinreich (1953), suggests at least seven reasons for the adoption of lexical items in a language. Emslie (1977:23-24) summarises these factors into two main motives, viz. the need-filling motive and the prestige motive. These factors will be discussed in view of the different contacts that Venda has had with other languages. Some of these factors have already been discussed in the previous chapter, albeit scantily.

### 2.2.1.1 The need-filling motive

Words may be adopted into a language because there is a need for them. According to Robins (1971:133) the need to adopt foreign words into a language may arise in many ways:

"The conditions of life of individuals in society, their artefacts, customs, forms of organisation and the like are constantly changing, and consequently the referents of many words in languages and the situations in which they are employed are equally liable to change in the course of time. New products often require new designations, and some words pass out of current vocabulary as the particular sorts of objects or ways of behaviours to which they refer become obsolete".

Robins shows in this passage that words may be adopted because of certain needs in the receiving language. These words are adopted to designate new concrete objects or abstract ideas and other cultural material that have come into the speech community. It seems that all languages have, at one stage or another, a need for new words. There is no language which can claim to be self-sufficient. Partridge (1973:306) expresses this as follows:



"No standard language exists on its own capital - no language can thus exist if it is to continue to be a language and not become a mausoleum."

The need to adopt new words in African languages is described by Lestrade (1967) as follows:

"The indigenous forms of speech, rich as they are in vocabulary, flexible as they may be in the expression of ideas, admitting as many shades of accuracy and delicate nuances of meaning, could not in their unaltered state, serve as an instrument of expression when it came to designating all the new things, all the new ideas, all the new content of the white man's civilization. Progressively as the Bantu came into contact with this civilization, there arose the need for new words to name the new things, new forms of expression, to convey the new ideas, a new speech habit, as it were, to meet the needs of the new environment in which they found themselves".

From this passage it becomes clear that a language adopts words from other languages to fill the communication gaps introduced into it, mainly through contact. In Venda a considerable number of foreign words seem to have been adopted for this purpose. From what Lestrade says, it appears that the need for African languages to adopt foreign words was increased by their contact with European languages like English and Afrikaans. Our findings in the previous chapter seem to attest to this fact. Venda appears to have been influenced more by these languages than by other African languages. English and Afrikaans are according to Lestrade (1967:106) "...the bearers of the new and powerful culture". Therefore many words were/ are adopted into African languages due to westernisation. However, in some instances words from these languages were adopted not because of their function, but because of the status of these languages and this brings us to the second motive, that of **prestige**.

### 2.2.1.2 The prestige motive

While some words are adopted to fill the communicative needs in a language, others are adopted for prestige. Prestige here has to do with the status of the source language. The prestige of a language is usually determined by factors outside the realm of language. Political and social factors play an important role in this regard. When two or more languages meet, it often happens that one has a higher status than the other. This view is supported by Burling (1970:169) who states that languages seldom come into contact on genuinely equal terms. Certain languages when they are in contact with others, become dominant over. There can be two types of dominance. According to Coetsem (1988:13) dominance can be linguistic or social. He describes linguistic dominance as that which occurs in a situation where the speakers of the adopting language are in the majority and have greater proficiency in the latter language than the speakers of the source language. Social dominance "refers to the social status of the *rl* (recipient language) as opposed to the *sl* (source language). Therefore a language can be dominant not because of the number of its speakers, but because of the social status which is accorded to it.

Therefore the dominant language may be that of a conquering tribe or nation or it may be the language of an established majority among whom socially subordinate immigrants filter (Burling 1970:170). The prestige motive seems to account for the many foreign forms adopted into Venda from languages such as English and Afrikaans. As was indicated in the previous chapter, these languages enjoy a higher status than their African languages counterparts. Because of their prestige, words which do not fulfil any function in the adopting language are adopted merely for speakers to identify themselves with the source languages. Thus, 'the prestige factor might be looked upon primarily as a cause or a reason for linguistic borrowing whether across language or across dialect boundaries' (Arlotto 1972:204).

### 2.2.1.3 A combination of both motives

Although in some instances adopted words could be accounted for by either of the factors we have discussed above, in others there is a combination of both factors. Coetsem (1988:14) has this to say in this regard

"A speaker using 'borrowed' words may be motivated to do so by need but nonetheless derive prestige from this situation. On the other hand a speaker using borrowed words may be motivated to do so by prestige while such a usage is rejected as pretentious by another speaker".

It seems that some words from English and Afrikaans are adopted for both the prestige as well as the need-filling motive. It is interesting to note that words from other African languages, with the exception of Shona are never adopted for prestige. The words from these languages (African languages) are adopted only when there is a need for them to express certain meaning significance. However, some words from these languages, though they fulfil certain functions in Venda, are often rejected because of the fact that their source languages are not highly regarded by the Venda.

### 2.2.2 Spheres of influence

Adoptives may be divided into different semantic domains. Some of these semantic domains were discussed in the previous chapter, where an attempt was made to show how the different semantic areas of Venda have been influenced by the languages it came into contact with. These semantic domains will therefore not be discussed again in this section.

## 2.3 Semantic adaptation

Studies on adoptives have indicated that when words are adopted from one language to another they undergo certain adjustments with regard to their meaning.

In this section, therefore, we shall be looking at how adoptives from different languages are adapted semantically to the Venda language. An attempt will also be made here to show how the native words extend their meaning to accommodate the foreign concepts.

### 2.3.1 Semantic adaptation of adoptives

In discussing the semantic adaptation of adoptives in Venda we shall be looking at, amongst other things, meaning correspondence, meaning extension, narrowing of meaning, radical change (shift) of meaning and change in emotive value (cf. Ullmann 1957, Ullmann 1970, Mojela 1991, Louwrens 1993)<sup>1</sup>.

#### 2.3.1.1 Meaning correspondence

Some adoptives are taken over without any change of meaning. Their meaning remains exactly the same as in their source language. Consider the the following examples:

Afr.brood	>	Ve.vhurotho	'bread'
Eng.dish	>	Ve.ndishi	
Eng.gravel	>	Ve.giravhulo	
Eng.pills	>	Ve.philisi	
Eng.watch	>	Ve.watshi	
Afr.kart	>	Ve.garata	'card'

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*1. Mojela (1991) and Louwrens (1993) have carried out an intensive study of the semantic changes of adoptives in Northern Sotho. Their framework of analysis with regard to some aspects of meaning change will be used in this study. Some examples included here have also been extracted from the above mentioned works because of their appropriateness with regard to the present analysis on Venda adoptives.*

Afr.botel	>	Ve.bodelo	'bottle'
Afr.suiker	>	Ve.swigiri	'sugar'

Most of the adoptives that fall into this group are names of foreign objects ideas which have entered the speech community.

### 2.3.1.2 Meaning extension

Meaning extension according to Arlotto(1972:177) has to do with a change in which a word refers to more items than was the case with its original occurrence in the source language. In other words, the adopted word widens its meaning range. 'By meaning range or area of meaning of a word we refer to the totality of meaning it can express' (Mokgokong 1975:26). Although the meaning is extended, the basic meaning is retained and is comparable. There are various ways in which the meaning of an adopted word can be extended. First, an adopted word can acquire additional meaning in the adopting language irrespective of the context in which it is used. Secondly, semantic meaning of an adopted word may be extended by means of figurative meaning. In this case the adopted words are used in metaphoric and idiomatic expressions.

#### (a) Additional meaning irrespective of context

We shall begin by looking at instances where the meaning of an adopted word is extended irrespective of the context in which it can be used. Let us consider the following examples:

ENGLISH: STEAMER	VENDA: TSHIDIMELA
Steam engine train	Steam engine train
	Diesel/electric train

ENGLISH: <b>LEMONADE</b>	VENDA: <b>NYAMUNAITHI</b>
A cooldrink made from lemon juice	A cooldrink made from lemon juice Any kind of cooldrink

ENGLISH: <b>GAS</b>	VENDA: <b>GESE</b>
A type of air substance	A type of air substance Electricity Lights

ENGLISH: <b>CHECKERS</b>	VENDA: <b>TSHEKASI</b>
Name of a chain store	Name of chain store Any plastic bag

SOTHO: <b>BAGATLA</b>	VENDA: <b>VHAKHADA</b>
A type of Tswana group	A type of Tswana group Any Sotho speaking person (particularly women)

An examination of the examples given above indicates that the adopted words have extended their meaning to cover a semantic field wider than that of the source language. If we take a word like **nyamunaithi** < Eng. 'lemonade' we realise that its original meaning has been extended. In its source language this word is used to refer to a specific type of cooldrink which is 'a still drink made from lemon juice' (The Concise Oxford Dictionary 1990:677). In Venda this word is used to refer to cold drinks in general. Meaning extension can also be seen from the

adoptive **gese** < Eng. 'gas'. In English this word refers to 'any airlike substance which moves freely to fill any space available irrespective of its quantity' (The Concise Oxford dictionary 1990:487), but in Venda this word, besides this meaning, can be used to refer to electricity or light. Sometimes it is used figuratively to refer to a beautiful person with a very light complexion. Figurative meaning will be discussed in greater detail the section that follows.

**(b) Meaning extension through figurative meaning.**

This aspect of meaning change, as indicated above, is still part of meaning extension even though it is discussed separately. The meaning extension in this section differs from the one discussed under (a) in the sense that the one discussed here has to do with the addition of figurative meaning to an adopted word. This process of adding figurative meaning to an ordinary word is quite a familiar process in Venda. Adoptives are also used in metaphors and idioms to express figurative meaning. We shall begin by looking at the figurative meaning of adoptives as they occurs in metaphoric expressions.

**(i) Meaning extension through metaphoric expressions**

"Metaphor changes the meaning of words and creates new expressions on spur the of the moment. It is born from the instanteneous glimpse of similarity between two objects or two acts" (Breal 1964:122). Breal's discription helps us to understand the origin of metaphors in a language. Speakers of a language compare two objects or two events which they see and this comparison results in a change in the meaning of the original word. Thus Waldron (1967:169) says:

"Metaphors enlarge the semantic range of words, momentarily or more permanently changing the frontiers of our lexical categories".

What Waldron says above, is also true of adopted words in Venda which when used in metaphoric expressions, may acquire new figurative meaning. This change

of meaning can be clearly seen from the following examples:

**Ve.limindidi < Eng.limited**

VE. : **Vele ndi limindidi.**

LIT. : 'Vele is a limited (company)'

FIG. : 'Vele is a person with unlimited resources (riches).

In this example the word 'limited' is used as a metaphor of wealth. Limited companies are thought to be rich. Vele is therefore equated with such companies to show that he is rich, particularly with regard to money. In this example the meaning of the word 'limited' which in the source language only denotes a company, has extended its meaning to refer to 'wealth or riches'. The extension of meaning through metaphors can also be realised in the following examples:

VE.: **Mulalo o tou vha baisikopo namusi.**(Eng.bioscope)

Lit. : 'Mulalo is a bioscope today'

FIG.: 'Mulalo is a **laughing-stock** today'

VE.: **Mutukana u tou vha sheleni** (Eng.shilling)

LIT.: 'The boy is shilling'

FIG.: 'The boy is **naked**'

In the examples given above, the English words 'bioscope' and 'shilling' have been used in metaphor expressions and have therefore acquired figurative meaning. A 'bioscope' is a kind of film projector which was used in the past before cinemas were established. It was watched by many people and people often laughed at some of the scenes that were shown. Therefore, if a person does things that attract people's attention and becomes a laughing-stock, he is referred to as a 'bioscope'. The word 'shilling' on the other hand, refers to a person who is naked since a shilling has no covering. As such one can see everything that is written on it.



(ii) **Meaning extension through idiomatic expressions.**

An idiom is defined by Langacker (1968:83) as "a phrase whose meanings cannot be predicted from the individual meanings of the morphemes it comprises". It is also important to note that although idioms are made up of more than one linguistic item they function semantically as a single lexical item (Mokgokong 1975:55). If we take an idiom like "U swika bagasitshi" (to arrive at Park station) we find that the word bagasitshi is an adoptive from Eng. 'Park station'. In Venda this word has acquired the figurative meaning of 'a final or last point', particularly in a journey or in doing something. This figurative meaning has been derived from the fact that Park Station is the biggest train station for mainline trains in the Transvaal. When the mainline trains arrive at this station they proceed no further. Therefore the idiom U swika bagasitshi (to arrive at Park Station), means to arrive at a final or last point in what one is doing. This therefore shows that the meaning of the name 'Park station' has been extended to an additional figurative meaning. This kind of meaning extension is also realised in the following examples:

**Mashudu u vho sokou amba vhudaridari nge a wanedzwa a tshi khou tswa. Hone fhala ha Bonyongo o vha a tshi khou tou tambela tshiporoni. Arali li mu wane zwavhudi o vha a tshi do vha o raha bakhethe.**

Lit. (Mashudu was just saying that and that because he was found stealing. But there at Bonyongo he was playing on the railway lines. If he (Bonyongo) had found him he would have kicked a bucket)

From the above paragraph , we find the following idioms:

IDIOM : Mashudu u vho sokou amba vhudaridari nge a wanedzwa a tshi khou tswa (Afr.daar, daar)

LIT. : 'Mashudu was just saying that and that because he was found stealing'

FIG. : 'Mashudu was **confused** because he was found stealing'

In this example the Afrikaans words 'daar, daar' have acquired the figurative meaning of 'confusion'.

IDIOM : Hone fhala ha Bonyongo o vha a tshi khou tambela tshiporoni (Afr.spoor).

LIT. : But there at Bonyongo he was playing in the railway lines.

FIG. : But there at Bonyongo 's place he was playing at a **dangerous place**.

In the idiom given above the Afrikaans word 'spoor' has acquired the figurative meaning of 'danger'. The following idiom is the last one in the paragraph above:

IDIOM : Arali li mu wane zwavhudi o vha a tshi do vha o raha bakhethe  
(Eng.bucket).

LIT. : 'If he had found him he would have kicked the bucket'

FIG. : 'If he had found him he would have been **dead**'.

In this example the English expression 'to kick the bucket' is used to refer to 'dying', hence this meaning extension has been adopted into Venda as well.

The following are other examples of idioms with adoptives which have acquired figurative meaning in Venda:

IDIOM: U **maketa** (Eng.market)

Lit. : To sell something

Fig. : To look for a job

IDIOM : U tshina **thandanda** (Tso.thandanda)

Lit. : To undergo thandanda divine practice.

Fig. : To be in trouble.

IDIOM : U dzhena **mabanndani** (Afr.band)

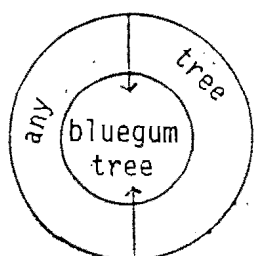
Lit. : To get in belts.

Fig. : To be arrested

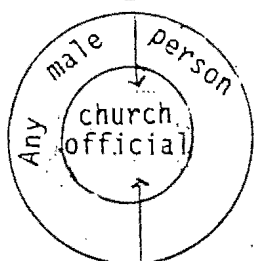
The adopted words, **u maketa**, **thandanda**, and **mabanndani** have acquired figurative meanings which do not occur in their source languages. When a person is selling something, he moves from place to place. The same thing applies to a person who is looking for a job, moving from one place to another until he finds it. **Thandanda** is a kind of dance performed by people who are undergoing divine rite in Tsonga. The dance is very fast, following the fast rhythm of the drum. The dancers never rest until the song is over. The fact that it is not an easy dance is likened with a person who is in trouble. Such a person never settles down until the trouble is over. The 'belts' in the last example refer to handcuffings. When one is handcuffed one seems to be bound up by belts.

### 2.3.1.3 Narrowing of meaning

Whereas some words extended their meaning when taken over into Venda, others narrowed their meaning. 'What is involved here is that the number of things a word refers to is reduced, or we might say that a word becomes more specialized' (Arlotto 1977:178). If we take a word like **mubomo** < Afr.boom (tree), in its source language this word refers to 'a tree', but in Venda it refers to 'a bluegum' tree only. Likewise, the word **muneri** < Afr.meneer (male church official) refers to 'any male person' in its source language. The narrowing of meaning of this word can be presented in a diagram as follows:



A. Mubomo



B. Muneri

The following tables also show instances of the narrowing of meaning of adoptives:

ENGLISH: BEER	VENDA: BIA
Alcoholic drinks made from hops or malt.	Brewery beer only (Traditional beer not included)

ENGLISH : RAILWAY	VENDA: RALIWEI
Railways Railway company	Railway company (The meaning of railways is not included)

The last example is quite interesting. The meaning of 'railway lines' is not included in the adopted word *raliwei*. Instead, the adoptive word *tshiporo* from Afrikaans word 'spoor' (railway line) is used in this regard.

#### 2.3.1.4 Radical change (shift) of meaning.

Louwrens (1993:14) says the following with regard to radical change of meaning to adoptives:

"It may happen that the semantic content of a loan-word shifts so radically from what the word originally meant, that only a meagre semantic relationship between the original word and the loan-word can be observed".

The difference between radical shift and other changes of meaning such as meaning extension and narrowing of meaning is a matter of degree. Radical shift of meaning can be clearly seen from the adoptive *lidzhagane*. This word has been probably adopted from the Afrikaans word 'diaken' (deacon). A deacon is 'a lay official who assists the minister, esp. in secular affairs' (Collins Concise Dictionary). The adopted form of this word in Venda refers to 'any person who is a christian'. The word *mudikoni* is now used in Venda for 'a deacon'. Another interesting

example of radical shift of meaning is the adoptive noun **tshigidi** from the Afrikaans word 'skiet'. In Afrikaans the word 'skiet' means to shoot, but when adopted in Venda it means 'a gun'. Although the meaning between these two words is somewhat related the radical shift is in the word category. The word 'skiet' is a verb whereas

**tshigidi** is a noun. Both words have related meanings despite the shift. Louwrens (1993:14) explains this point as follows:

"..whatever the extent of the shift, there will always remain some semantic connection between the borrowed word and its counterpart in the language from which it was taken over"

These changes, as well as others, are illustrated in the following tables:

AFRIKAANS: <b>DIAKEN</b>	VENDA: <b>LIDZHAGANE</b>
Church official who attends to secular affairs of the church	Any person who is a Christian

AFRIKAANS: <b>SKIET</b>	VENDA: <b>TSHIGIDI</b>
Shoot	A gun

ENGLISH: <b>FOX</b>	VENDA: <b>LIFOGISI</b>
A person who is cunning and sly	A detective

ENGLISH: <b>MARCHING IN THE LINE</b>	VENDA: <b>MATSHINGILANE</b>
People who march in a line	Nightwatchers

AFRIKAANS: VANMELEWE	VENDA: MULIVHE
Long ago	Forever

ENGLISH: LIMITED	VENDA: LIMINDIDI
A type of a company	A wealthy person/ Person with unlimited resources

### 2.3.1.5 Changes in emotive value

The emotive value of words can be described as the words "capacity to produce a certain emotional effect upon the hearer or listener" (Lyons 1977:175). When words are taken over from one language to another, they may change their emotive value. Louwrens (1993:14) has this to say in this regard

"...borrowing often goes hand in hand with changes in the emotive value of loan-words, i.e. it causes a shift in the emotional effect a word has in its language of origin on the one hand, and in the borrowing language, on the other".

The emotive value of words can change to express either appreciative connotation or pejorative connotation. The first type of change is also referred to as amelioration. This type of change can be shown by the adoptive **mesitirese** from the English word 'mistress'. In English this word originally referred to 'a woman at the head of the household or family / woman in authority who gives orders to the servants'(Hornby 1974:562). In Venda the word **mesitirese** refers to 'a lady teacher'. The connotation of 'a housewife' in this case is completely excluded in Venda. Instead, a specific adoptive for a domestic servant is used viz. **gele** from English word 'girl'. In English the word 'girl' is used to refer to 'female child; daughter; young woman; woman working in a shop, office etc' (Hornby 1974:363).

The fact that the adopted word **gele** refers to a female domestic servant only shows that a pejorative connotation has been added to the word. Another example of pejorative shift is found in the word **'boyi'** (an adult labourer) from the English word **'boy'**. The word **'boy'** refers to a 'male child up to the age of 17 or 18' (Hornby 1974:98). The English word **'boy'** has therefore acquired some pejorative connotation when taken over to Venda. The change in the emotive value of the words discussed above can be clearly illustrated in the following tables:

<b>ENGLISH: MISTRESS</b>	<b>VENDA: MESITIRESE</b>
Woman associated with domestic services.	A lady teacher (Meaning of a domestic servant is excluded)

<b>ENGLISH: GIRL</b>	<b>VENDA: GELE</b>
A young female person (under 16 years of age)	An adult domestic female worker (particularly one who works for whites)

<b>ENGLISH: BOY</b>	<b>VENDA: BOYI</b>
Any male young person ( under the age of 17 or 18)	An adult male labourer ( particularly for whites)

### 2.3.2 Semantic adaptation of native words to adopted concepts.

Native words can undergo some semantic adjustments due to the influence of foreign languages. In such cases the changes here are mainly brought about by the new concepts introduced into the language. According to Ullmann (1959:170)

'a semantic change will occur whenever a new name becomes attached to a sense and / or a new sense to a new name.' Here we shall be looking at the way in which the meaning of native words is modified to accommodate new foreign concepts which have entered the speech community. The most common way in which native words are modified to accommodate foreign concepts is by extending their meaning range or area of meaning (The meaning extension of words has already been discussed, 4.2.3.1.2). Native words in Venda, like the adopted words, may have their meaning range extended to accommodate new senses or concepts brought into the language. Just like adopted words, native words while accepting the new meaning, retain their original meaning. The word **mudi** which means 'a house or traditional village' can be used to refer to 'a town or city'. In this case the meaning range of the word **mudi** has been extended to accommodate a new meaning. Another good example is the word **maine** which means 'a traditional healer'. The meaning of this word can be extended to mean 'a medical doctor'. Another example is the word **niwedzi**. This word refers to 'the moon'. The meaning of this word has now been extended to mean 'a month'. What happened here is that when the modern calendar was introduced with a certain number of days constituting a month, the Venda people who relied on the appearance or shape of the moon as their calendar, then extended the meaning of the word **niwedzi** to also refer to 'a month'. The word **musanda** is used in Venda to refer to 'a house of a chief'. Today the meaning of this word has been extended to refer to 'a capital city'. For instance, **Thohoyandou** and **Pretoria** may be regarded as the capitals or 'misanda' of Venda and South Africa respectively. The meaning of the word **musanda** has in this instance been extended to include that of a modern capital city. However, the modern capital city does not necessarily mean the dwelling place of a king or chief, but a centre of administration. The following are other examples of native words whose meaning range have been extended:

**Native** :Original and adopted meaning

**vhurala** :-traditional bed made of wood  
-modern bed



- khoro : -traditional court at the chief's place  
 -modern court
- halwa : -traditional beer  
 -modern beer in cans or bottles
- sosa : -traditional place where beer is made  
 -modern brewery
- mutshaeli : -a person who controls spanned oxen  
 -a person who drives a vehicle
- muhatuli : -a person who judges cases in a traditional court  
 -a person who judges cases in a modern court

In each of the examples given above there are two meanings. The first meaning in each case represents the original meaning of the word. The second one is the additional meaning to the native word. The meaning of the native word has been extended to cover the new meaning introduced into the speech community. Although in some instances the adopted words may be used instead of the native words, the purists often prefer to use the native word with extended meaning. For instance, the purists may prefer to use the word **mutshaeli** 'a person who controls yoked oxen' to refer to a 'driver' instead of an adoptive **diraiva**.

#### 2.4 The effects of adoption on the Venda lexicon and semantics.

Studies on adoptives (e.g. Weinreich 1953) have shown that adoptives can affect a language in various ways. The influence of adoption on a language can be either negative or positive. With regard to the latter, adoption may result in the enlargement of the lexicon of a language, enriching the language with synonyms and other words that have more expressive meaning. On the other hand adoption may cause the obsolescence of native words, and the problem of homonymy in a language. These different effects of adoptives on the Venda language will be discussed in detail in the sections below.

#### 2.4.1 The enlargement of the lexicon of a language

When a new object, activity or idea enters a culture, the word or words which express it may be adopted (Hoffer 1980:12). The introduction of these new lexical items enlarges the lexicon of the language. With time, some of these words become completely assimilated into the adopting language. Hundreds of new words have been added to Venda through this process of adoption.

#### 2.4.2 Enriching the language with synonyms

The adoption of foreign words into Venda has resulted in many synonyms in the language. "The term **synonymy** is used in semantics to refer to the phenomenon whereby words are believed to have the same meaning" (Poulos 1986:30). Nida (1969:73) defines synonyms as

"words which share several (but not all) essential components and thus can be used to substitute for one another in some (but not all) contexts without any appreciable difference of meaning in these contexts".

This definition brings us to the question of whether real synonyms do occur in a language. Real synonymy can be regarded as an instance where two words which appear in the same language have exactly the same meaning and can be used interchangeably in all contexts without the slightest alteration either in cognitive or emotive import (Ullmann 1963:108-109). From Nida's definition it is clear that real synonyms are very rare in a language. This view is supported by Palmer (1976:60) who says:

"It can, however, be maintained that there are not real synonyms, that no two words have exactly the same meaning. Indeed it would seem unlikely that two words with exactly the same meaning would both survive in a language".

Mokgokong (1975:45) also rejects the view of synonyms as words which are exactly the same in all respects:

"Synonyms are therefore words of similar significance in the main, but with a certain dissimilarity as well; with very much in common, but also with something private and particular, which they do not share with one another. They are not on the one hand words absolutely identical in meaning; but neither on the other hand only remotely related to one another".

For our study we shall be mainly concerned with the synonymous relationship between adopted and native words and also the synonymous relationship between adopted words themselves. We shall begin by looking at those instances where adopted words enter into synonymous relationship with native words. Let us consider the following examples:

ADOPTIVES	SOURCE LANGUAGE	NATIVE WORDS
sibadela	Afr.hospitaal	vhuongelo 'hospital'
nese	Eng.nurse	muongi
modoro	Afr.motor	tshiendedzi 'vehicle'
thiibii	Eng.T.B	lufhiha 'tuberculosis'
thoilethe	Eng.toilet	bunga
mungane	Tso.mungana	khonani 'friend'
sivhara	Afr.swaer	malume 'brother-in-law'
muhaliivo	NS.mogadibo	muvhuye 'sister-in-law'
mungome	Tso.mungome	ñanga 'diviner'
dokotela	Afr.dokter	ñanga 'doctor'
tshifevhi	Zu.isifebe	phombwe 'adulteress'
lisuhana	NS.lesogana	muthannga 'young man'
phutheo	NS.phutego	tshivhidzo "congregation"
morodza	Afr.more	vusa 'greet'

The examples given above illustrate the synonymous relationship between adoptives and native words. The adoptive word **sibadela** (hospital) has the native word **vhuongelo** as its synonym. However, the meaning between these words, though related, is not exactly the same. The word **sibadela** refers to 'a hospital' whereas the word **vhuongelo** may refer to 'any place where a sick person is looked after'. Another example is the adoptive **nese** (nurse) which has **muongi** as its synonym. Although both of these words may refer to 'a nurse' the latter example may be used to refer to 'any person, not necessarily a trained person, who looks after a sick person.' A synonymous relationship is also realised between the adoptive **thoilethe** and the native word **bunga**. Although these two words refer to a place where people excrete, there are some differences in their meaning. The adopted word **thoilethe** is used to refer to the type of toilet that contains water whereas **bunga** refers to 'a toilet made of a hole dug into the ground and walls built around it perhaps with a roof'. This type of toilet, because it does not use water, smells and attracts flies, hence the word **bunga**, which is derived from the verb stem - **vhunga** (to wipe away flies, in this context). The word, **ndilo** and **phuleithi**, although they both refer to 'a container used for porridge' have slight differences in their meaning. **Ndilo** is used to refer to 'a wooden food container' whereas the word **phuleithi** refers to 'a metal food container'. Another example is that of the words **muhaliivo** and **muvhuye**. The word **muvhuye** refers to 'a sister-in-law' who has been married by money used as the 'lobolla' of a sister to the brother. The word **muhaliivo** has no such implication. It merely shows the relationship between a sister to the brother and the wife. Although we have not discussed all the examples given in the table, the above discussion illustrates the kind of synonymous relationship which adoptives may enter into with native words.

As has already been mentioned, an adopted word may also enter into a synonymous relationship with another adopted word. These synonyms may be from the same source language or different source languages. The adoptive **vhengele** (Afr.winkel) may enter into a synonymous relationship with the adoptive **shopho** (Eng.shop). Another example is the Afrikaans adoptive 'kamara' which is

synonymous with the English adoptive 'rumu.' The meaning in the two examples of synonyms given above is exactly the same. Therefore these synonyms constitute real synonyms in Venda. The following are other examples of real synonyms from different source languages:

silaha	(Afr.slaghuis)	:	butshara(Eng.butcher)
swigiri	(Afr.suiker)	:	tshugela (Eng.sugar)
tshitolo	(Eng.store)	:	shopho (Eng.shop)
shopho	(Eng.shop)	:	vhengele (Afr.winkel)

The meaning of the words of each pair given above is exactly the same and so therefore these words may be regarded as true or real synonyms.

#### 2.4.3 Loss of native words

Although the adoption of foreign words enriches a language, it may also lead to the loss of some native words. This loss of words in a language is commonly known as obsolescence. According to Arlotto (1972:169) obsolescence

"takes place when the speech community ceases to use the item in question and as a result the word falls out of everyday usage...For all practical purposes, these words have left the language, and their current usage is essentially restricted to antiquarians or historians of science".

Although there are various factors which lead to the obsolescence of native words, adoption seems to play a very important role in this regard. The native words become obsolete because of the introduction of better words into the speech community through adoption. Sometimes words become obsolete because the object or action they used to refer to has ceased to be of use to the speech community and has been replaced by a new one. Nkabinde (1968:19) has this to say in this regard (with reference to the Zulu language):

"..the borrowings found in the language are a record or register of concrete objects or abstract ideas that have been incorporated into Zulu life due to contact with foreign cultures".

The fact that there are many foreign objects that have been incorporated into Venda society at the expense of native ones explains why many native words have become obsolete in the language. If we take food, for example, we note that most of the food products used in the olden days have been replaced by modern ones. Food such as **tshitagada**, **tshigume**, **mufumbu**, **munamba**, **mutumbula** etc. have been replaced or are in the process of being replaced by modern food. The replacement of these food products also leads to the replacement of words which designate these products.

Lastly, a word may become obsolete because of its unfavorable connotations. The replacement of words with negative connotations by adopted ones will be discussed later in this chapter. Taboo words may also be replaced by adopted words. This may lead to their permanent loss.

The prestige factor may play a role in the loss of native words. Speakers of a language, particularly the educated ones, prefer the adopted words above the native ones and this causes the corresponding native word to lose frequent use. As a result of this, the native word becomes obsolete.

#### **2.4.4 The problem of homonymy**

"Homonymy is a term used to describe pairs or groups of words with the same phonetic form but totally different meanings" (Mokgokong 1975:40). According to Yule (1985:96-97) such words "have accidentally come to have exactly the same form". Lyons (1977:21) indicates that it is not just the difference in meaning which makes two words to be identified as homonyms, but also their unrelatedness of meaning. Although homonymy has been clearly defined here, several problems are encountered when a distinction is drawn between homonymy and other sense

relations such as polysemy. Polysemy is used to refer to a situation where the same word may have a set of different but related meanings. The main problem here is "how does one draw the line between homonymy (roughly 'two or more words having the same pronunciation and/or spelling') and polysemy ('one word having two or more senses')" (Leech 1974:228). Ullmann (1957:127-128) illustrates the problem of the distinction between homonymy and polysemy by the English words 'flower' and 'flour'. These words were originally one word; 'flour' was 'flower' the finest part of wheat. Therefore synchronically, these words may be regarded as homonyms, and diachronically they are in fact polysemous. Lyons (1977:550) also recommends that the historical derivation of words is important in distinguishing between homonymy and polysemy. However, he regrets that this criterion may not be always possible due to the large number of words which may be under investigation. Sometimes the historical information needed may not be so relevant to the synchronic study of the language.

Although some linguists like Lyons (1977b:552) feel that the theoretical status of the distinction between homonymy and polysemy should be left unsolved, we hope that the study of adoptives will throw some light on this problem.

In Venda adoption has resulted in many homonyms. These homonyms may be categorised according to their similarity of shape with regard to tone. Some adopted words have exactly "the same form (i.e. the same speech sounds and tonal pattern) but with different meanings" (Mokgokong 1975:40). This type of homonym is called **homotonym**. Other homonyms have corresponding segments but differ in meaning and tonal pattern. This type of homonym is referred to as **heteronym**. We shall begin here by looking at examples of homotonyms.

### Homotonyms

pósà - throw something

pósà - post a letter (cf.Afr.pos)

sálá - saddle of a horse (cf.Afr.saal)

sálá - remains of burned wood or coal

sámbá -curse (cf.Eng.samba)

sámbá - part of a car engine

dóróbo' -town (cf.Afr,dorp)

dóróbó -venereal diseases (cf.Eng.drop)

tshìdíná -type of a fern plant

tshìdíná -brick (cf.Afr.steen)

fúú - lining of a cloth.

fúú - food for cattle (cf.Afr.voer)

tshikápá - type of a blanket

tshikápá - sheep (cf.Afr.skaap)

This type of homonymy creates ambiguity in communication. For instance, the meanings of the following sentences are ambiguous

(a) **Mulalo o dzula n̄ha ha sala.**

(i) Mulalo sat on a saddle

(ii) Mulalo sat on the remains of burned coal

This sentence may have two meanings. The word **sala** in this sentence may be used to refer to 'the saddle of a horse' or 'remains of burned coal or wood'. As the above sentence shows, the meaning of this word can be ambiguous in some contexts.

The problem of ambiguity in the usage of homonyms in tonal languages like Venda



can be partially solved by means of tone. Tone may play an important role in distinguishing words which have the same form but different meanings. Let us look at the following types of homonyms which have different tones (i.e heteronyms):

### Heteronyms

**libúgú** -big book (cf.Afr.boek)

**libùgú** -big worm

The words in this pair of words constitute heteronyms in Venda. These words differ in their tonal patterns. The first word begins with a low tone followed by two high tones. The second word begins with two low tones and ends with a high tone.

**gùlú** - intestine

**gúlú** - bullet (cf.Afr.koel)

The words in the examples above are also heteronyms since they differ only in tone. The first word has a low and a high tone, whereas the second word consists of high tones only. The following are further examples of heterotonyms:

**mùbómó** - bluegum tree (Afr.boom)

**mùbòmò** - the edge of a basket.

**mákété** - market (cf.Eng.market)

**màkété** - big skirts (derogatory).

**dzhèsí** - jersey (cf.Eng.jersey)

**dzhésí** - type of grass

**mùgòdí** -mine (cf.Zu.umgodi)

**mùgódí** (LHH)-gatherer (goods)

#### 2.4.5 Taboo and euphemism

Adoption may assist the language in replacing some of the taboo words in the speech community. The term **taboo**, has according to Ullmann (1970:465) originated, from the Polynesian language and was introduced to English by Captain Cook. According to Ullman (ibid:465) this term 'has a very comprehensive meaning but, in general, signifies that a thing is forbidden'. To avoid the usage of taboo words in a language, adoptives may be employed. The verbal stem **-nya** (to pass faeces) is taboo in Venda. Therefore an adoptive stem **-kaka** (from Afrikaans 'kak' ) is used in place of **-nya**. The word/stem **-kaka** is regarded as less offensive. The use of a less offensive word in the place of the offensive one is referred to as **euphemism**. Stern (1931:331) describes this substitution of an offensive word by a less offensive one as follows:

"A foreign word is substituted, which being less definite in meaning, is the same degree less offensive. Beckman explains this by the circumstances that the foreign word is more or less a blank, which obediently conforms to the use we make of it, while the native word has numerous undesirable associations with the offensive thing, and means exactly what it means".

The following are other examples of euphemisms in Venda

Munna o **binya** musadzi thavhani mulovha.

Munna o **reipa** musadzi thavhani mulovha.

(The man raped a woman yesterday at the mountain)

Luvhengo u na **thumbu**.

Luvhengo u na **phurege**.

(Luvhengo is **pregnant**).

In the examples given above the words **binya** and **thumbu** have been replaced by

the adoptives **reipa** and **phurege** respectively. These adoptives are regarded as less offensive compared to their native counterparts.

## 2.5 Conclusion

In this chapter we discussed the factors which have led or which lead to the adoption of foreign words in Venda. In discussing these factors, we specifically referred to the need-filling motive, the prestige motive or a combination of both. An attempt was also made to show the different ways in which foreign words were and are adapted semantically into Venda. Here it was established that certain words have meanings which correspond with that of the adopting language; it was noted that certain words extend their meaning range whereas others narrow it. Some words extend their meaning range figuratively. Some adopted words also change their emotive value when they are taken over into another language. Some words acquire pejorative connotations, whereas others acquire ameliorative connotations. It is interesting to note that some native words, too, extend their meaning to accommodate new concepts which have been introduced into the speech community. Lastly, the effects of adoption to the Venda lexicon were assessed.

## CHAPTER 3

### 3.0 ADOPTIVES AND THE SOUND SYSTEM OF VENDA

#### 3.1 Introduction

When words are adopted from one language to another they appear to be subjected to different kinds of adjustments, amongst others, phonological adjustment. This chapter will attempt to describe and illustrate how adoptives are adapted to the sound system of Venda i.e. to show the changes that occur and to account for the factors that underlie such changes. To start with, a general overview of Venda phonology will be presented. This will be followed by an analysis of the phonological adaptation of adoptives to Venda phonology. The focus here will be at adaptation on the segmental level, adaptation to the syllable structure and tone assignment on adoptives. This chapter will conclude by looking at the implications of adoptives to the Venda sound system.

#### 3.2 The sound system of Venda

In this section we shall be looking at the sound system of the Venda language. However, the intention here is not to make an indepth study of all the aspects of the Venda sound system since much on the sound system of Venda has been written by linguists such as Westphal (1946), Doke (1954), Van Warmelo (1989) and Poulos (1990). Instead only those aspects which may help to throw some light on our study of adoptives will be outlined in this section. We shall begin by looking at the vowels.

##### 3.2.1 Vowels

Vowels are defined by Poulos (1990:500) as "a category of sounds which are produced with a relatively unobstructed air passage... when vowels are produced, the articulators are fairly wide apart..." Vowels can be divided into simple and

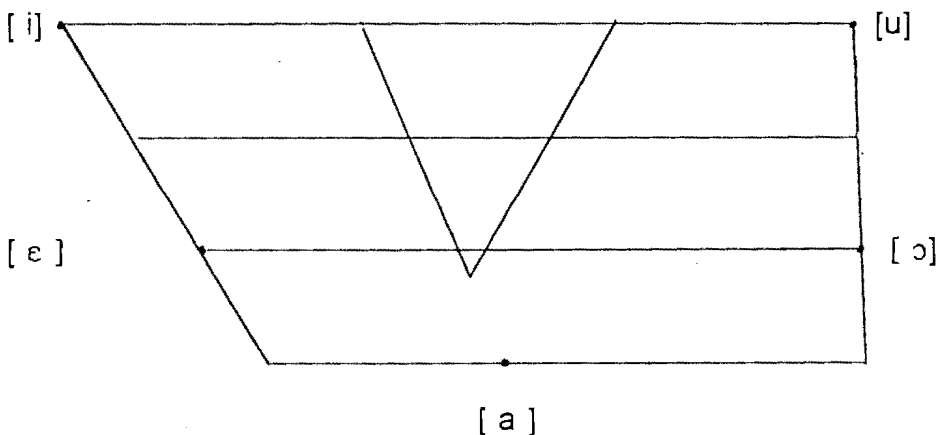
compound vowels or diphthongs.

### 3.2.1.1. Simple vowels

Venda, unlike other languages such as Northern Sotho, English, Afrikaans, etc., only has five basic vowels. These vowels are represented phonetically and phonemically as follows

/ a /	: [a]	as in	[-amba ]	'speak'
/ e /	: [e]	as in	[ k'ereke ]	'church'
/ i /	: [i]	as in	[-ima ]	'stand'
/ o /	: [o]	as in	[-ora ]	'draw'
/ u /	: [u]	as in	[-dura ]	'expensive'

Two of these vowel phonemes, viz. / e / and / o /, have variants which are realised phonetically as [ e ] and [ o ] respectively. These realizations occur where such phoneme segments are followed by a high vowel or a syllable with a high vowel. Venda vowels can be clearly illustrated in the following chart



### 3.2.1.2 Diphthongs

"A diphthong is a two-part vowel sound which, as a matter of convenience, can be

described as a sound which involves a movement of the tongue from one vowel quality to another". (Poulos 1990:505). According to Ward (1948:111) the vowels which combine should be so pronounced as to form one syllable if they are to be regarded as diphthongs. The occurrence of diphthongs in Venda and in other African languages such as Tsonga and Zulu, is still a matter of controversy. However, Poulos argues for the occurrence of such sounds in Venda :

"The occurrence of diphthongs in Venda is particularly noticeable in a number of aspect prefixes and, as far as can be ascertained, consist of a combination of two vowel qualities, namely **o** and **u** " (Poulos 1990:505).

Diphthongs are according to him more noticeable in quick speech in aspect prefixes like **toou**, **tou**, **kou** etc. However, in normal or slow speech these vowels do not come out clearly as diphthongs but rather as separate vowels. The fact that diphthongs rarely occur in the language may in a way show that diphthongs are not a common feature of the Venda language system. It is hoped that a study of adoptives will throw some light on this question of the occurrence or non-occurrence of diphthongs in Venda. It will be interesting to see how foreign words with diphthongs are incorporated into the Venda sound system.

### **3.2.2 Consonant phonemes of Venda**

In this section we shall be looking at the Venda consonant phonemes. Here we shall be looking at the Venda phonemic inventory and its phonotactics. Let us begin by looking at the phonemic inventory of the language.

#### **3.2.2.1 The basic inventory**

Every language has its own set of phonemes. The concept 'phoneme' will be used here to refer to the sound segments of a language which have the capacity to distinguish between the meanings of words. Lass (1987:357) has defined the concept phoneme as follows:

"A phonological unit serving a contrastive function; a minimal **segment**-sized unit capable of distinguishing meaning."

This definition somehow answers the question of how to identify the sound segments which constitute the phonemic inventory of a language. The distinctive sounds or phonemes of a language can be identified by comparing pairs of words which are phonetically identical in every respect except for one sound segment. Such pairs of words constitute what is called minimal pairs (Poulos 1990:529). From each pair at least two phonemes can be identified. Consider the following examples:

u tala      `to swim'              / l /

u tata      `to be sensitive'          / t /

u mala      `to marry'                      / a /

u mela      `to germinate'                / e /

In the examples given above, four phonemes have been identified, viz. /l/, /t/, /a/, and /e/ by means of minimal pairs. This is attested by the fact that the substitution of one phoneme for another in each pair results in a change of meaning of the respective words. The phonemic inventory of the Venda language in accordance with Poulos (1990:534) will be presented below.

Bi	DL	D	AL.	Pa.	Ve.	AIB.	LabP
ph	pf	th ^	th	ty	kh	tsw	phw
p	bv	t ^	t	dy	k	dzw	pw
b	f	d ^	d	tsh	g	sw	bw
fh	v	l ^	ts	dzh	x	zw	nw
vh		n ^	dz	sh	ñ		
m			l	zh			
			r	ny			
			s				
			z				
			n				

The consonant phonemes in the chart above have been grouped according to their place of articulation. These phonemes may be further classified according to the manner in which they are articulated. However, "it might, in fact, be argued that phonemes do not have any phonetic properties because they are not units of the phonetic level of representation: phonemes one might say, have nothing to do with phonetics because they are abstract non-phonetic units" (Giegerich 1992:39). Giegerich, although he maintains the validity of this statement also emphasises the need for its qualification. In order to classify phonemes or describe them, their phonetic characteristics should be considered. This is supported by Ladefoged (1982:245) who says that "each feature (phonetic feature) can be used to classify the phonological oppositions - the phonemes - that occur in a language."

Some phonemes have different phonetic realisations. The phonetic realisation of a phoneme is commonly known as an allophone. If we take the phoneme /m/ for example, we will find that it is realised as the sound [m] in certain environments and as [m̥] in other environments. Therefore, these sounds are mere variants of one and the same phoneme /m/ and as such they do not function distinctively.



We will not pursue the discussion of the phonetic features of phonemes or their phonetic realisation any further. This brief discussion suffices for the purposes of this study.

### 3.2.2.2 Venda phonotactics

Here we shall be looking at the possibilities of combinations of distinctive sound segments i.e. permissible strings of phonemes and the rules which govern such combinations. The focus here will be on consonant combinations such as consonant clusters. However, other aspects of phonotactics (such as distribution restriction) will also be discussed.

#### 3.2.2.2.1 The complex consonants, compounds and clusters.

Consonants in a language may be arranged in a way that they succeed each other without having a vowel in between. "A language imposes certain restrictions on the kinds of combinations into which speech sounds can be put, and every speaker knows, albeit subconsciously perhaps, which sounds and which sound sequences belong to his own particular language" (Poulos 1990:521). Sound segment combination may result in complex consonants, consonant compounds and consonant clusters. We shall begin by looking at the complex sound segments:

##### (a) Complex consonant sounds

Certain stop sounds in Venda are complex. These consonant sounds are mainly affricates. In the articulation of these sounds there is "a sharp plosive character, followed by an element of audible friction" (Poulos 1990:489). Examples of these consonant sounds are:

tsh	as in tshanda	'hand'
pf	as in pfene	'baboon'
dzh	as in u dzhena	'to get in'

tsw            as in tswio            'kidney'

Each of the sound segments given above appears to be comprised of more than one sound segment. The sound segment **tsh** can be regarded as comprising consonants, viz. **t** and **sh**. The question which is often raised by linguists is whether the sound segment **tsh** should be regarded as a single phoneme or as a compound or cluster segment. In Venda, these sound segments are articulated as single segments. Therefore they can rather be considered as **complex consonants** rather than compound or cluster consonants.

### (b) Consonant compounds

Some consonant sounds in Venda form sequences which constitute compounds. Consonant compounds may be formed by nasals or by a nasal and an oral sound. It is interesting to note that when a nasal combines with another consonant it always comes first. When some nasals occur before certain consonants they constitute independent syllables. Nasals that constitute syllables are referred to as syllabic nasals. These nasals may be influenced by the consonants which they precede. Because of these influences they may have different phonetic realisations. Consider the following examples:

nkunda    `defeat me' [ŋ]

mmala    `marry me' [m]

nnyala    `dislike me' [ɲ]

In each of these examples the homorganic nasal N- constitutes an independent syllable and is realised differently in each case. In the first example it is realised as a velar nasal, in the second example as a bilabial consonant and in the last example as a palatal nasal. It is also interesting to note that the homorganic nasal N- has, in the examples above combined with oral stops and with other nasals. The following are further examples of nasal compounds:

## i) Nasals and plosive consonants

Plosive consonants which can combine with nasal consonants include ejectives, aspirated plosives and voiced plosives.

Ejectives:	t	: ntota	`pinch me'
	p	: mpima	`measure me'
	t	: ntama	`admire me'

Aspirated :	th	: ntho	`wound'
	kh	: nkho	`clay-pot'
	ph	: mpho	`gift'

Voiced plosive:	d	: ndowela	`get used to me'
	d	: ndina	`worry me'
	b	: mbeba	`put me on the back'
	g	: ngavha	`grab me'

## ii) Nasals and affricates

The affricate sounds can also combine with nasals to form nasal compounds

tsh	:	ntshipa	`strangle me'
pf	:	mpfuna	`love me'
bv	:	mbvula	`strip me'
dz	:	ndzea	`marry me'
dzh	:	ndzhena	`get into me'

## iii) Combination with other nasals

n	:	n <sup>^</sup> nea	`give me'
m	:	mmona	`go around me'

n : nńala `give up on me'

The homorganic nasal N-, however, cannot form compounds when used with certain consonants. Some of these consonants are as follows:

/ fh, vh, f, v, l, s, z, l, r, sw, zw, sh, zh, h /

Where the homorganic nasal preceded such sounds there is always some form of sound change. Hence the homorganic nasal is known to cause quite a number of sound changes in Venda. Consider the following examples:

N + fholo	: pholo	`healing'	[ f ] > [ ph ]
N + ramba	: thambo	`invitation'	[ r ] > [ th ]
N + swaya	: tswayo	`signs'	[ sw ] > [ tsw ]
N + sela	: tselo	`winnowing basket'	[ s ] > [ tsh ]
N + shaya	: tshayo	`lack'	[ j ] > [ tʃ ]

### (c) Consonant clusters

Consonant sounds may form a sequence which constitutes a cluster. Consonant clusters differ from the complex consonant sounds in that in their articulation, unlike the complex sounds, there is more than one utterances. It appears that consonant clusters rarely occur in Venda. However, languages like English and Afrikaans allow several consonant clusters, e.g. :

Eng.	stamp	
Eng.	truck	
Afr.	knoop	`button'
Afr.	straat	`street'

It is interesting to see how foreign words with consonant clusters are treated in Venda. This will be discussed in detail later in this chapter (cf. section 3.3.1.3).

### 3.2.3 Venda syllable structure

Linguists have defined a syllable in various ways. Doke (1954:207) defines a syllable "as a sound or combination of sounds uttered with a single impulse of the voice". According to some linguists such as Jones a syllable consists of a sequence of sounds which contain one peak prominence. Poulos (1990:522) regards these peaks of sonority as having some or other correlation with the whole question of tone. According to him every syllable in Venda is associated with tone. In this section our main focus will be on the structure of the syllable in Venda. However, the syllable structure of other languages, particularly those languages which serve as source languages for Venda adoptives, will also briefly be examined.

In Venda the syllable can consist of any of the following:

- i) a vowel (V)
- ii) a consonant followed by a vowel (CV)
- iii) a nasal (syllabic nasal) (C)

#### i) A vowel

A vowel may constitute a syllable in Venda e.g

a-mba	V - CV	'sing'
e-nda	V - CV	'go'
i-nga	V - CV	'make beer'

#### ii) Consonant and a vowel

Some syllables in Venda consist of a consonant and a vowel. In some languages, syllables, particularly in word final position, end with a consonant only. Such syllables are called closed syllables. In Venda, syllables generally end in a vowel with the exception of some ideophones:

khu-hu	:CV - CV	`chicken'
mu - n - na	:CV - C- CV	`man'
kho- lo-mo	:CV - CV-CV	`cattle'

Examples of ideophones are as follows:

tswu-rrr	: CV-CCC
bvu-mm	: CV-CC
nzi-rr	CV-CC
thwa-la-lll	: CV-CV-CCC

### iii) A nasal consonant

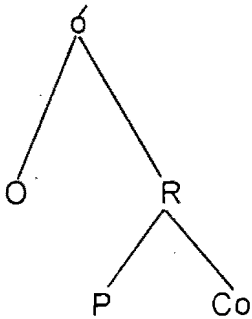
It was indicated in the previous discussion that some nasals constitute a syllable on their own. Consider the following examples

m - pho	C - CV	`gift'
m - mvi	C - CV	`grey-hair'
n - ngu	C - CV	`sheep'

It has already been mentioned that nasal consonants which function in this manner are referred to as **syllabic nasals**.

In recent years the syllable has received a considerable amount of attention from phonologists (Katamba 1989:153). Many different approaches to the study of the syllable have come to light. The **branching or hierarchical** approach was adopted by many phonologists to represent and explain the syllable structure of a language. Some phonologists such as Kiparsky (1979), Halle and Vergnaud (1980), Harris (1983) and many others used the hierarchical branching approach in the framework of multi-tiered phonological theory. According to this approach "phonological representations are viewed as consisting of a number of independent levels that are linked to each other" (Katamba 1989:154). Much on this approach will be

discussed in more detail later in this chapter (cf. section 3.3.1). According to the traditional model of the branching approach, a syllable ( $\sigma$ ) is considered as consisting "of an **onset (O)** and a **rhyme (R)**; and the rhyme of a **peak (P)** and a **coda (Co)**" (Lass 1984:252). According to Lass the syllable constituency can be represented in a **BRANCHING TREE** as follows:



The branching model which represents the syllable structure so well is the CV-model of phonology by Clements and Keyser (1983). This model has added a great impetus to the study of the syllable structure. This model has also been used in the study of the African languages syllable structure (e.g. Khumalo 1982). According to this theory a syllable is made of syllable trees. The syllable trees consist of:

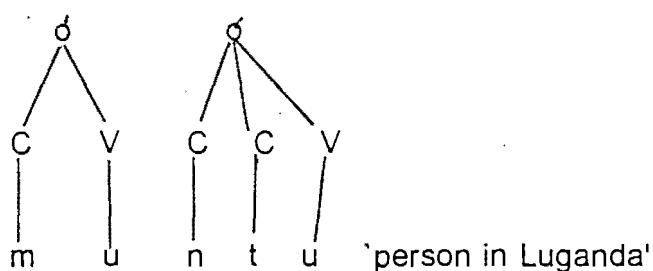
"three-tiered representations, in which each tier has a certain vocabulary associated with it. The vocabulary of the first, or o-tier, consists of a single element  $\sigma$ . The vocabulary of the second or CV-tier, consists of two elements C, V; and the vocabulary of the third, or segmental tier consists of single-column phonetic matrices characterising consonants and vowels in the usual manner" (Clements and Keyser 1983:25).

The version of the CV-model proposed by Clements and Keyser "has the advantage of being conceptually simpler than the alternatives. Intervening between the syllable node and segmental tier there is a 'flat' CV-tier, lacking internal constituent structure. Contrast with the more complex syllable models with onsets

and rhymes..." (Katamba 1989:158). The different tiers in CV-phonology are linked to one another. Katamba (1989:158) describes the linking between tiers as follows:

"In CV-phonology, the linking is done using ASSOCIATION LINES which are subject to a WELL-FORMEDNESS CONDITION. To relate the CV-tier to the segmental tier, association lines are drawn following certain universal rules. Normally, these rules link V elements to [-cons] segments (vowels) and C elements to [+cons] segments..."

He then illustrates this representation with the following example:



According to this model, any segment dominated by a C-element of the CV-tier is nonsyllabic while any segment dominated by a V-element is syllabic. However, as has already been mentioned, a nasal on its own can constitute a syllable. The way in which foreign words with syllables consisting of a consonant only and those which end with a consonant are treated in Venda will be discussed later in this chapter (cf. section 3.3.2.2).

### 3.2.4 Tone

Venda is a tone language. Poulos (1990:564) defines a tone language "as a language in which pitch variation plays a role in changing the meaning of a word i.e. the meaning of a word can be changed by merely changing the pitch of the word". He refers to the distinctive pitches or pitch levels as tones or tonemes



Studies done on Venda tones (Westphal 1946, Mathivha 1966, Van Warmelo 1989, Poulos 1990) have shown that Venda has two basic tone levels viz. high (H) and low (L). Two other relative tone levels are a falling tone and a rising tone. Tone is assigned to each syllable. Where a syllable consists of more than one element i.e. a consonant and a vowel, tone is assigned to the latter.

The high and low tones of a word may be marked by acute and grave accents i.e. [´] and [˘] respectively. Another way of representing tones in a word is by using symbols such as H and L after a word (Poulos 1990:564). Tones may occur in patterns in some words (Poulos 1990:564-565). According to him certain general statements can be made about the tones which occur on formatives or words of a language. Noun prefixes, with the exception of a few classes, are known to be marked with a low tone. In this section we shall not make an in depth study of the tonal patterns of different word categories in Venda. Enough work has been written in this regard (cf Westphal 1946, Mathivha 1966, Van Warmelo 1989, Poulos 1990, Cassimjee 1992). What we have said here forms the basis for our study of tonal adjustment on the adopted words in Venda.

### **3.3 Phonological adjustment on adoptives.**

As already mentioned, adoptives seem to be subjected to different phonological treatment when they are incorporated into the adopting language, in this case Venda. In this section we shall be looking at the different ways in which adoptives in Venda are modified phonologically. However, before we discuss the phonological changes which occur to adoptives in Venda, we shall present a brief outline of the different explanations that have already been given by other linguists in this regard. Most of these explanations are within the phonological theory framework. In discussing the phonological adaptation of foreign words to Venda we shall first look at the changes which take place at the segmental level. The focus here will be on sound substitution. Secondly, we shall be looking at the adjustment which occurs on the syllable structure of adopted words. The main focus here will be on the

constraints against clusters and words with consonant-final syllables. Lastly we shall look at the tonal adaptation of the adopted words to the Venda tonal system.

### 3.3.1 Attempted explanations of the phonological changes of adoptives.

"The analysis of borrowed lexicon has been one of the undecided areas in the field of phonology" (Yavas 1982:123). As a result, there are as many explanations of this problem as there are different phonological theories. The problem of the phonological adaptation of adoptives can be traced back to the days of pre-structuralism. Although pre-structuralists partly addressed the problem with their **phonetic approximation hypothesis**, they did not solve it. The problem once again captured the attention of Structuralists like Haugen, Bloomfield and Weinreich. Nevertheless their explanations never satisfied the Generative phonologists such as Hyman. Hyman's explanation was followed by a revised version, still within the framework of the Generative approach, by Kaye and Nykiel (1979). The emergence of the Natural phonology theory was also of great significance to the study of the phonology of adoptives. Phonologists such as Lovins (1975), Bjarkman (1976) and many others took pains to show how their theory could resolve the problems which exist in adopted words. However, as we shall see later in this section, some of the problems regarding adoptive phonology remained unresolved. Some linguists, realizing the shortcoming of working within a phonological theory to address the problems of adoptive phonology, decided to find solutions in terms of the adopting language constraints, i.e. the adopting language is regarded as having certain constraints which determine the nature of phonological change an adoptive word will undergo.

In the following sections we shall be considering six different approaches in greater detail under the following subheadings: phonetic approximation, phonemic approximation, generative phonology, natural phonology, autosegmental phonology and the recipient language constraints approach.

(a) **Phonetic approximation**

This explanation is found in pre-structuralist literature. Hyman (1970:8) describes this approach as follows:

"The form this argument usually takes is that speakers of a language, in hearing a foreign sound replaces that sound with the most closely related phonetic (or perhaps phonemic) unit in its inventory".

From this passage it is clear that the substitution of one sound segment for another is explained in terms of **physical phonetics**. The speaker of the receiving language will as a rule replace a foreign sound by the one which is the most closely related to it in his language. This therefore, presupposes that some form of contrastive analysis takes place in the mind of a speaker before deciding on the substituting sound segment. This approach may lead to some generalisations on the nature of substitution. Hyman (1970:9) has this to say in this regard: (NB.L1 in the following passage refers to the source language and L2 to the adopting language).

"A contrastive analysis of the occurring phones of L1 and L2 should then suffice in such a 'theory' to explain how (and demonstrate why) the phones of L1 will be realized by speakers of L2, and the phones of L2 will be realized by speakers of L1".

The phonetic approximation theory seems to provide a satisfactory explanation for some cases of sound substitution in Venda, particularly the substitution of sound segments which do not occur in the language. There are a number of sound segments in words adopted from English, Afrikaans and other African languages which do not occur in Venda. Some of these sound segments, as it will be shown later in this chapter, are replaced by native sounds segments on the basis of their phonetic approximation.

Although this approach can satisfactorily account for the substitution of some sound

segments, it is inadequate when it comes to others. Hyman (1970:9) demonstrates the inadequacy of this approach by using the example of the English sound [θ] which is realised in French as [s], and an English [ð] as [z]. The substitution of these sound segments in these two languages has a physical phonetic explanation, [s] is the closest sound French has to English [θ] and [z] to English [ð]. The problem with this theory arises when another language, L3 comes into consideration. Hyman (1970:10) then compares how the English sounds [θ] and [ð] are adapted to the Serbo-Croatian language. In this language the English [θ] is realised as [t] (and not [s]) and [ð] as [d] (not [z]). Although substitution here seems to be based on phonetic approximation, Hyman seems to be dissatisfied with the fact that these sounds are not replaced by the same sounds in both French and Serbo-Croatian. This in itself shows that there are other factors which are at work beside physical phonetic properties. He therefore comes to the following conclusion:

"It appears more realistic to say that a language adopts that sound that is 'felt' to be closest to the prototype. Thus a Frenchman feels that English [θ] most closely resembles his own [s], while a speaker of Serbo-Croatian feels that [θ] most closely resembles his [t]. As soon as we accept this notion of Sprachgefühl we can no longer adhere to a physical phonetic interpretation of foreign sound assimilation. The unequivocal conclusion that we are led to is that **foreign sound adaptation is mental in nature**. The only way in which we can explain why a sound X from L2 is realized as sound Y (and not as sound Z) in borrowing language L1 is by having recourse to the phonological facts of L1 and the phonetic data of L2. Differing phonological properties are then responsible (at least in part) for different nativization processes." (Hyman 1970:11-12)

It is clear from this passage that Hyman rejects the phonetic approximation approach in favour of the phonological explanation. The phonetic approximation approach also suffers another setback in cases where foreign sounds that have

equivalents in the recipient language are replaced by other different sounds. Thus Lovins (1975:14) says:

"The phonetic approximation theory most obviously fails when there are members of L1 phonetic inventory essentially identical to the Ls (source language) sound in question, and demonstrably much more like it than anything else in LT (recipient language), and yet an entirely different substitution is made. This means that some more abstract aspect of LT phonological structure is getting in the way..."

Whilst it is true that this approach is not sufficient to account for all the phonological changes (including substitution) which adoptives undergo, it cannot be totally abandoned since "there are well-documented cases for which no satisfactory explanation has been offered in terms of anything more abstruse than low-level phonetic detail" ( Lovins 1975:12). This will become much clearer later in this chapter.

### **(b) Phonemic approximation**

The advent of structuralism, with its emphasis on the sound system of a language rather than on the study of isolated speech sounds, resulted in a reinterpretation of the phonological changes which occur on adoptives. According to this view, "foreign sounds are not reanalysed as isolated phenomena, but instead fit into the phonological system (as opposed to the phonetic system) of the borrowing language" (Hyman 1970:12). Haugen (1950:217), one of the phonemicists who supports this approach, illustrates it with a Spanish adoptive **estufa** 'stove' which is reproduced in Yaqui Indian as [ehtupa]. In this case the sound [h] has substituted [s] and this is because the normal allophone of /s/ before /t/ and /k/ in Yaqui, is [h]. Hyman describes Haugen's explanation as follows:

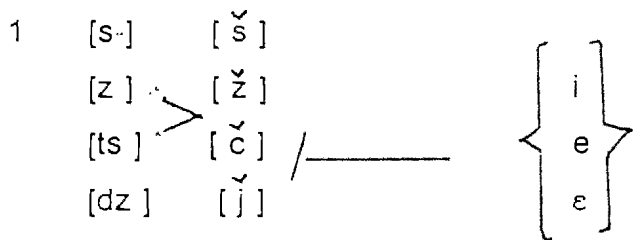
"Haugen should have been led to postulate that sounds are borrowed on the basis of **phonemic approximation**, that is, a language first finds the closest

phoneme that encompasses the phonetic quality of the foreign sound, and then this foreign sound is appropriately phonemicised and subject to the phonological constraints of that phoneme 's members... Thus the lexicalized form of Spanish *estufa* is /*estupa*/ with a phonetic realization of [ehtupa]. This would account for why [h] was used, when I assume there was some other element appearing in that context that would have more closely approximated [s] phonetically".

The advantage of this approach over a solely phonetic one "lies in distinguishing underlying from surface levels of phonological structure (phonemes vs. allophones) and in advocating the description of at least some of the distributional restrictions on these different sets of units" (Lovins 1975:15). However, Lovins does not fail to recognize the shortcoming of this approach

"But as a purely descriptive theory, taxonomic phonemics says little about what should happen in practice in a language contact situation: what it is that is perceived in Ls as significant, and how it is classified and produced 'in terms of' the units of LT".

Hyman illustrates the shortcoming of this theory, especially with regard to its failure to give general explanations to the phonological processes of a language, by giving the following examples from Nupe:



These examples illustrate the distribution of stridents in Nupe. A palatalization rule which derives strident palatal sounds from strident alveolars results in the appropriate allophones before front vowels as shown above. According to phonemic approximation one would predict that foreign sequence [si] will be analysed as [si] in Nupe. This, according to Hyman (1970:18) is not the case. The

foreign sequence [sɪ] is realised as [sʲɪ] or [syɪ]. This leads Hyman to postulate that **foreign sounds are perceived in terms of underlying forms**, and thereafter, they are subjected to the phonological constraints of the system of the recipient language.

Bjarkman (1976:314) describes the shortcoming of this approach as follows:

"In the final analysis, however, Structuralist approaches to borrowing (and to most other questions in linguistic theory) fail essentially because they can't provide a comprehensive enough model capturing the inevitable interplay between phonemic (underlying) and phonetic (surface ) factors and accounting for constraints in both the target and source systems".

This theory, therefore only describes the phonological changes that occur to adoptives without showing how a speaker would actually map one linguistic system onto another.

### (c) Generative phonology

Another attempted explanation of the phonological changes which occur to adoptives is the one which operates within the framework of Generative phonology. In this study we do not intend to make an in-depth study of this theory. Nevertheless, we shall give a very brief background of the theory and then show how it has been applied to the study of adoptives by some linguists.

Generative phonology (or standard theory as it was later called) was developed by Chomsky and his collaborators. This theory was given its first full and authoritative statement in their book 'The Sound Pattern of English' (1968). Katamba (1989:X) explains the basic objectives of this theory as follows:

"The basic goal of generative grammar is to explore and understand the nature of linguistic knowledge. It seeks answers to questions like: what does knowing a language entail? Are there any properties of language that are

universal i.e. is there such a thing as 'Universal Grammar'?"

From its conception Generative phonology was mainly focused on 'phonological representation' and 'rules'. With regard to the former, two levels of analysis are recognized, viz. the systematic phonemic level and the systematic phonetic level. This causes the Generative approach to differ from that of Structuralism which instead recognizes three levels of analysis which are the phonetic, phonemic and morphophonemic levels. Anderson (1985:325) describes the differences with regard to rules between the generative approach and its predecessors in the following manner:

"the emphasis of generative phonology broke with previous work from the beginning by emphasizing the centrality of rules in a theory of language".

The phonemic levels of Generative phonology, though similar in some respects to those of structuralism, also have marked differences. The systematic phonemic level corresponds to the morphophonemic level of Structuralism. The systematic phonetic level is more abstract than that of Structuralism. In generative phonology, allophonic variations fall within the systematic phonetic level. Rules play an important role in deriving surface forms from underlying forms. This short background on the Generative approach suffices for our study of adoptives. Whether or not, this theory is suitable for explaining phonological changes which occur to adoptives, is an issue that will be taken up later in this section. The first significant attempt to explain phonological changes of adoptives by this theory was made by Hyman. He uses adoptives to justify generative phonology.

As his point of departure, Hyman (1970) rejects both the phonetic and phonemic approximation theory, whether fairly or unfairly, in favour of an explanation based on Generative phonology. This approach, as we have already mentioned, differs from others in the sense that it recognizes two levels, viz. systematic phonemic (underlying) and systematic phonetic (surface) levels. According to him "foreign sounds are perceived in terms of underlying forms" (1970:19). The source word



would be subject to modification by the synchronic phonological rules of the borrowing language (Steinbergs 1984:119). Hyman justifies his analysis by examples from Nupe. After analysing the phonological changes of adoptives in this language he makes the following observations

"a word or formative when borrowed becomes part of the lexicon with a phonological representation which is subject to the morpheme structure conditions and then all of the phonological rules. These new words then consist of phonological strings which are composed of underlying phonological segments already in the language, and not new phonological segments or segments which may be closer to the phonetic output in all cases " (1970:21).

In this passage, Hyman emphasises the necessity of recognizing an independent level of abstract phonological representations and an ordered set of Phonological rules relating these abstractions to their concrete phonetic realizations. Thus he further says:

"It is by recognizing a deeper level than the autonomous phonemic level and by conceptualizing the phonological component as a system of rules relating abstract underlying forms to surface phonetic realizations that borrowing can be coherently handled" (1970:21).

Hyman illustrates this operation with the Spanish word **estufa** which was lexicalized with a phonetic realization [ehtupa] in Yaqui. The underlying sound /s/ had been transformed to a phonetic sound [h] by a phonological rule which changes the /s/ before /t/ and /k/ in Yaqui. This rule can be formalised as follows:

$$s \rightarrow h / \left. \begin{array}{c} \text{t} \\ \text{k} \end{array} \right\}$$

Hyman (1970) also demonstrates, with reference to Nupe adoptives from Yoruba, how speakers of a native language perceive foreign sounds in terms of their underlying forms. Here it is important to note the vowel systems of both Nupe and Yoruba. Yoruba has a seven-vowel system, viz.:

i		u
e		o
ɛ	a	ɔ

while Nupe has a five-vowel surface system, viz.:

i		u
e		o
a		

Hyman then introduces a context-free rule

[ +low ] --> [+back,-round]

which will account for the absolute neutralization of /ɛ/ and /o/ as low surface vowel [a] (Bjarkmann 1976:324). Bjarkman illustrates the application of this rule by the following Nupe adoptives from Yoruba:

Yoruba	Nupe	
[keke]	[kyakya]	'bicycle'
[egbe]	[egbya]	'Yoruba town name'
[tore]	[twarya]	'to give a gift'
[kobe]	[kwabwa]	'penny'

In this case Nupe speakers can be assumed to make the following analysis. Since the vowels in Yoruba utterance [kɛkɛ] can be recognized as acceptable underlying forms, they are lexicalized as such according to Hyman's Principle 1 which states that foreign sounds are perceived in terms of underlying forms in the native phonological system.

Although Hyman's generative approach accounts for some of the phonological changes which occur in adoptives, it is not without some flaws. The first shortcoming lies in the theory itself. The question of abstractness has caused much criticism of the Generative approach. The main problem here is the discrepancy which sometimes exists between the underlying and the surface representation. Katamba (1989:134), though an adherent of Generative phonology, raises some thought-provoking questions with regard to abstractness in phonological theory:

"The controversy centres around the extent to which phonetic realisations can differ from underlying representations. Is there a principled way of determining when underlying representations are too far removed from surface manifestations to be credible? ...Phonological theory would become empty if any sound was allowed to change arbitrarily into any other sound at the whim of the analyst" (1989:134-135).

He further explores the possibility of finding the mechanism which may be used to determine the degree of relatedness between the underlying and surface representations:

"This begs the question of the degree of relatedness that is sufficient to allow the derivation of phonetic representations from the same base form. Can effective mechanical procedures that determine which forms are derivable from the same synchronic source ever be devised? Unfortunately, the answer is 'no' (ibid. 135).

According to him "abstractness is a scale rather than a dichotomy. It is not possible to establish the absolute cut off point beyond which the degree of abstractness becomes intolerable" (ibid.150).

The fact that Generative theory has no mechanisms to constrain abstractness makes it difficult to reject whatever an analyst deems as the underlying form of a surface representation of an adoptive form in a language. In some studies of adoptives the situation is exacerbated when the underlying form has been deepened to account for the maximum possible surface representations. Bjarkmann (1976:324) criticizes Hyman 's treatment of Nupe with regard to this fact:

"Hyman's treatment of Nupe has received recent notoreity (especially as developed in Hyman 1970b) to the extent that he has employed his loanword data in the attempt to justify an abstract solution to Nupe phonology".

This positing of abstract underlying forms which may sometimes be remotely related to the derived surface form weakens the Generative explanation to the problem of adoptive phonology.

Lovins (1975:19) also criticises Hyman's approach on the ground that it deals only with foreign words which have become completely nativized. It does not account for the words which have not yet been completely assimilated. In such cases Hyman takes refuge in 'rule exception without describing what type of exceptions entail what sort of foreignness' (1970:19). Although Steinbergs (1984) found Hyman's explanation useful for some cases in Tshiluba, an African language spoken in Zaire, he takes issue with it with regard to other examples:

Fr. [mustike:r]	>	Tsh. [musitekele]	'mosquito net'
Ki. [polisi]	>	Tsh. [mpoluse]	'policeman'
Fr. [somet ]	>	Tsh. [nsesete]	'socks'
Fr. [muzet ]	>	Tsh. [muse:te]	'box, bag'

Normally Tshiluba alveolars are palatalized before [i] not [ɛ], yet in these examples alveolars are only palatalized before [ɛ]. This makes it difficult to apply Hyman's explanation since there is no synchronic phonological rule in this language which accounts for this change.

This failure on the part of Hyman's hypotheses has led some phonologists such as Kaye and Nykiel (1979) to refine generative phonological theory of adoption by stressing the importance of deep phonotactic constraints in a language. "Certainly it is evident that phonotactic constraints (whether deep or surface) must play a large part in modifying the shape of some loanwords" (Steinbergs 1984:120).

#### (d) Natural Phonology

The failure of standard generative phonology to provide satisfactory explanations to the phonological changes which occur in adoptives has made some linguists take recourse to Natural phonology. Natural phonology arises from the need to find natural or more transparent explanations of the language processes instead of using abstract rules. This theory was founded by Stampe. The basis of the theory is the claim that our **innate phonetic capacity** can be represented in the form of a set of very general natural processes. The trademark of this phonological theory is the distinction between rules and natural processes. According to this theory, natural processes and not learned rules, are the ones which govern our phonetic behaviour. Since phonological processes form the basis of this theory, it would perhaps be expedient to cite what are processes in Stampe's view. Stampe (1972:1) defines a phonological process as

"...a mental operation that applies in speech to substitute for a class of sounds or sound sequences presenting a specific common difficulty to the speech capacity...an alternative class identical but lacking the difficult property".

Stampe argues further that although the substitutions are mental in nature, they are

motivated by the physical character of speech. In other words processes are defined according to their function which is "to maximize the perceptual characteristics of speech and minimize its articulatory difficulties" (Stampe 1972:9).

As already mentioned this theory distinguishes between processes and rules:

"Natural processes are constraints which the speaker brings to the language, rules, on the other hand, are constraints which the language brings to the speaker" (Yavas 1982:123).

Yavas further explains the distinction between natural rules and natural processes as follows:

"Learned rules need not express phonetically transparent alternations or minimal substitutions. They are always context-sensitive, are not synchronically productive, and do not apply to nativize loanwords. Natural processes, on the other hand always have phonetic motivation, they may be context-free, they can make only minimal substitutions, and do apply to loanwords. As to the order of application, all natural processes apply after learned rules" (Yavas 1982: 124) .

From the above discussion it becomes clear that natural processes apply to adoptives. These natural processes differ from rules in that they are productive. One of the objectives of Natural Phonology is to limit the global status of rules which in Generative phonology resulted in so many exceptions, especially with regard to adoptives. Global rules are known to add too much power to grammars (ibid.128). Natural Phonology differs from the Generative approach on the question of perception of foreign sounds. According to Bjarkman (1976:353), "loanwords are taken to be perceived in terms of 'natural phonemic' and not 'systematic phonemic' representations". Thus it is natural processes, not rules, that determine the nativization of the adopted words. It is interesting to note how these processes function according to Natural phonology. This can be illustrated by the following

examples which show the changes that occur to Arabic adoptives in Turkish (these examples have been taken from Yavas 1982:125):

Arabic	Turkish	
/kita:b/	[kitap]	'book'
/istibda:d/	[istibdat]	'despotism'
/imda:d/	[imdat]	'help'
/intixa:b/	[intihap]	'choice'
/muha:rib/	[muharip]	'warrior'
/mutana:sib/	[mutenasip]	'proportional'

These examples show a phonological process in Turkish which devoices stops in word final position. This process takes place without exception. The phonological processes in this approach apply sequentially (i.e. apply one after another) and not simultaneously (i.e. they do not apply at the same time) (Steinbergs 1985:113).

Although Natural Phonology theory might be useful in explaining some problems in adoptive phonology, it is also not without flaws. Even Bjarkman, who did an intensive study of this theory and its application to adoptives, admits that "certain inherent flaws remain unrectified in Stampe's pioneer model". There are a few inherent problems with regard to this theory, viz. the distinction between rules and processes, ordering relationships between processes, and its exclusiveness (i.e. the exclusion of unmotivated and morphological alternatives).

Let's begin by looking at the problem of the distinction between rules and processes. Although the distinction between rules and processes is the basis of the Natural Phonology theory, such a distinction does not appear to be clear-cut, especially when it comes to adoptives. The problem here is the fact that "certain constraints do not lend themselves easily to such classification" (Yavas 1982:130). According to him "the rule/process distinction appears to be too simplistic to account for certain facts of borrowing" (Ibid.130). Yavas illustrates the problem of the distinction between rules and processes by citing the case of vowel harmony in

Turkish. Although in some languages vowel harmony is a natural process, in Turkish it is a rule according to 'Natural Phonology' since it does not apply consistently. Yet to adoptives it applies very consistently with phonetic motivations. In this case vowel harmony suits the definition of it being a process. There are many such instances, as we will see later in this chapter.

"The rule/process identification would run into other problems when we consider the ordering relationships of the constraints in accounting for the borrowing assimilations" (Yavas 1982:127). As we have already indicated, processes occur sequentially and they occur after the learned rules. Yavas uses the same case of vowel harmony in Turkish which, according to the theory, is a learned rule. Vowel harmony, as can be seen from the following examples, takes place after vowel epenthesis, which is a natural process.

Arabic	Turkish	
/jism/	[jisim]	'substance'
/fikr/	[fikir]	'idea'
/xayr/	[hayir]	'good'
/qahr/	[kahir]	'anxiety'
/kibr/	[kibir]	'pride'
/sabr/	[sabir]	'patience'
/tawr/	[tavir]	'manner'

(Yavas 1982:126)

In these examples vowel harmony (which is a learned rule) takes place after vowel epenthesis (which is a natural process). This, according to Yavas, undermines natural phonology's claim that rules only occur before processes. In the examples given above the learned rule appears to come after the natural process. This hypothesis therefore still needs some modifications with regard to the rule/process ordering.



The third problem relates the exclusiveness of the theory. As already discussed, only processes are considered for the nativization of adoptives. The issue of unmotivated and morphologically motivated alternations falls outside the scope of this theory. Anderson (1985:345) expresses his dissatisfaction with regard to this point as follows:

"If we attempt to limit the explanatory domain of phonology to the set of natural processes in Stampe's sense, the result is that any alternation which is not phonetically motivated or shows phonetically arbitrary properties, immediately falls into the category of learned rules and thus fall outside of the theory. In that case however, a great deal of the descriptive content of the sound systems of natural languages, indeed, nearly all of it is not describable as 'phonology' in this sense at all".

From this passage it becomes obvious that not all the problems of the nativization of adoptives can be fully accounted for by a theory such as natural phonology, which restricts its explanation to phonetic motivated processes only. Linguists like Anderson (1985), Bach and Harms (1972) regard the search for naturalness purely on phonetic grounds as a futile exercise. Other domains may contribute significantly towards solving the problem of the phonological adoption of foreign words in a language. According to Steinbergs (1985:90) social, cultural, and historical factors just as purely linguistic ones, also play a role in the modifications of adoptives.

#### **(e) Autosegmental phonology**

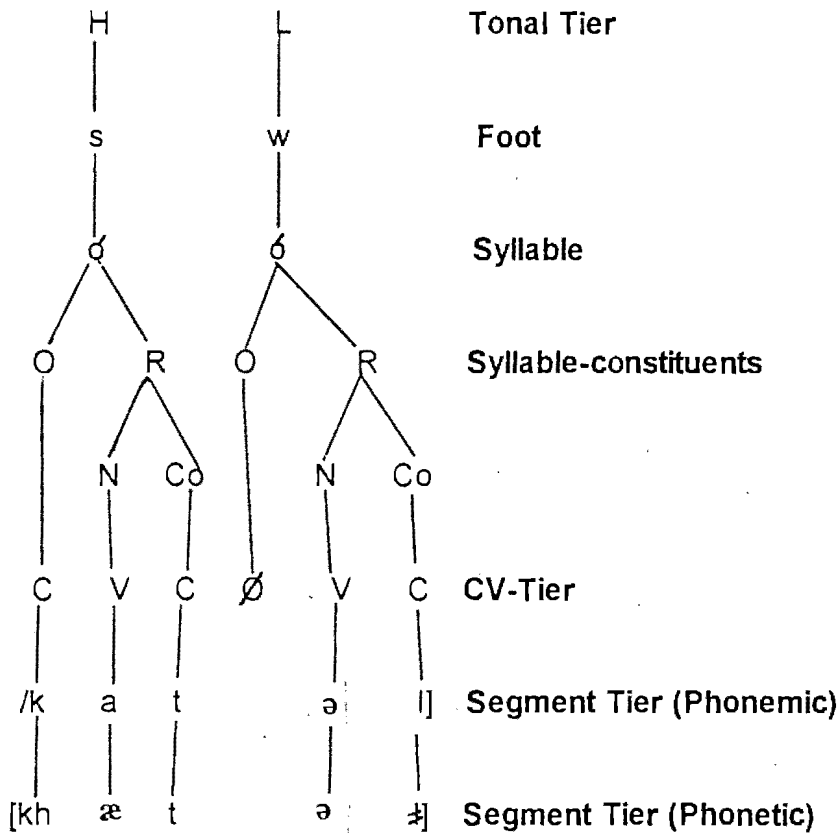
Autosegmental phonology was an attempt by some phonologists to break away from "the monolithic nature of uniformly segment-based theories" (Anderson 1985:347). Some of these theories have been discussed in this section. Katamba (1989:196-197) describes the differences between these theories and autosegmental phonology as follows:

"In autosegmental phonology the focus shifts to ways in which phonological rules can change the organisation of phonological representation. In autosegmental phonology, phonological representations are no longer seen as simple rows of segments, with all phonological processes taking place at one single level. Rather, they are regarded as complex arrays (in principle of independent) elements arranged on different levels or TIERS. The different levels though interconnected, are in principle autonomous".

The autosegmental approach brought about innovation with regard to phonological representation. In Anderson's words it is "the elaboration of richer notions of phonological representation, going beyond the traditional picture of forms as composed at all levels of sequences of segment-sized units" (1985:342). Giegerich (1992) also emphasises the need for such phonological representations which are more highly structured than those used in linear approaches. Thus he says the following in favour of the autosegmental approach:

"Indeed, recent phonological theory (under headings such as **Dependency Phonology** and **Autosegmental Phonology**) is notable for such an interest in (and proliferation of) representational devices, and in particular concerning the structure of `segments'-whatever those are" (1992:323).

Lass (1992:1) illustrates the phonological representation in Autosegmental phonology with the word `cattle'



(Lass 1992:1)

In linear phonology (i.e. where phonological representations are seen as simple rows of segments) it is not possible to show all the phonological aspects of a word in one representation as in the example given above. In this example the different elements on each **TIER** associate with each other by means of association lines. However, there are certain rules that govern such association. As already mentioned, phonological processes take place at different levels or **tiers** instead of taking place at one single level or row of segments. In this way it is easier to show the different phonological changes that occur in a word.

This approach has been used by some linguists to explain phonological processes such as vowel and consonant harmony, palatalization and many others (cf. Katamba 1989; Khumalo 1987) in language. Khumalo (1987) employs this theory to explain some of the phonological changes which occur on Zulu adoptives. Here he established that the substitution of certain foreign sound segments in Zulu is

determined by the harmony process which can be vividly explained by the autosegmental approach. Another innovation brought about by this theory concerns tone. Katamba (1989:201-202) says the following in this regard:

"In autosegmental phonology, given the starting assumption of the autonomy of tone, the existence of such free, unassociated tones is not surprising. But the same facts cause severe embarrassment in the theory of linear phonology where tone features are assumed to be an integral part of the segmental representation of tone-bearing units such as vowels because the prediction that tone is the segmental feature is not borne out by the evidence. The existence of floating tones was one of the original arguments used to justify autosegmental representations".

Although this study will not make a detailed study of tone, it is hoped that this approach will provide some explanation of the tonal adaptation of foreign words in Venda.

#### **(f) Recipient language constraints approach**

From the foregoing discussion it appears that the phonological adjustments of adoptives have created problems for most of the phonological theories proposed so far. In some instances, as has been discussed above, it is the shortcoming of the theory that complicates the analysis of the changes rather than the processes of adoption themselves. It is for this reason that some linguists like Holden (1976), Yavas (1982), Steinbergs (1984, 1985), and Kaye and Nykiel (1972) decided to seek explanations in the constraints of the recipient language. Yavas (1982:130) describes this approach as follows:

"What seems to be a better approach is to look at the native language constraints as having different degrees of strength, and such a strength hierarchy among the native constraints is reflected in loan adaptation".

He further mentions that

"...an approach which considers the native constraints as a continuum according to their synchronic strength (productivity) would be better equipped to account for the facts than the one which commits itself to a binary rule/process distinction based on phonetic naturalness" (ibid.131).

This kind of an approach has been used by Steinbergs (1984, 1985) in the analysis of adoptives in Tshiluba, a language spoken in Zaire, and Oshikwanyama a language spoken in Angola and Namibia. It seems that most linguists accept the fact that there are constraints in a language which determine the nativization of adoptives. Holden (1976) gives a lengthy discussion on how such constraints in the recipient language modify the newly incorporated words. He discusses these constraints under a hypothesis which he labels the 'The Magnetic Attraction Hypothesis'. This analogy according to him implies

"that each phonological constraint of the target system exerts a 'magnetic' pull on the appropriate segments of the borrowings, in order to assimilate those segments to the native system. Different constraints have differing strengths of attraction, and the 'magnetic force' of each constraint acts differently on different segments which satisfy the structural conditions of that constraint (as though different metals were being attracted by the magnet). I further hypothesize that these varying strengths are a direct measure of the relative 'productivity' or viability of phonological rules or constraints in the native system, and provide us with a glimpse of how such rules begin to decay 'from within', so to speak" (Holden 1976:133).

Holden raises a very interesting point with regard to the way in which language constraints work in the modification of adoptives. He shows that language constraints operate in the form of a continuum. These constraints operate in different degrees depending on different factors. Although this approach, may lead to some generalisations on the nature of change, it avoids such general rules or

processes advanced in theories such as Generative grammar. In opposition to approaches which propagate explanations based on ordered phonological rules, Holden favours one which regards adoptives as being "incorporated into a system expressing constraints on the concatenation of surface phones" (Holden 1976:144). Steinberg's research on the Tshiluba and Oshikwanyama languages (1984 and 1985 respectively) shows how different constraints operate in a language. With regard to the latter, he established the following hierarchy of constraints: The first is the constraint against consonant final words; the second is the constraint which results in substitution and the third and last constraint relates to processes which derive from constraints against clusters. These constraints can be illustrated by the following examples:

Source language	Tshiluba	
Eng. [farm]	[ofalama]	`farm'
Germ.[kartə]	[okalita]	`map'
Eng. [krisməs]	[okilisitimisa]	`Christmas'
Germ.[brot]	[ombolota]	`bread'

(Steinbergs 1985:95)

In these examples there is a constraint against the occurrence of foreign segments in Oshikwanyama. The sound *r* and the 'schwa' vowel *ə* do not form part of this language's sound inventory. They are therefore replaced by *l* and *a* or *i* respectively. These examples also illustrate a **constraint against consonant clusters**. Consonant clusters **-rm**, **-rt-**, **kr-** and **br-** have been broken up by epenthetic vowels. The first and the last examples also illustrate a **constraint against consonant final words** in Oshikwanyama. As a result of this constraint vowels are added onto the final positions of these words. Steinberg's research also established that some modifications to adoptives derive from deep structure constraints rather than surface ones (1985:100).

Whilst this approach may appear to be very comprehensible since it operates within the physical or phonetic realm, it does not clearly indicate how a speaker of

the adopting language goes about modifying adopted foreign segments. However, Silverman (1992) gives a very good description of how recipient language constraints operate. He starts by identifying two levels at which constraints of the native language operate on the incoming foreign words. The first level is what he calls the **Perceptual level**. He describes this level as follows:

"The first level of loanword phonology consists primarily of a parsing of the input signal into segment-sized chunks, for which native feature matrices which most closely approximate their articulatory and/or acoustic properties are provided" (1992:291).

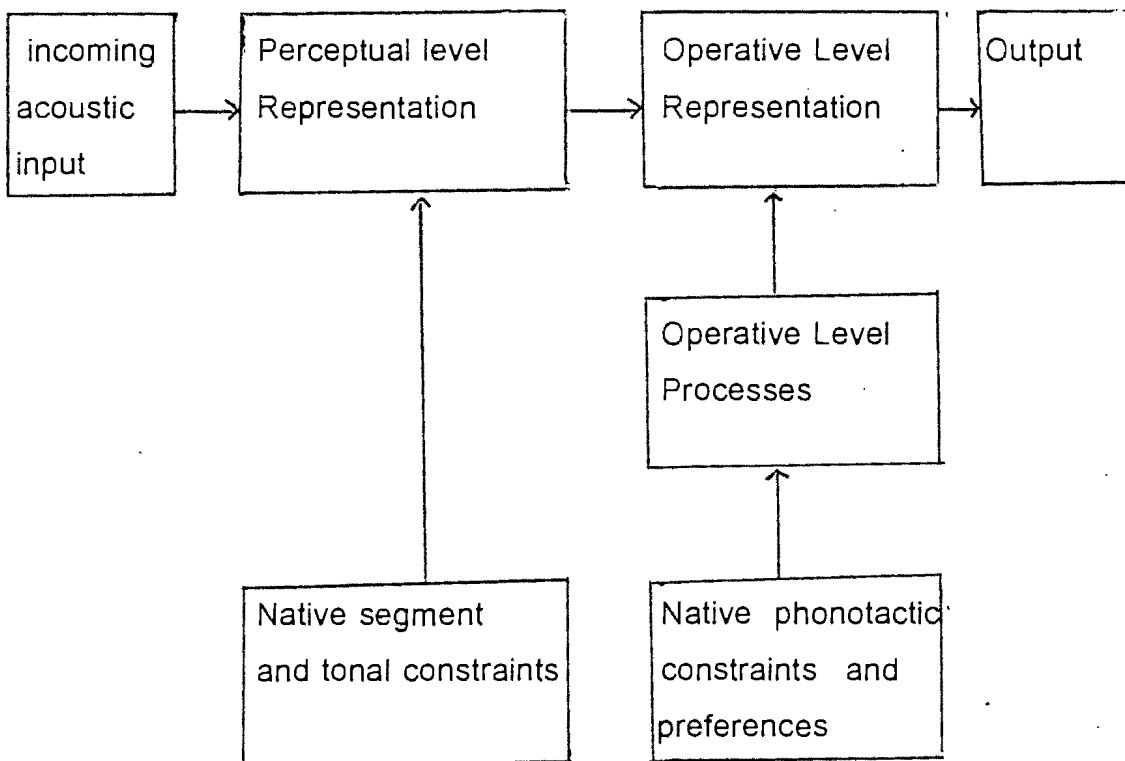
Silverman hypothesises that there are certain constraints at this level which influence the perception of the incoming forms by the native speaker. Thus he regards the perception of phonetic material as language-set dependent, and as such speakers will employ their language set when incorporating foreign words into the native system. It is the native language system which determines how incoming forms are perceived. The first constraint which he identifies at this level is the constraint against foreign segments whose matrix does not exist in the recipient language. In such a case the speaker of the native language will represent and reproduce the native segment which most closely approximates the input in terms of articulatory and /or acoustic properties. This constraint is referred to as the **native segment inventory constraint**. Another constraint which operates at this level is the **tonal constraint**.

Other adjustments such as the ones that occur on the syllable take place in the **Operational level**. It is at this level that perceived segments may undergo true phonological operations triggered by **native phonotactic constraints** (Silverman 1992:293). These constraints account for the substitution of segments which are perfectly acceptable to the phonemic inventory of the native language. The changes in the syllable structure of adopted words may be caused by the **native syllable structure constraints** and others. Some of these constraints may be illustrated by the following example involving the Venda adoptive **gireme** <

**Eng.gram :**

- (i) The native segment inventory constraint which replaced the English vowel æ with the native vowel [ɛ].
- (ii) The native syllable structure constraint resulted in the insertion of the vowel [ i ] between the cluster gr-.  
This constraint also avoids the occurrence of a consonant in a word final position, hence the vowel [ɛ] is added to the final consonant m.
- (iii) The tonal constraint requires the adopted word to conform to the language tonal system, i.e. girémé.

More on these constraints will be discussed again in the sections that follow. The levels and constraints discussed above can be represented in diagram form as follows (extracted from Silverman 1992:293):



For our study of adoptives it will be interesting to see how the constraints described above operate in the different African languages of Southern Africa in modifying adoptives from the same source language, for example, English and Afrikaans. As



was indicated in Chapter 2, African languages have adopted a considerable amount of words from these languages. It is therefore obvious that some of the words from these source languages have been adopted in all of the African languages spoken in the region.

## **S u m m a r y**

In the foregoing discussion different explanations of the phonological modification of adopted words in a language were scrutinized. As indicated, various phonological theories have been employed in one way or another to explain this complex process of phonological adaptation of foreign sounds to a language. Firstly, we discussed the **phonetic approximation theory**. This theory seems to be suitable to account for the substitution of foreign sounds which do not occur in the native language sound inventory. Such foreign sounds are replaced by native sounds which, phonetically are very close to them. However, some foreign sounds which have equivalents in the recipient language may be replaced by different sounds.

The phonemic approximation theory, as has already been indicated, seeks explanations in **allophonic variations**. This explanation was found to be lacking in that it cannot account for the phonological processes which are responsible for the new resultant sounds in the native language. It was noted that this theory was too simplistic in trying to explain the substitution of foreign sounds by allophonic variation alone.

Another noteworthy contribution to the problem of the phonological adaptation of foreign words comes from **Generative grammar**. The Generative approach attempted to account for the **phonological processes** and **rules** which are responsible for the adaptation of foreign sound segments to a language. According to this approach foreign sounds are perceived in their underlying form. The underlying forms are then transformed by means of phonological rules to systematic phonetic forms in the receiving language. The problem with this

approach lies in its abstractness in that some systematic surface forms seem to be so different from the underlying forms from which they are said to have been derived. In this approach a rule becomes an overpowerful tool which can be used to transform any underlying form to the systematic phonetic form. The danger of this approach to the study of the phonological adaptation of adopted words is that segments which have been adopted from the source language may not be accurately identified since a linguist can posit any segment as an underlying form provided there are enough rules to justify its derivation. To constrain abstractness in the generative approach, some phonologists like Stampe came up with a new theory called Natural phonology. One good thing about this theory is its emphasis on the **natural processes** which are a result of certain constraints on the part of the speaker. However, the failure of this theory to provide a clear distinction between rules and processes resulted in the exclusion of some morphophonological processes which play a very important role in the phonological modification of adoptives in a language.

Another explanation which was discussed is the autosegmental approach. The advantage of this kind of approach lies in its representation. Certain phonological changes which occur when foreign words are adopted into the native language can be vividly described and illustrated. This approach can usefully account for the adjustments of foreign words to the syllable structure of a language. This approach may also be used in the study of tonal adaptation to the adopted words.

The final approach which was discussed is the **recipient language constraints approach**. This approach has been advocated by linguists like Holden (1976), Steinbergs (1984; 1985) and Silverman (1992). They regard the phonological modifications to the adopted words as being due mainly to certain constraints in the recipient language. Holden has indicated that these constraints have different strengths. It is these constraints which prevent or allow the occurrence of certain foreign sounds or sounds sequences in the adopting language. These various constraints viz. the native segment inventory constraint, the native phonotactic constraint, the native syllable structure constraint and the tonal constraint, which

operate in the phonological adaptation of foreign words in Venda, will be considered in our study of sound substitution, to be discussed in the following section.

### 3.3.2 Sound substitution

When words are adopted from one language to another certain sounds may be substituted by others. There are various factors which lead to the substitution of sound segments in adopted words. Firstly, substitution occurs because of the lack of the equivalent sound segments in the recipient language. The sounds and forms which are incompatible with the sound segments of the adopting language are replaced by native ones. This type of substitution seems to be triggered by the **native segment inventory constraint**. In terms of this constraint foreign sounds which do not occur in the recipient language sound inventory are barred from occurring and are therefore substituted by native ones. However, the main problem with this kind of substitution is "what principle does a borrowing language follow in order to replace a source language sound which the borrowing language lacks" (Steinbergs 1984:118)?

The second type of substitution, and perhaps the most complicated, is the one which affects sounds that are perfectly acceptable to the sound inventory of the recipient language yet are substituted by others. This kind of substitution raises a number of questions. In the first place it is difficult to understand why foreign sounds which are part of the recipient language's sound inventory are replaced by different sounds. The second question relates to the problem of explaining the factors which determine the choice of the substituting sounds. An attempt will be made here to describe the factors which lead to substitution and those that determine the choice of the substituting sounds. In discussing sound substitution we shall first consider vowels and then consonants.

### 3.3.2.1 Vowel substitution

Venda has only five basic vowels. Some of the languages from which Venda has adopted words have seven or more basic vowels. In this section we shall only consider the vowels from English and Afrikaans. Our choice of these languages is motivated by the fact that most Venda adoptives have their origins in these two languages. Moreover, these languages have a wide variety of vowels. Some of the vowels found in these languages are not found in the Venda vowel inventory. The substitution of these vowels (i.e vowels which are not found in Venda) will be the main concern of this study. Substitution occurs with both simple vowels and diphthongs. We shall begin by looking at the substitution of simple vowels.

#### (a) Simple vowels

An attempt will be made in this section to discuss and illustrate the substitution of the various vowel sounds in Venda adoptives. The focus here, as has already been mentioned, will be on the substitution of English and Afrikaans vowels which have no equivalents in Venda. Vowels from these languages which have replicas in Venda and are therefore reproduced without any modification, will be ignored in this study since their realisation is redundant. Before discussing the substitution of the various vowels we shall look at the English<sup>1</sup> and Afrikaans vowel inventories.

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1. *The English examples that will be used in this study will be based on the Southern British Standard which is referred to as Received Pronunciation (RP). We chose this British English dialect because (i) the English spoken in South Africa originated from British English, (ii) the RP dialect is widely used and is well documented (Lass 1987 :91 ).*

English has the following simple vowels:

i, ɪ, e (ɛ), ʌ, æ, u, ʊ, ɔ, ʌ, ɒ, ɜ, ə <sup>1</sup>

The Afrikaans simple vowels are as follows:

la, ɔ, æ, e, ə, i, o, u, ε, ø, y / <sup>2</sup>

The substitution of simple vowels will be clearly illustrated in the examples that follow. As mentioned above, we shall use adoptives from English and Afrikaans. The vowels under consideration in the adopted words will appear in bold script.

1. *The English vowel: æ*

The English vowel æ is realised as [ ɛ ] or [ a ] in Venda.

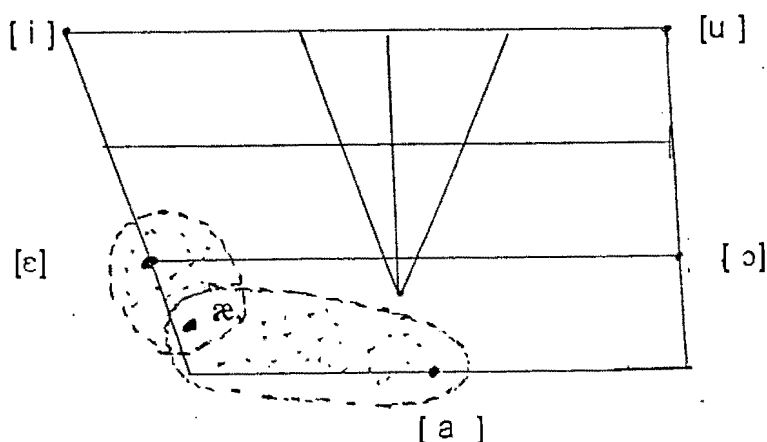
stamp > tshitemmbe

1. *These vowels are based on the Received Pronunciation (RP). The symbols used for these vowels, as well as the examples in which they occur, were taken from various sources, namely the Everyman's English Pronunciation Dictionary (Jones 1956) , the Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary, the Collins Concise Dictionary, Giegerich 1992, Gimson 1970 and Roach 1983. The distinction between short and long vowels is not relevant to this study, therefore this aspect of vowels has been ignored in this study. In some cases the symbols as represented above are listed in these works as phonetic symbols (i.e. between square brackets) and in others as phonemic symbols (i.e. between slashes)*

2. *The Afrikaans vowels have been cited from De Villiers (1970) and 'Uitspraakwoordeboek van Afrikaans' (by Le Roux en Pienaar 1970). In this list of vowels we have ignored the length mark (: ) used in their sources.*

gravel	>	giravhulo
cap	>	khephe
candle	>	khandela
dash	>	deshe
tap	>	thephe
cash	>	kheshe
telegram	>	telegiramu

Because the vowel  $\text{æ}$  does not occur in Venda it is realised as [a] or [ɛ] in Venda adoptives. This substitution is not accidental. The Venda vowels [a] and [ɛ] are the ones which are the closest to the English vowel  $\text{æ}$ . The Venda vowel [ɛ] shares the feature [front] with the English vowel whereas the vowel [a] shares the feature [low] with that of the English vowel. Thus the substitution in this case is made on the basis of phonetic approximation. This can be seen from the position of these vowels in the following vowel chart: <sup>1</sup>




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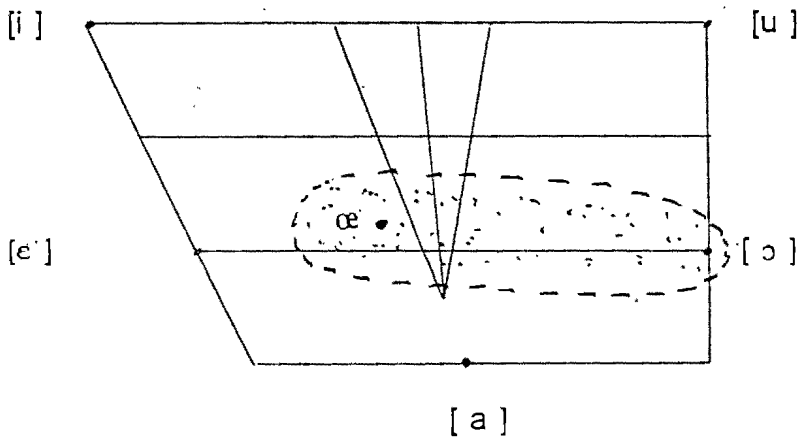
1. The position of the English vowels in this chart and in the subsequent charts are based on Roach (1983).

## 2. The Afrikaans vowel: œ

The vowel [œ] is described by De Villiers (1970:58) as an abnormal midlow vowel i.e. it shares the tongue position of a central vowel [ə] and a high [a]. It is also characterised by a certain measure of roundness of the lips. This vowel is replaced by the vowel [ɔ] in Venda. Let us look at the following examples:

Afr.sukkel	>	Ve.sogola	'suffer'
Afr.skuld	>	Ve.tshikolodo	'debt'
Afr.brug	>	Ve.buroho	'bridge'

Considering the phonetic characteristics of the vowel [œ] given above, it becomes clear that the substitution of this vowel is mainly because of phonetic similarities between the two vowels. Vowel [ɔ] is characterized by lip rounding in its articulation. This roundness of lips agrees with the lip-rounding in the articulation of the Afrikaans sound [œ]. The chart below illustrates the position of these vowels:

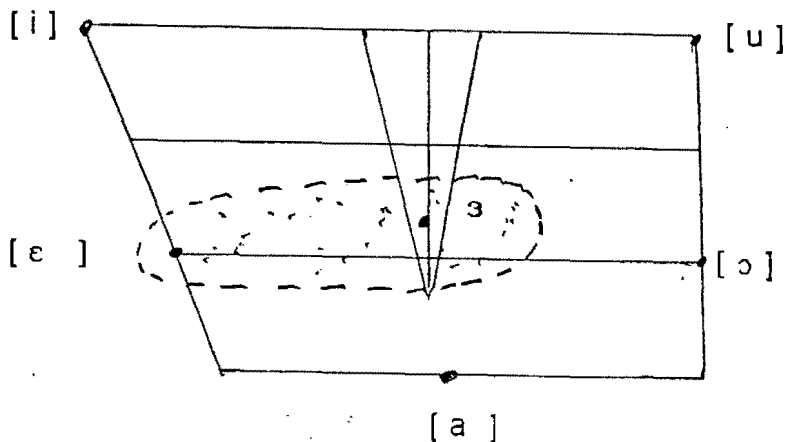


## 3. The English vowel: ɜ

This is a central vowel (i.e. a vowel produced when the central part of the tongue is raised, in this case, to the mid position) which is produced with the lips in neutral position. This vowel is found in the following examples:

Eng.fern	>	Ve.feni
Eng.fence	>	Ve.fence
Eng.term	>	Ve.themo
Eng.germ	>	Ve.dzheme
Eng.jersey	>	Ve.dzhesi
Eng.jerk	>	Ve.dzhege
Eng.firm	>	Ve.feme
Eng.learner	>	Ve.lenasi
(licence)		

The examples given above show that the English vowel **ɜ** is replaced by e [ɛ] in Venda adoptives. This substitution is due to the fact that the two sounds are phonetically close to each other. They both are mid-vowels and are produced without the lip-rounding. The closeness between these two vowels can be seen from the following chart:



#### 4. The English and Afrikaans vowel: ə

This vowel is often referred to as *schwa*. "Schwa is, in terms of its articulation, neither high nor low, neither front nor back. It is a vowel produced with a neutral setting of the articulators and is in this respect a 'minimal' vowel, involving, as it does, no displacement of the articulators from the neutral position" (Giegerich 1992:68). This vowel does not occur in Venda and is realised in Venda as either



[ɛ], [i], [u], [a] or [ɔ]. This can be seen from the following examples:

fashion	>	fesheni
kitchen	>	khishi
station	>	tshiti <sup>ˆ</sup> tshi
location	>	lokhi <sup>ˆ</sup> shi
cupboard	>	khabodo
custard	>	khasita <sup>ˆ</sup> di <sup>ˆ</sup>
gravel	>	giravhulo
father	>	fada <sup>ˆ</sup>
customer	>	khasita <sup>ˆ</sup> ma
culture	>	khalitsha

In the examples above it is interesting to note the various substitutions of the English vowel ə. Its realisation is complex in the sense that it is realised by all five Venda vowels. It is interesting to note that even in the following examples of Afrikaans the vowel ə is realised by different Venda vowels viz. [a], [ɛ], [i], [ɔ] and [u].

Afr.politiek	>	Ve.polotiki	`politics'
Afr.ring	>	Ve.rinngi	`ring'
Afr.ink	>	Ve.ennge	`ink'
Afr.winkel	>	Ve.vhengele	`shop'
Afr.tafel	>	Ve.ta <sup>ˆ</sup> fula	`table'
Afr.kamer	>	Ve.kamara	`room'
Afr.betaal	>	Ve.badela	`pay'

The substitution of the vowel ə in both English and Afrikaans, as shown in the examples above, is an interesting one. The question here is why is this vowel realised by all the Venda vowels? To answer this question, the phonetic qualities of this vowel and its position in the vowel chart need to be taken into consideration.

As mentioned above, this vowel is a neutral vowel, therefore its substitution by all the Venda vowels may be explained with reference to phonetic approximation. The vowel ə occupies the most central position in the vowel chart. Because of its central position and its neutrality it can share phonetic characteristics with any peripheral vowel in Venda. Nevertheless this account still does not explain what determines the realisation of a specific vowel phoneme instead of another. One way of explaining this problem is to look at the influence of other vowels within the word in which this sound occurs. The following examples may throw some light in this regard:

khishi	< Eng.kitchen
tshititshi	< Eng.station
kamara	< Afr.kamer
fada	< Eng.father

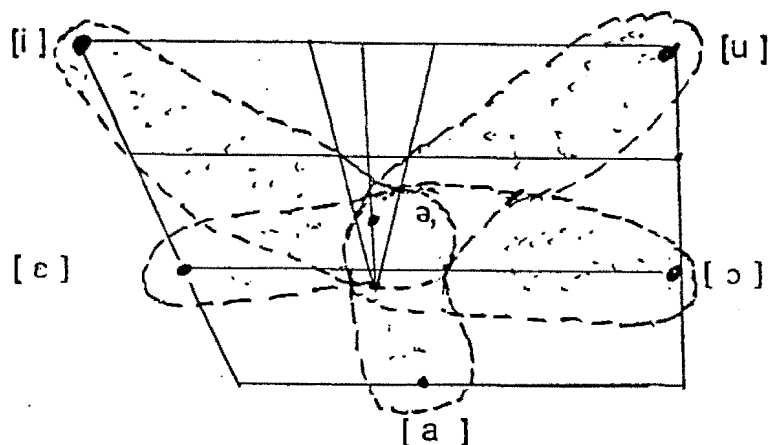
The replacement of the vowel ə by vowels [i] and [a] in the these examples seems to be due to assimilation (i.e the schwa vowel has assimilated to the vowels of the preceding syllables). However, the following examples seem to counter this argument:

khabodo	< Eng.cupboard
giravhulo	< Eng.gravel
tafula	< Afr.tafel

From these examples it appears that the preceding consonant is a factor rather than the vowel. The sounds [b, β, f] seem to have influenced the central vowel ə to be realised as a rounded back vowel in Venda. The common factor here is the bilabial characteristic in

both the consonant and the vowel. Both vowel [ɔ] and [u] are [+round] and like their preceding consonants, involve the lips in their production.<sup>1</sup>

The central position which the schwa vowel ə occupies could be seen from the following chart:



#### 5. The English vowel: ʌ

This vowel is described by Giegerich (1992:73) as being unrounded and slightly more back than front. It is fully low in English dialects like RP. This vowel is replaced by [a] in Venda. Consider the following examples:

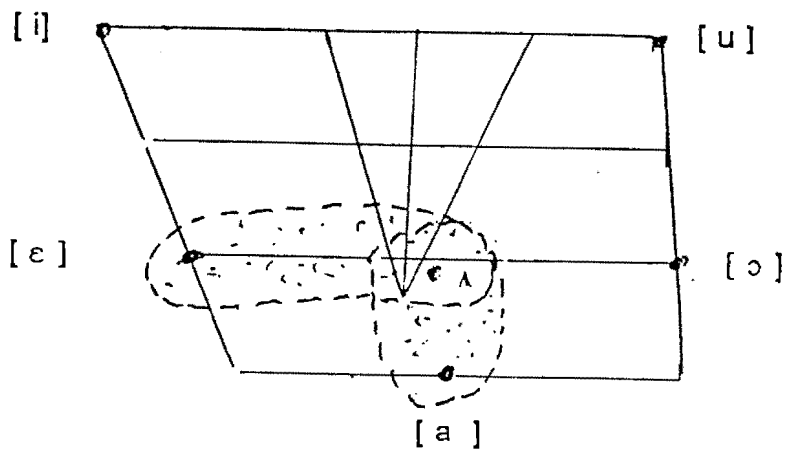
Eng.custard	>	Ve.khasitadi
Eng.pick-up	>	Ve.phikhaphu
Eng.bus	>	Ve.basi

---

1. The influence of bilabial consonants on the realisation of back vowels has also been noted in other studies on other African languages (cf. Van Warmelo 1929 (Sotho), Kruger 1965 (N.Sotho), Hermanson 1991 (Zulu), Nkabinde 1968 (Zulu), Khumalo 1987 (Zulu). According to them bilabial consonants or consonants with bilabial characteristics may influence the realisation of a high back rounded vowel.

Eng.cupboard	>	Ve.khabodo
Eng.customer	>	Ve.khasitama
Eng.brush	>	Ve.bulatsho
Eng.republic	>	Ve.riphabuliki
Eng.judge	>	Ve.dzhadzhi
Eng.jumper cable	>	Ve.dzhampasi
Eng.jumble sale	>	Ve.dzhambulusele

The realisation of the English vowel  $\Lambda$  as [a] in the examples above seems to be due to phonetic approximation. Even though the English vowel is produced at a slightly higher level, both are low vowels. In the articulation of both vowels there is no rounding of lips. Therefore, the choice of the vowel [a] as a substitute for the English vowel  $\Lambda$  seems to be determined by phonetic approximation. The substitution of the vowel  $\Lambda$  is illustrated in the following chart:



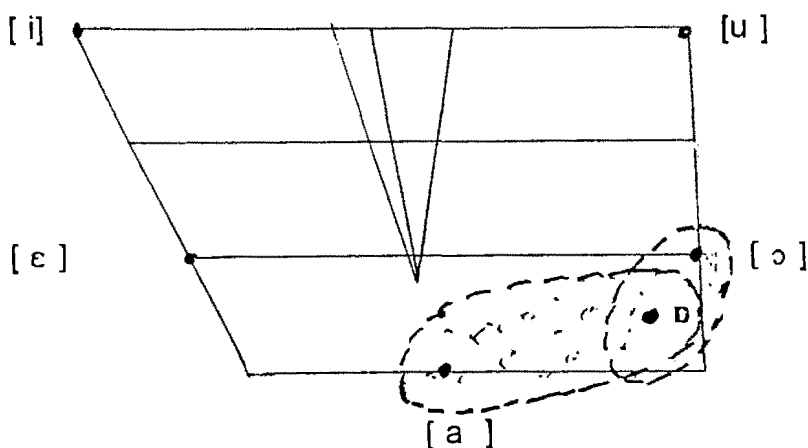
#### 6. The English vowel : ɒ

The English vowel  $\mathfrak{D}$  becomes [ɔ] or [a]. These two Venda vowels are the closest to this English vowel. The English vowel  $\mathfrak{D}$  shares the feature [back] with the Venda vowel [ɔ], and as a back vowel it is articulated with the rounding of lips,

though to a lesser degree than vowel [ɔ]. The two vowels also share the feature [back] i.e they are both back vowels. The fact that the English vowel **ɒ** has much in common with the Venda vowel [ɔ] shows that substitution is made here on the basis of phonetic approximation. The same can be said of the the substitution of the English vowel by the Venda vowel [a]. Although the two vowels differ with regard to the part of the tongue that is used in their articulation, and are produced at more or less the same level in the mouth, they are in fact both low vowels. Therefore substitution is also made here on the basis of phonetic approximation.

Eng.polish	>	Ve.pholishi
Eng.policy	>	Ve.pholisi
Eng.pop	>	Ve.phophu (music).
Eng.posh	>	Ve.phoshi
Eng.porridge	>	Ve.phalishi
Eng.watch	>	Ve.watshi

In the examples above, the English vowel **ɒ** is either replaced by the vowel [ɔ] or [a] as shown in the last two examples. It is not clear from these examples as to what determines the choice of either vowel. The word **phalishi** is more of a colloquial word since there is a well-established word for porridge which is **vhuswa**. Sometimes the word **parenzha** is used which is also an adopted word from the English word "porridge". Consider the following chart for the various substitutions:

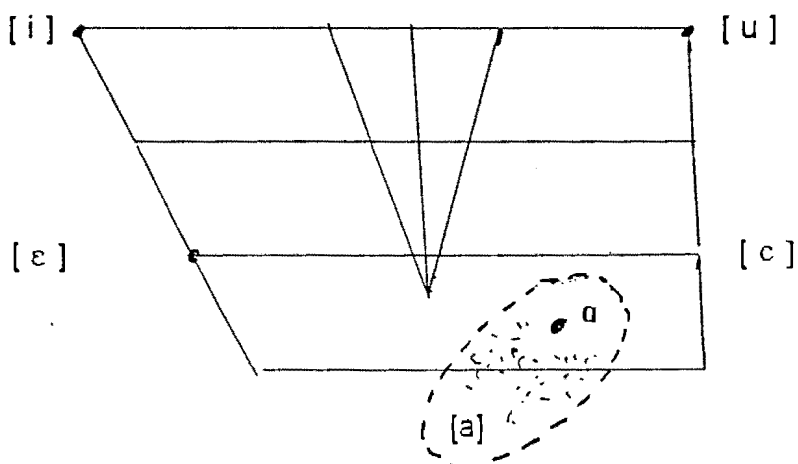


### 7. The English vowel: $\alpha$

This vowel is realised as [a] in Venda. This realization is due to phonetic approximation. Both are low vowels. Although the English vowel is produced with the back of the tongue, it is very close to the central position where the Venda vowel is produced. This realization can be seen from the following example:

Eng. father	>	Ve.fada "Roman Catholic priest"
Eng. party	>	Ve.phathi
Eng. park	>	Ve.phakha
Eng. parliament	>	Ve.phalamennde
Eng. passport	>	Ve.phasiphotho

In all the examples above the English vowel  $\alpha$  is replaced by vowel [a] in Venda:  
The phonetic relationship between the two vowels is illustrated in the chart below:



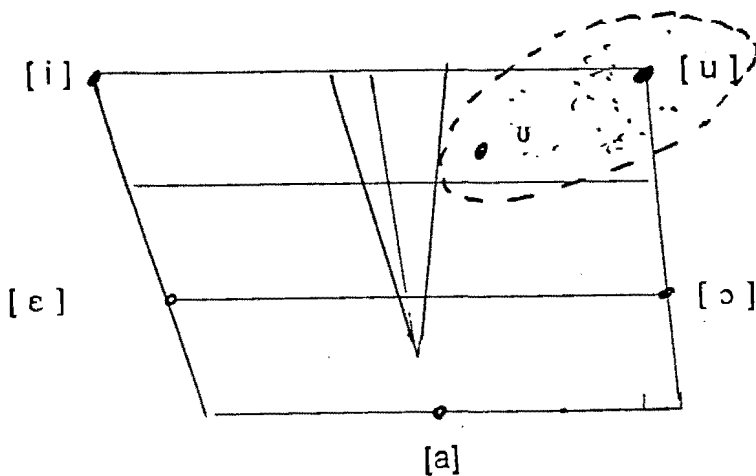
### 8. The English vowel : u

This high vowel is replaced by [u] in Venda:

Eng.sugar	>	Ve. tshugela
-----------	---	--------------

Eng.goods (train)	> Ve. gutsu
Eng.butcher	> Ve. butshara
Eng.pudding	> Ve.phudini
Eng.push	> Ve.-phusha
Eng.pull	> Ve.-phula

In all the examples above the English vowel *ʊ* is replaced by [u]. This substitution may be explained with reference to phonetic similarities between the two vowels. Both these vowels are produced with the back part of the tongue and they also share the features [high] and [round], though to different degrees. The back position of these vowels and their height in the mouth is illustrated in the following chart:



### 9. The Afrikaans vowel: [y:]

The vowel [y] is described by De Villiers (1970:58) as follows:

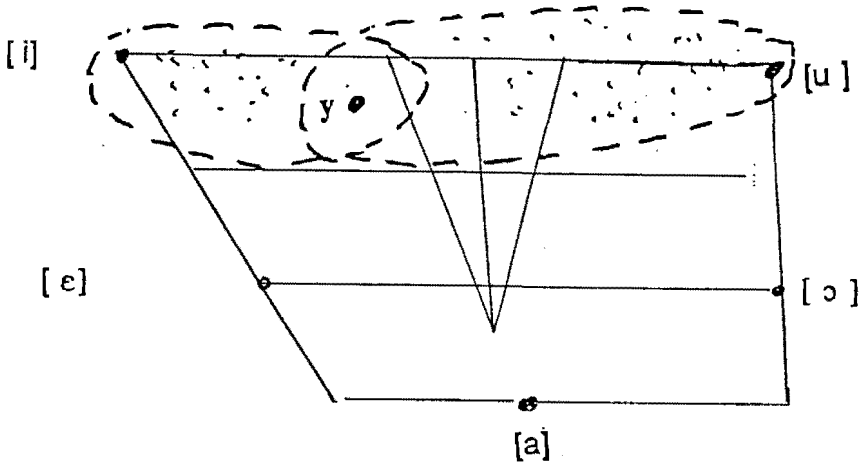
"Die [y] van bv.minuut is 'n ABNORMALE HOË VOOR VOKAAL, d.w.s. dit het die tongstand van [i] met gewoonlik effens geronde lippe soos by [u]".

In the light of the above quote, it is not surprising that the Afrikaans vowel is replaced by [i] or [u] in Venda:

Afr.duur > Ve.dura "expensive"

Afr.suur	> Ve.swiri	"orange"
Afr.huur	> Ve.hira	"hire"
Afr.muur	> Ve.miri	"wall"
Afr.minuut	> Ve.miniti	"minute"

The Afrikaans vowel [y] is replaced by [i] in all the examples except in the first one. In the first example, the vowel [y] is replaced by the Venda vowel [u]. These replacements may be explained by looking at the phonetic characteristics of these two vowels. The two vowels are produced at a high level in the mouth. They are both front vowels even though their degree of frontness is not the same. This can be seen from the following chart:



From this chart we can see the proximity between the Afrikaans vowel [y] and the Venda [i]. The replacement of vowel [y] by [u] may also be explained by the fact that both are high vowels and that vowel [y] is produced with some form of lip rounding. However, with regard to the choice of the vowel [u] in the first example and not in others, there appear to be no clear explanation. The occurrence of this vowel may therefore be regarded as an exception.

### (b) Diphthongs.

Diphthongs were briefly discussed in section 3.2.1.2. Our main concern in this section is to look at the phonological changes which foreign words containing



diphthongs undergo when they are adopted into Venda. The main question here is whether the diphthongs from foreign languages such as English will be accepted as they are into Venda or whether they will be subjected to some changes. As was mentioned, in the previous section, that diphthongs do not seem to be a natural feature of the African languages. Let's begin by looking at the sets of diphthongs which are found in English and Afrikaans:

*English Diphthongs:*    ai, au, ɔi, əi, eə (eɜ), uə, əu, ei    1

*Afrikaans Diphthongs:*    a:i, o:i, u:i, eu, əi, œy, œu    2

Before we look at substitution, a few remarks will be made on the nature of the diphthong. In defining the diphthong it was indicated that a diphthong is a two-part vowel sound and that these sounds should be pronounced as a single syllable. The phonetic symbols used for each diphthong represent the beginning and the end of the vowel glide. According to Crystal (1992:105)

"one element in the diphthong is always more sonorous than the other, if this is the first element the diphthong is said to be 'falling' or 'descending', if the second, it is 'rising' or 'ascending'".

---

1. These vowels are based on the Received Pronunciation (RP). The symbols used for these vowels and the examples of words in which they occur were taken from various sources, namely, the Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary; the Collins Concise Dictionary, Giegerich (1992), Gimson (1970) and Roach (1983).

2. The Afrikaans vowels have been cited from De Villiers (1970) and Uitspraak-woordeboek van Afrikaans (Le Roux en Pienaar 1976).

He further describes sonority as

"the overall loudness of a sound, relative to others of the same pitch, stress and duration. Sounds are said to have an inherent sonority, which accounts for the impression of a sound carrying further" (1992:320 )

The difference in sonority, i.e. in pitch, stress and duration, we hope, will in one way or another influence the substitution of diphthongs in adopted words in Venda. Stress may determine the realisation of certain vowels in stressed or unstressed syllables (Roach 1983:63). There are certain vowels, the 'schwa' vowel, for example, which according to Roach (1983:63) does not occur in stressed syllables. The vowels of a diphthong may also differ in terms of the duration they take in their pronunciation. The first vowels of diphthongs usually have a longer duration than the second ones. Their long duration may influence their perception, especially by a foreign speaker of the language. These different characteristics will be taken into consideration in our study of the substitution of the various diphthongs in Venda.

### 1. *The English diphthong* :[ai]

The following examples show how the English diphthong ai is adapted to Venda:

Eng.bicycle	>	Ve.baisigira
Eng.dice	>	Ve.daizi
Eng.ice-cream	>	Ve.aisikirimu
Eng.tie	>	Ve.thai / thayi

From the examples given above the English diphthong ai is realised with the sequence of vowels [a+i] in Venda, where, the [a] vowel in Venda is a central vowel and the English [ i ] is the same as that of Venda.

Consider now the following Venda examples that have been adopted from

Afrikaans words that contain the diphthong [a:i] (the colon after [a] indicates length):

Afr.slaai	>	Ve.tshil <sup>^</sup> ai	`slice'
Afr.laai	>	Ve.l <sup>^</sup> aisa	`load'
Afr.ba:ici	>	Ve.badzhi	`jacket'
Afr.fa:ici	>	Ve.fagi	`big drum'
Afr.onderba:ici	>	Ve.tshinorovhagi	`waist coat'

Note that in the first two examples, the Afrikaans diphthong is realised in Venda by the same sequence of vowels as was the case with the English examples, but in the last three examples the diphthong has been replaced by the single vowel [a]. In these latter cases the vowel [i] is elided. The elision of the vowel [i] is not unexpected here since it is preceded by a long vowel [a:] which appears to be more stressed. This vowel becomes even more sonorous by the fact that it is the first element of the diphthong. As already indicated, the sonority of the first vowel of a diphthong causes the second vowel to be less audible.

## 2. The Afrikaans diphthong: [œy]

The Afrikaans diphthong [œy] presents a very interesting case. This diphthong is replaced by a single vowel in Venda. Consider the following examples:

Afr.suiker	>	Ve.swigiri	`sugar'
Afr.kruiwa	>	Ve.girivhane	`wheelbarrow'
Afr.druiwe	>	Ve.n <sup>^</sup> dirivhe	`grapes'

From these examples it appears the first vowel of the diphthong has been elided. The Afrikaans vowel [y] is then realised as [i]. These two sounds are phonetically close to each other (cf. vowel chart and discussion on p.166 of this study). The elision of vowel [œ] may be attributed to the high palatal tongue position of the vowel [y]. This makes it to be more sonorous than its counterpart. Because of its

high sonority it might have become more audible to the non-speakers of the language than its counterpart.

### 3. *The English diphthong: [ei]*

The English diphthong [ei] is realised as [ei] in Venda.

Eng.tape	> Ve.theiphi / theyiphi
Eng.bail	> Ve.beili / beyili
Eng.cane	> Ve.kheini /kheyini

In these examples the diphthong has been replaced by a sequence of the vowels [ɛ] and [i]. Sometimes a semi-vowel is inserted between the vowel sequences. The question here is whether the vowel sequences in the above examples constitute diphthongs. Some linguists feel that these sequences should be regarded as mere sequences rather than diphthongs. This issue will be taken up later in this chapter.

In some instances the English diphthong [ei] may be replaced by a single vowel [ɛ] in Venda:

Eng.gate	> Ve.gethe
Eng.jail	> Ve.dzhele
Eng.paper	> Ve.phepha
Eng.cable	> Ve.khevhele
Eng.cake	> Ve.khekhe

The question that the two sets of examples raises is why in the first set of examples the diphthong ei was replaced by a sequence of vowels [ɛ] + [i] and not by a single vowel, as in the second set of examples. It is interesting to note that in all the examples the first vowel of the diphthong is retained. The realisation of the vowel [i] in the first set of examples may be explained by the influenced of the insertion of the final vowel [i] which occurs in all the examples. It appears the final

vowel [ɪ] intensifies the sonority of the vowel [i] which is in the weaker diphthong position. In the second set of examples, there is no insertion of a final vowel, and so the vowel [i] of the diphthong is elided and the diphthong is replaced by a single vowel [e]. The choice of this vowel seems to have been influenced by several factors. In the first place, it is the same vowel [e] which occurs at the beginning of the diphthong. As such it is more sonorous than its counterpart since the first sound of the diphthong is usually produced with more intensity than that of the second one. Secondly, as the first segment of a diphthong, this vowel has a longer duration than the second one. This again makes it more audible than the second one.

#### 4. The diphthong: [əi]

The Afrikaans diphthong [əi] is replaced by the single vowel [i] or [ɛ̃] in Venda:

Afr.tapyt	>	Ve.tap <u>ɪ</u> ta	`mat'
Afr.spyker	>	Ve.tshibigiri	`nail'
Afr.pyp	>	Ve.bibi	`smoking pipe'
Afr.kaptein	>	Ve.kap <u>ɪ</u> teni	`captain'
Afr.trein	>	Ve.th <u>ɪ</u> reni	`train'

The question here is what determines the choice of these two vowels in the examples given above. The replacement of the diphthong by [i] (which represent the second part of the diphthong) seems to contradict what we stated earlier on, namely, that the first sound of a diphthong is more sonorous and is therefore likely to dominate the second one. In this case it is interesting to note that the vowel which occurs at the beginning of the diphthong is the schwa vowel [ə]. The dominance of [i] in the examples above may be explained in the light of the nature of the schwa vowel [ə]. This vowel normally occurs in unstressed positions (Giegerich 1992:73). According to him, this vowel may be entirely dropped in certain words because it is not stressed when pronounced. Because of its low sonority value, its lack of stress and short duration, this vowel does not seem to be

easily perceived by non-speakers of the language, hence it is dropped in some diphthongs. In view of the phonetic characteristics of the schwa vowel it is not surprising that this vowel has been dropped in favour of the vowel [ɪ]. Nevertheless, the last two examples seem to counter the explanation given above. In these last two examples the schwa vowel has been replaced by [ɛ]. As has already been indicated, the replacement of [ ə ] by the vowel [ɛ] is mainly due to phonetic approximation. The vowel [i] (which represents the second part of the diphthong) is elided in these last two examples. The deletion of this vowel may be explained by the fact that this vowel occupies a weak position in the diphthong. It appears that the substitution of the schwa vowel occurred before the deletion of the vowel [ɪ].

#### 5. The English diphthong: [oi]

The English diphthong is realised as [oi] in Venda.

Eng.join > Ve.dzhoini

Eng.toy > Ve.thoi

In these examples the English diphthong is replaced by the sequence [o+i] in Venda. The vowels which constitute the English diphthong have been reproduced by the same Venda vowel sequence. This substitution has been motivated by similarity of phonetic features.

#### 6. The English diphthong: [eə]

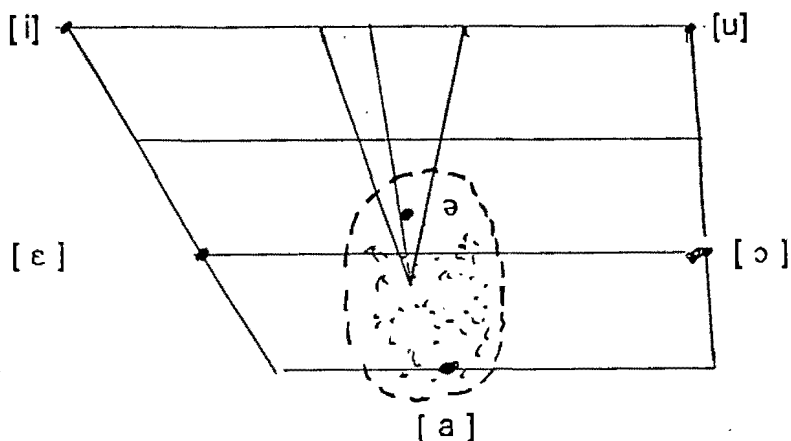
The English diphthong eə is realised as [ɛa / ɛya] in Venda.

Eng.square > Ve.tshikwea/ tshikweya

Eng.underwear > Ve.andawea/ andaweya

The first element of the English diphthong has been replaced by the vowel [ɛ] and

the schwa vowel [ə] replaced by [a]. As was mentioned previously, the schwa vowel can be replaced by any of the five vowels in Venda. The realisation of the vowel [a] here also seems to be due to the proximity which this vowel shares with the [ə]. Consider the following vowel chart:



### 7. The English diphthong: əʊ

The English diphthong is replaced by both simple vowels and diphthongs. Consider the following examples:

Eng. overall	> Ve. ovarolo
Eng. overtime	> Ve. ovathaimi
Eng. oversize	> Ve. ovasaizi
Eng. protein	> Ve. phurotheini
Eng. prose	> Ve. phurosa
Eng. notes	> Ve. notsi
Eng. notice	> Ve. nothisi
Eng. telephone	> Ve. thelefoni
Eng. phone	> Ve. founi
Eng. phoneme	> Ve. founimi

The English diphthong has been replaced by the vowel [ɔ] in all the examples with the exception of the last two examples. The substitution of this diphthong is very

interesting in the sense that (i) the diphthong is replaced by a single vowel, and (ii) this vowel is not either of the two vowels in the diphthong. What seems to have happened here is some form of coalescence between the two vowels. The [ʊ] vowel which perhaps is in a stronger position than the schwa vowel [ə], seems to have a somewhat dominant role in the choice of the vowel [ɔ] in Venda and is similar to the English one in terms of its roundness and backness.

#### 8. The English diphthong: [aʊ]

The English diphthong is realised in Venda as follows:

Eng.blouse	> Ve.bulausu
Eng.pound	> Ve.paundu
Eng.crown	> Ve.khirauni
Eng.account	> Ve.akhauthu
Eng.counter	> Ve.khauthara
Eng.discount	> Ve.disikhauthu
Eng.towel	> Ve.thaula
Eng.half-a-crown	> Ve.hafukoroni

In all the examples, except the last one, the diphthong **aʊ** has been replaced by the sequence **[a+u]** in Venda. The Venda vowels in this sequence are phonetically very close to those of the English diphthong. The English vowel **a**, though not a central vowel, shares phonetic features such as [low] with the Venda **[a]**, while the vowel [ʊ] of the English diphthong shares the phonetic feature [round] with its Venda counterpart. Therefore adaptation has been effected on the basis of phonetic approximation. The replacement of the diphthong **aʊ** by the vowel [ɔ] in some Venda adoptives is difficult to explain. It appears that this word has been adopted into Venda via Afrikaans. In Afrikaans the word for 'half-a-crown' is 'halfkroon' (pronounced as **half'kro:n**). The pronunciation of the Afrikaans word seems to be closer to Venda than the English one. The fact that the word 'half-a-crown' entered the language via Afrikaans may be used as a possible explanation for the



realisation of the vowel [ɔ] in the adoptive *hafukoroni*.

**(c) General remarks on the substitution of vowels in Venda**

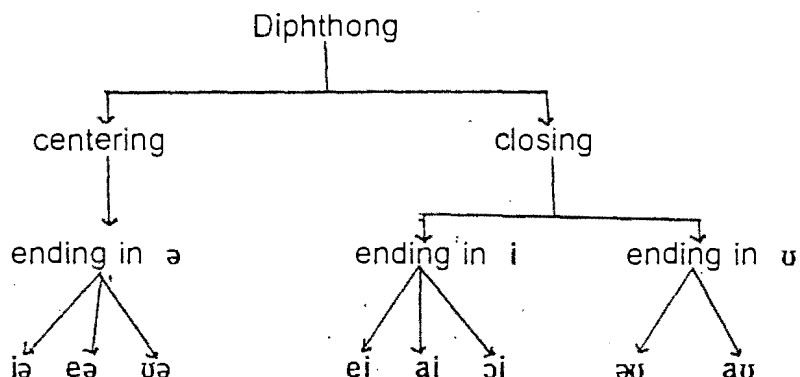
Venda has adopted a considerable number of words from English and Afrikaans. Some of the adoptives from these languages contain vowels which are not found in the Venda vowel inventory. As was shown in the previous discussion, these vowels are replaced by vowels that are found in the language. The replacement of these foreign vowels by native ones, seems to be triggered by the **native segment inventory constraint**. Studies of other languages (cf. Kaye and Nykiel 1972; Holden 1976; Yavas 1982; Steinbergs 1984; Silverman 1992) have identified different constraints which operate in different languages. In Venda, the **native segment inventory constraint** prevents the occurrence of any vowel which does not belong to the language sound inventory. Various Venda vowels have therefore been used to replace the foreign vowels. These replacements do not, however, occur in an ad hoc manner. The substitution in these cases appears to be mainly due to phonetic approximation. In other words, foreign vowels are replaced by vowels which are closest to them in the adopting language. In some cases, the choice of the substituting vowel is influenced by assimilation. The vowel which replaces a foreign vowel assimilates to the preceding native vowel or to the succeeding one. The substitution of the different simple vowels from English and Afrikaans can be summarised as follows:

English vowels:

- æ > [ɛ] [a]
- ə > [a], [ɛ], [i], [ɔ], [u]
- ʌ > [a], [ɛ]
- ɒ > [ɔ], [a]
- ɑ > [a]
- ɜ > [ɛ]

Afrikaans vowels:    ə > [ a ], [ ɛ ], [ i ], [ ɔ ], [ u ]  
                           y > [ i ], [ u ]  
                           æ > [ ɔ ] .

In this section we also discussed the substitution of diphthongs from English and Afrikaans. The English diphthongs can be summarised as follows:



(Loach 1983:19)

The occurrence of diphthongs in African languages such as Venda, as has already been mentioned, is still a matter of controversy. Diphthongs from English and Afrikaans are adjusted in various ways in Venda. In some instances, as was shown above, diphthongs are replaced by single vowels. The problem that arises concerns the choice of the substituting vowel. From the analysis of the various diphthongs different explanations were given. In some cases the first vowel of the diphthong is chosen. If this vowel does not occur in Venda, it is replaced by another vowel which then becomes a substitute for the diphthong. The choice of the substituting vowel seems to be determined mainly by phonetic similarity, i.e. a foreign vowel is replaced by one which is phonetically close to it. Let's take the English diphthong *cake* ('keik) for example. This word is adopted as *khekhe* [khekhe] in Venda. The diphthong in this word has been replaced by the single vowel [ɛ]. The choice of this vowel may be explained by factors like stress and duration. The stress in this syllable falls mainly on this first vowel and the fact that it has a longer duration in its pronunciation than the second one might have influenced its perception by the

speakers of the adopting language. Sometimes the vowel which replaces the diphthong is the result of coalescence between the two elements of the diphthong. This can be seen in the adoptive **ovarolo** < Eng. overall /əʊvəro:l/. The vowels have influenced each other, resulting in the vowel [ɔ] in Venda.

In certain instances diphthongs are realised as vowel sequences in Venda. In these sequences vowels which do not occur in Venda are replaced by others closest to them. The question here is whether or not such sequences constitute diphthongs. The issue of the occurrence or non-occurrence of diphthongs in Venda has been discussed, albeit briefly, at the beginning of this chapter. There it was indicated that diphthongs do not seem to be a common feature of Venda despite their alleged occurrence in fast speech of some word forms. This question is raised here once more because of the many adopted words from English and Afrikaans which incorporate diphthongs. Should this be regarded as the 'importation' of new foreign sounds into the language? There are two views with regard to these sounds. The first view rejects the notion that diphthongs occur in African languages. According to this view, the English diphthong /aɪ/ would merely be regarded as a sequence of separate vowels, i.e. /a+i/ rather than a diphthong (cf. Kruger 1965; Nkabinde 1968; Batibo 1993). The other view maintains that such sequences of vowels constitute diphthongs since their articulation is exactly the same as that of the diphthongs in the source language. Although this view may be applicable to some languages, it does not seem to apply to Venda for several reasons. Vowels in Venda are tone bearing units. Some vowel sequences have different tones, e.g. **thai** (HL), **thoi** (HL). The vowel sequences in these examples are regarded as separate syllables rather than diphthongs. However, in cases where the vowels of a diphthong have the same tones, this principle doesn't apply.

There is also a tendency in Venda to insert a glide between the vowel sequences e.g. **tshikweya**, **andaweya**, **thawula**, **phurotheyini**, etc. The nature of the glide depends on the nature of the vowels involved. The insertion of a glide between the vowel sequence may, in a way, demonstrate the language constraint against the

occurrence of diphthongs in Venda. Rising or falling tone may occur in some of the vowel-glide sequences.

### 3.3.2.2 Consonant substitution

As already mentioned, substitution in Venda also occurs with consonants. Here we shall focus mainly on the consonant sounds from English and Afrikaans<sup>1</sup> to illustrate the type of consonant adjustment effected on Venda adoptives. However, a few examples will also be taken from other African languages such as Nguni. Some of the consonant sounds from these languages also occur in the Venda sound inventory, others do not. Substitution seems to occur in both the consonants which have no replicas in Venda and also those which have replicas in the language. We shall begin by looking at the kind of substitution which occurs when equivalent sounds do not occur in the adopting language

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*1. In our examples of the substitution of the different sounds we shall use various symbols to represent English and Afrikaans consonants. These symbols have been cited from various sources, namely, Lass (1987), Giegerich (1992), the Oxford Dictionary and the Collins dictionary). The Afrikaans symbols have been cited from De Villiers (1970) and Uitspraak-woordeboek van Afrikaans by Le Roux & Pienaar (1976). In some cases the examples given in English and Afrikaans have been represented phonemically in the above sources. In other cases they have been represented phonetically. Since this study does not purport to represent a detailed analysis of the phonetic and/or phonemic status of the different vowel qualities in English and Afrikaans, the examples listed in this section are given as they were represented in the works cited above. In some cases slashes are used, in other cases round slashes are used and yet in other cases square brackets are used, depending on the work from which they have been cited.*

**(a) Substitution of consonants which do not occur in Venda**

Substitution of this nature requires a comparative study of the sound inventories of the source languages and the adopting language. If one compares English and Afrikaans with Venda, one notes that there are a number of consonants from these languages which are not found in Venda. The English language, for example, has certain sounds, namely, lateral [l], and the dentals [ð] and [θ] which do not occur in Venda. Like English and Afrikaans, other African languages such as Zulu and Shona, have certain consonants which do not occur in Venda. Zulu has, for instance, clicks whereas Shona has implosives. These sounds do not occur in Venda. The question of great interest, therefore, is what happens when words with consonants which do not occur in Venda are incorporated into the language.

**1. The English sound: th [θ]**

Consider the following adoptives from English:

Eng. <b>theorem</b>	>	Ve. <b>theoremu</b> ~siyoremu
Eng. <b>theology</b>	>	Ve. <b>thiolodzhi</b> ~siyolodzhi
Eng. <b>theatre</b>	>	Ve. <b>thietha</b> ~ siyetha
Eng. <b>thermometer</b>	>	Ve. <b>themometha</b> ~ semometha
Eng. <b>athletics</b>	>	Ve. <b>athilethikhi</b>
Eng. <b>Sabath</b>	>	Ve. <b>Savhatha</b>
Eng. <b>thesis</b>	>	Ve. <b>thisisi</b>
Eng. <b>methodist</b>	>	Ve. <b>methodisi</b>
Eng. <b>mathematics</b>	>	Ve. <b>methemethiki</b>
Eng. <b>Lutheran</b>	>	Ve. <b>Lutere</b>

From the examples given above the voiceless [θ] may either change to the dental ejective t̚ [t̚], or to alveolar ejective [t̚] or it may be adapted to the aspirated th [th] in Venda. The realisation of dental [t̚] in the last example above may be attributed to the influence of the German language. The Germans were the first

people to introduce the Lutheran church in Venda. With regard to the realisation of the sound **t** [ṭ] one may suspect the influence of the Afrikaans or German languages. Therefore the word **Lutere** might have been adopted to Venda from the German language or via Afrikaans. In Afrikaans the sound [t] is unaspirated and as such it is realised as the sound [ṭ] which is also unaspirated to a certain degree in Venda. In some instances the [s] sound is used as a variant of the English **th** [θ] as indicated in the above examples. This kind of substitution was triggered by the **native segment inventory constraint**. This constraint replaces any foreign sound which does not form part of the language inventory by the native one. In both cases the choice of the substituting sound seems to be determined by phonetic factors. The Venda consonants [th, s, t] which have substituted the English consonant [θ] are very close to it, hence we can speak of phonetic approximation. A number of phonetic similarities between these sounds can be noted. In some instances the original sound [θ] is retained, especially by bilingual speakers. For instance, the sound [θ] in words like **theory** and **theatre** is very often pronounced as in English.

## 2. The English sound: th [ð]

The voiced English sound [ð] is substituted by the sounds [d] and [ḍ] in Venda:

Eng. **heathen** > Ve. muhedeni

Eng. **leather** > Ve. leda

Eng. **father** > Ve. fada

The motivation for this kind of substitution is the lack of equivalent sounds in Venda. The sound [ð] does not occur in the Venda sound inventory and is therefore replaced by sounds which are very close to it. But the question here is what determines the realisation of either of these substituting sounds. The realisation of the dental sound **d** [ḍ] in the last two examples may be explained with reference to the influence of **-er** on the sound [ð]. The **-er** sound makes the sound [ð] in the last two examples to be pronounced as a dental sound.

### 3. The English lateral sound: /l/

The lateral [l] is another example of English sounds which do not occur in Venda. This consonant may either change to the dental [l̪] or it may be replaced by the tap sound [ɾ]. However, this sound may be retained in some adoptives.

Eng.police	> Ve. pholisa (tap)	[ɾ]
Eng.hostel	> Ve. hositele (lateral/dental)	[l̪] / [l]
Eng.telephone	> Ve. thelefoni (lateral/dental)	[l̪] / [l]
Eng.blouse	> Ve. bulausu (dental/lateral)	[l̪] / [l]
Eng.leave	> Ve. livi (dental/lateral)	[l̪] / [l]
Eng.lorry	> Ve. lori (dental/ lateral)	[l̪] / [l]
Eng.towel	> Ve. thaula (tap)	[ɾ]
Eng.wool	> Ve. wulu (tap/ lateral / dental)	[ɾ] / [l̪] / [l]
Eng.ball	> Ve. bola (tap/lateral / dental)	[ɾ] / [l̪] / [l]
Eng.pencil	> Ve. penisela (tap)	[ɾ]

Here it is also interesting to see how the Afrikaans sound [l] is realised in Venda:

Afr.leer	> Ve. <u>l</u> eri (dental)	'ladder'
Afr.lekker	> Ve. <u>l</u> egere (dental)	'sweet'
Afr.tolk	> Ve. <u>l</u> ogogi (tap)	'interpreter'
Afr.lepel	> Ve. lebu <u>l</u> a (tap)	'spoon'
Afr.plek	> Ve. bu <u>l</u> ege (tap/lateral)	'place'
Afr.blik	> Ve. lu <u>l</u> ege (tap/lateral)	'can'
Afr.geld	> Ve. tshe <u>l</u> ede (tap/lateral)	'money'

From the examples given above we can note that the replacement of the lateral sound /l/ in Venda is really quite complex. In some instances this consonant is realised as a dental yet in other instances it is realised as a tap, lastly it may also simply be retained as a lateral consonant. There seems to be no clear criterion underlying the choice of the sound which replaces the English or Afrikaans sound

[!] in Venda. Traill (1993:7) says the following in this regard:

"In other respects, the evidence is that Venda employs the distinction productively in adoptives from English and Afrikaans. The details of the distribution of laminals and apicals in these adoptives suggests that there is no fixed strategy for assigning the foreign sounds to one or other category".

The examples given above attest to the fact raised by Traill here that the choice of either the lateral or the dental sound to replace the lateral sound in Venda adoptives is not clear.

#### 4. *The substitution of Nguni clicks.*

Clicks do not occur in Venda. Therefore when Nguni words with **clicks** are adopted into Venda, these sounds are replaced by sounds closest to them. The following are examples of Nguni words which have click sounds.

Zu.umGqibelo > Mugivhela

Xh.amaXhosa > Mathosa

Zu.umqomboti > mutomboti

From these examples the Nguni clicks, namely **qg[!g]**, **xh[iih]**, **q[!]**, are replaced by **g[g]**, **th[th]** and **t[t]** respectively. The replacement of these clicks appears to have been made on the basis of phonetic approximation. In the first example the click [!] is dropped and the [g] sound then remains in the place of the click. It seems the voiced quality of the [g] makes it more audible than the click [!]. The choice of the sound [th] to replace the click **xh[iih]** appears to have been determined by the alveolar and aspirated nature of this click. The click in the last example is articulated with some ejection. This may be the reason for its replacement by an ejective sound **t[t]**.



## (b) Substitution of consonants which occur in Venda

Substitution becomes more complicated in instances where the speaker of the adopting language replaces the sounds which occur in his language by different ones. There are many consonants from English and Afrikaans which are replaced by other consonants in Venda even though they are found in the sound inventory of the language. One would expect these consonants to be taken over without any modification since they are already part of the adopting language's sound inventory. The replacement of these consonants raises a number of questions. In the first place, it is not clear as to why these sounds are replaced by different sounds. The second question relates to what are the factors that determine the choice of the substituting sounds. In attempting to answer these questions various examples will be analysed.

### 1. The Afrikaans consonant: *k /k/*

The voiceless Afrikaans sound *k* may be realised as voiced **g[g]** or voiceless **[k]** in Venda. We shall begin by looking at the instances where *k* is replaced by **g[g]** in Venda:

#### Initial position

Afr.kamp	> Ve.gammba	`camp'
Afr.kameel	> Ve.gamela	`camel'
Afr.koffie	> Ve.gofhi	`coffee'
Afr.koring	> Ve.gurou	`wheat'
Afr.kettel	> Ve.gedela	`kettle'
Afr.kerk	> Ve.gereke	`church'
Afr.kam	> Ve.gamu	`comb'
Afr.komers	> Ve.gumbese	`blanket'
Afr.kapok	> Ve.gambogo	`snow'
Afr.karretjie	> Ve.gariki	`wagon'

Afr.kook	> Ve.guga	`cook'
Afr.kous	> Ve.lugausu	`garment'

### Medial position

Afr.speiker	> Ve.tshibigiri	`nail'
Afr.sker	> Ve.tshigero	`scissor'
Afr.beker	> Ve.bigiri	`beaker'
Afr.suiker	> Ve.swigiri	`sugar'

### Word final position

Afr.blik	> Ve.lulege	`tin'
Afr.plek	> Ve.bulege	`place'
Afr.kapok	> Ve.gambogo	`snow'
Afr.werk	> Ve.vherega	`work'
Afr.week	> Ve.vhege	`week'
Afr.boek	> Ve.bugu	`book'
Afr.sak	> Ve.saga	`sack'

In all the examples given above the Afrikaans **k** is adopted as **g[g]** in all the word positions, i.e. initial, medial and word final position. Poulos (1990:517) attributes the replacement of the sound **k** by **g[g]** to the phonetic qualities of this Afrikaans sound. According to him, the Afrikaans sound **k** is unaspirated. Because of this it is very often adopted as **g[g]** in Venda which is also unaspirated.

Although in the examples given above the sound **[k]** is adopted as **g [g]**, this is not the case in the following examples:

Afr.kamer	> Ve.kamara	`room'
Afr.kaptein	> Ve.kaput <sup>u</sup> eni	`captain'
Afr.kolonel	> Ve.kolonele	`colonel'

Afr.skip	>	Ve.tshikepe	`ship'
Afr.skuld	>	Ve.tshikolodo	`debt'
Afr.skelm	>	Ve.tshikeleme	`criminal'

The adoption of the Afrikaans **k** as ejective sound **[k]** in the first three examples is not easy to explain. One possible explanation could be that these words were adopted by bilingual speakers who wanted to reproduce the Afrikaans sound as it is pronounced in the source language. After all, these are recent adoptives. Therefore this substitution may be explained by phonetic approximation. The substitution in the last three examples may be explained by the consonant cluster **sk**. In this cluster the Afrikaans sound **k** is unaspirated and is therefore replaced by the ejective sound **[k]** which is closest to it.

#### *The English consonant /k/*

The English phoneme /k/ can be realised differently in Venda. It can be realised as an ejective sound **[k]** or as an aspirated **[kh]** depending on the environment it occupies in a word. These realisations can be clearly seen from the following examples. We shall first look at instances where the phoneme /k/ is realised as an aspirated sound in Venda:

Eng.cabbage	>	Ve.khavhishi
Eng.cable	>	Ve.khevhele
Eng.chemist	>	Ve.khimisi
Eng.cake	>	Ve.khekhe
Eng.computer	>	Ve.khomphiutha
Eng.catalogue	>	Ve.khathalogo
Eng.curry	>	Ve.khere
Eng.cup	>	Ve.khaphu

From the examples given above it is apparent that the English phoneme /k/ is

realised as an aspirated sound [kh] in Venda where it occupies the initial position in a word. This does not come as a surprise since this sound is realised in a similar manner in English. However, in the following examples the English non-aspirated sound [k] is realised as an aspirated sound in Venda:

Eng.cream > Ve.khirimu  
 Eng.cricket > Ve.khirikhethe  
 Eng.Christmas > Ve.Khirisimasi

However, in the following examples English non-aspirated sound is realised as an ejective sound despite the fact that it occupies the initial position of a word.

Eng.class > Ve.kilasi  
 Eng.club > Ve.kilabu  
 Eng.clinic > Ve.kiliniki

It appears that the realisation of the phoneme /k/ as an ejective sound in Venda is due to the manner in which the consonant cluster cl is articulated. In the articulation of this cluster the sound l immediately follows /k/. As a result the sound /k/ is pronounced as the ejective sound k[k] of Venda. The same realisation of the phoneme /k/ occurs where it is preceded by an [s] sound in the word initial position:

Eng.scheme > Ve.tshikimu  
 Eng.school > Ve.tshikulu  
 Eng.Scottish > Ve.tshikotshi  
 Eng.skirt > Ve.tshikete  
 Eng.skipper > Ve.tshikipha  
 Eng.scooter > Ve.tshikuta  
 Eng.scorns > Ve.tshikontsi

In these examples the English sound /k/ occurs in sound clusters, and as such it loses its aspirated quality.

The English sound **k** may also be realised as an ejective sound [k̰] in medial and final position of the word. We shall first look at the examples in which this sound occurs in the medial position:

Eng.market > Ve.makete  
 Eng.basket > Ve.basikete  
 Eng.casket > Ve.khasikete

The following examples show the realisation of /k/ as in word final consonant clusters:

Eng.mask > Ve.masiki  
 Eng.clerk > Ve.kilaka

Although the examples given above seem to create the impression that the English phoneme is always realised as an ejective sound in medial and word final position, this is not the case with the following examples:

Eng.packet > Ve.phak<sup>h</sup>ethe  
 Eng.park > Ve.phak<sup>h</sup>a  
 Eng.cake > Ve.khek<sup>h</sup>e  
 Eng.khakhi > Ve.khak<sup>h</sup>e  
 Eng.truck > Ve.thirak<sup>h</sup>a  
 Eng.track > Ve.thirek<sup>h</sup>e

The realisation of the aspirated sounds in both medial and final positions may be explained with reference to the phonological process of consonant harmony. In the adoptives given above there is always an aspirated sound in the preceding or following syllable. In a word like **phak<sup>h</sup>ethe** there are three aspirated sounds viz. [ph], [kh] and [th]. One may therefore argue that the realisation of the sound



Afr.botel	>	Ve.bodelo	`bottle'
Afr.botter	>	Ve.bodoro	`butter'
Afr.baadjie	>	Ve.badzhi	`jackert'

Eng.bar	>	Ve.bara	
Eng.ball	>	Ve.bola	
Eng.bus	>	Ve.basi/bisi	

In these examples the sound **b** occurs in the initial and the stressed syllable. In this position the sound **b** becomes audible enough to be correctly approximated with the sound [b] on Venda. However, in the following examples, the sound **b** is replaced by the Venda sound **vh[β]**.

Afr.broek	>	Ve.vhurukhu	`trouser'
Afr.brood	>	Ve.vhurotho	`bread'
Afr.boor	>	Ve.vhoro	`drill machine'
Afr.boer	>	Ve.livhuru	`boer/farmer'
Afr.bybel	>	Ve.bivhili	`bible'
Eng.cabbage	>	Ve.khavhishi	
Eng.cabble	>	Ve.khevhele	
Eng.rubber	>	Ve.ravhara	

The realisation of the sound **vh[β]** in the first two examples may be explained by morphological factors. In these examples the Afrikaans consonant cluster **br** is interpreted as the **vh-** prefix of noun class 14. It is not clear as to what causes the **b** in **vhoro** and **livhuru** to be replaced by **vh[β]**. The adoption of **b** as **vh[β]** in the remaining examples above may be explained by the fact that the sound occurs in medial position and in unstressed syllables. Because of this the sound **b** becomes `softened' in such a way that it is perceived in Venda as the sound **vh[β]**.

## 4. Afrikaans consonant: t

The Afrikaans consonant may be realised as dental sounds [d̪] and alveolar [d]:

Afr.tent	>	Ve.dennde	`tent'
Afr.tou	>	Ve.deu	`rope'
Afr.tolk	>	Ve.d̪ologi	`interpreter'
Afr.tafel	>	Ve.d̪afula	`table'
Afr.trekker	>	Ve.d̪erete̪re	`tractor'

The voiceless consonant [t] is realised as a voiced alveolar [d] in the first two examples and as voiced dental sound [d̪] in the last three examples. The realisation of the sounds [d] and [d̪] in these examples may be explained by the nature of the Afrikaans sound [t]. This sound is unaspirated and can therefore be approximated to the Venda sound [d] or [d̪] which though voiced, is also unaspirated. These substituting sounds also occur in medial:

Afr.stoel	>	Ve.tshidulo	`chair'
Afr.steen	>	Ve.tshidina	`brick'
Afr.kettel	>	Ve.ge̪dela	`kettle'
Afr.skottel	>	Ve.tshigo̪delo	`household'
Afr.hospital	>	Ve.sibadela	`hospital'

In the first two examples, the sound [t] originally occurred in a cluster. As has already been mentioned, adopted nouns which begin with **s+C** cluster are assigned to class 7. In these examples, the sound [t] is replaced by the alveolar sound [d]. In medial position, except the last example, the sound [t] is replaced by the alveolar sound [d]. In word final position, the sound [t] is replaced either by the dental [d̪] or alveolar [d]:

Afr.pot	>	Ve.bodo	`pot'
Afr.koerant	>	Ve.gurann̪da	`newspaper'



Afr.skiet	>	Ve.tshigidi	`gun'
Afr.tent	>	Ve.dennde	`tent'

From the examples given above, it appears that the Afrikaans sound **t** is replaced by the sound **[d]** or **[ɖ]** in all the positions, i.e. word initial, medial and final position.

However, Afrikaans /t/ can also become the voiceless dental **[t̪]** in Venda, as shown in the following examples:

Afr.tamaties	>	Ve.tamat̪isi	`tomatoes'
Afr.tapeit	>	Ve.tapita	`tile'
Afr.trein	>	Ve.tireni	`train'
Afr.tronk	>	Ve.tironngo	`jail'
Afr.tie	>	Ve.tie	`tea'

The choice of the dental sound **[t̪]** seems to be mainly due to phonetic approximation. The Afrikaans sound **[t]**, as already indicated, is unaspirated. Therefore, it is replaced by the sound **[t̪]** which, even though is produced with some force of ejection, is an unaspirated sound. In the last example the substituting sound is the alveolar **[t]**. However, it is not clear why the **[t]** has been replaced by the ejective sound **[t̪]** in the last example. The influence of the high vowel **[i]** which immediately follows the sound **[t̪]** may be suspected to have influenced the realisation of an ejective sound.

The dental sound **[t̪]** is also realised where the Afrikaans **[t]** occur in a cluster:

Afr.straat	>	Ve.tshitarata	`street'
Afr.stokies	>	Ve.tshitokisi	`court'
Afr.strop	>	Ve.tshitiropo	`strop'
Afr.stand	>	Ve.tshitannde	`stand'
Afr.streep	>	Ve.tshitirepe	`stripe'

- Afr.stasie > Ve.tshitasie 'station'  
 Afr.straaf > Ve.tshitarafu 'punishment'

In a nutshell, the Afrikaans sound [t] is replaced by the sounds [d], [d̥], [t] and [t̥]. All these sounds are phonetically closer to the Afrikaans sound [t], though to different degrees.

### 5. The English consonant : /t/

In English the phoneme /t/ has two allophones, viz. unaspirated [t] aspirated [tʰ]. These allophones may constitute phonemes in Venda since they can function distinctively. The phoneme /t/ is realised as t[t] or th[tʰ] in Venda. Let's begin by looking at the instances where the sound /t/ occurs in word initial position:

- Eng.tank > Ve.thanng'e  
 Eng.tennis > Ve.thenisi  
 Eng.towel > Ve.thaula  
 Eng.tie > Ve.thai  
 Eng.toy > Ve.thoi

The English /t/ in the examples above is an aspirated sound since it occupies the word initial position. This sound is adopted without any change into Venda. However, in the following examples the English sound /t/ is adopted as th[tʰ] even though it is not at the initial position of a word:

- Eng.toilet > Ve.thoilethe  
 Eng.ticket > Ve.thikhithi  
 Eng.deposit > Ve.diphosithi  
 Eng.plate > Ve.phuleithi

The realisation of the aspirated sound [tʰ] in word final position in the above examples seems to be influenced by the aspirated sounds in the preceding

syllables. In this case the aspirated sound which is found in the initial or medial position influences the /t/ in final position in such a way that it too becomes an aspirated sound. This is illustrated by the fact that if one uses an ejective sound in the initial or medial position the [t] in the final position is also realised as an ejective sound **t[t]** in Venda. As already mentioned, this process is called consonant harmony. Consonant harmony was discussed in the previous sections. What is interesting here is the fact that the influence may occur across a syllable:

Eng.deposit	>	Ve.dipositi cf. diphosithi
Eng.plate	>	Ve.puleiti cf. phuleithi
Eng.report	>	Ve.ripoto cf. riphotho

The English sound t may be realised as non-aspirated in initial position especially where it occurs in a cluster:

Eng.store	>	Ve.tshitolo
Eng.steam	>	Ve.tshitimu
Eng.stamp	>	Ve.tshitemmbe
Eng.station	>	Ve.tshititshi

In these examples the English sound t is unaspirated and is therefore realised as an ejective **t[t]** in Venda.

#### 4. The Afrikaans sound /p/

The Afrikaans sound [p] may be realised as an ejective [p] or as a voiced sound [b] in Venda. We shall begin by looking at instances where [p] is realised as [b]:

Afr.pad	>	Ve.bada	'path'
Afr.plaas	>	Ve.bulasi	'farm'
Afr.pyp	>	Ve.bibi	'pipe'

Afr.pot	> Ve.bodo	`pot'
Afr.krap	> Ve.garaba	`scrape'
Afr.pas	> Ve.basa	`pass'
Afr.papa	> Ve.baba	`daddy'
Afr.seep	> Ve.tshisibe	`soap'

From these examples, the Afrikaans **p** is adopted as **b[b]** when it occurs in word initial and final position. It would appear the consonant **p** is approximated with the voiced bilabial **[b]** in Venda when it occurs in the initial position of a word. In the examples such as **bibi**, **bodo**, **garaba**, **baba** the sound **[p]** is replaced by the voiced sound **b[b]** even in the word final position. The occurrence of this sound in this position of a word seems to be due to the influence of other voiced stop sounds which occur word-initially. However, there are examples which are exceptions to this explanation, e.g. **pennde** < **Afr. pent**. In this example the sound **p** occurs in the initial position yet it remains voiceless. The consonant **p** is usually adopted as an ejective **p[p]** when preceded by voiceless stops. Let us consider the following examples:

Afr.skrop	>	Ve.tshikoropo	`piece job'
Afr.strop	>	Ve.tshitiropo	`strop'
Afri.kamp	>	Ve.kompo	`hostel'

The word **tshisibe** < **Afr.seep** seems to be an exception to the explanation given above. In this example the final stop sound **p** is replaced by a voiced consonant **[b]**. However, it is interesting to note that in this example there is no preceding stop in the source word.

The consonant **p** may also be realised as an ejective sound **p[p]** when it occurs in a cluster word-initially. This can be seen from the following examples:

Afr.span	>	Ve.tshipano	`span'
Afr.spyt	>	Ve.tshipeti	

- Afr.spook > Ve.tshipuku 'ghost'  
 Afr.plan > Ve.pulane 'plan'

### 7.The English consonant: /p/

This phoneme can be realised in Venda as **p[p]** or **ph[ph]**. Let us start by considering instances where **p** is realised as **ph[ph]**:

- Eng. pipe > Ve.phaiphi  
 Eng. polish > Ve.pholishi  
 Eng. porridge > Ve.phalishi  
 Eng. pind > Ve.phaindi  
 Eng. parliament > Ve.phalamennde  
 Eng. pavement > Ve.phevumennde  
 Eng. pepper > Ve.phiriphiri  
 Eng. puppet > Ve.phaphethe  
 Eng. passport > Ve.phasiphotho

In these examples the English sound **p** occurs word-initially and it is aspirated. In Venda it is adopted as the aspirated sound **ph[ph]**. However, in some examples given above, namely **phaiphi**, **phiriphiri** and **phaphethe** the aspirated sound **ph[ph]** is also realised in medial position. This may be explained by the influence of the aspirated sound in the initial position. This sound may be adopted as a non-aspirated sound in the initial position when it occurs in a cluster, e.g. :

- Eng.sports > Ve.zwipotso  
 Eng.spelling > Ve.tshipelini  
 Eng.speed > Ve.tshipidi  
 Eng.spoon > Ve.tshipuni  
 Eng.spade > Ve.tshipeidi

The English sound **p** may be adopted as an ejective sound in the medial and final positions of a word:

Eng. report	>	Ve.ripoto
Eng. recipe	>	Ve.risipi
Eng. deep	>	Ve.dipe
Eng. stop	>	Ve.tshitopo

In a nutshell, the English unaspirated sound **p** is adopted as an ejective sound **p[p]**, and an aspirated **ph** as the aspirated sound **ph[ph]** in Venda adoptives. Substitution in this case has been motivated by phonetic approximation.

#### 8. The Afrikaans sound : /x/

The Afrikaans sound **x** may be realised as a **[tʃh]**, **[x]** or **[ɦ]** in the adopted word:

Afr.geld	>	Ve.tshelede	`money'
Afr.agent	>	Ve.axennde	`lawyer'
Afr.gemmer	>	Ve.xemere	`ginger'
Afr.saag	>	Ve.saha	`saw'
Afr.brug	>	Ve.buroho	`bridge'

In the first example the Afrikaans **[x]** is adopted as **[tʃh]**. The sound /x/ may be pronounced as *xelt*, *ˈxeldə*, (*çelt*) (cf. Le Roux en Pienaar 1976:65; Kruger 1965:62). The sound **[tʃh]** in Venda might be a result of the influence of the variant sound **[tʃh]** in the last example ( personal communication with Professor Louwrens). In the adoptives *axennde* and *xemere* the sound /x/ is reproduced without change. But this is not the case with the last two examples. In these examples /x/ occurs in word final position and is adopted as voiced **[ɦ]**. The voicing in the Venda sound **h[ɦ]** may be attributed to the final vowels **[a]** and **[ɔ]** which are voiced by nature.

### 9. The Afrikaans sound /w/

This sound is usually adopted as **vh**[β] in Venda.

Afr.werk	>	Ve.vherega	'work'
Afr.week	>	Ve.vhege	'week'
Afr.winkel	>	Ve.vhengele	'shop'
Afr.kruiwaen	>	Ve.girivhane	'wheelbarrow'

The explanation to the replacement of the sound **w** by **[β]** in these examples may be explained by looking at the phonetic characteristics of these sounds. The Afrikaans sound **w** is described by Kruger (1965:48) as "'n stemhebbende bilabiaal-velere wrywinglose kontinuant met sentrale vrylating". This sound is softer (less tense) than the Venda **v**[v] yet it is stronger (more tense) than the Venda semi-vowel **w**[w]. Therefore **[β]** seems to be the closest sound to the Afrikaans sound **w**. These sounds share bilabial qualities, i.e. they both involve the lips in their production.

#### (c) General remarks on the adaptation of consonants in Venda

In the foregoing discussion consonant substitutions in Venda adoptives has been discussed. We began by discussing the substitution of the consonants which do not have equivalents in the adopting language. These consonants are **th**[θ], **th**[ð] and **ll**[l], These sounds are restrained from occurring in the Venda language by the **native segment inventory constraint**. Therefore they are replaced by sounds which are phonetically closest to them.

The substitution of consonants from other languages which have equivalents in the Venda language was also discussed and included the following consonant substitutions:

Afrikaans sound	k	>	Ve .g[g], k[k]
English sound	k	>	Ve. k[k], kh[kh]
Afrikaans sound	b	>	Ve. vh[β], b[b]
English sound	b	>	Ve. vh[β], b[b]
Afrikaans sound	t	>	Ve. d[d], d[ <u>d</u> ], t[t], t[ <u>t</u> ]
English sound	t	>	Ve. t[t], th[th]
Afrikaans sound	p	>	Ve. b[b], p[p]
English sound	p	>	Ve. p[p], ph[ph]
Afrikaans sound	g	>	Ve. tsh[tʰ], x[x], h[h̥]
Afrikaans sound	w	>	Ve. vh[β]

The substitutions in these consonants have been motivated by phonetic factors. There are close similarities between the foreign sound and the one that replaces it in the source language. The replacement of consonants which are part of the sound inventory of the source language with different ones may be explained with reference to the environment in which that sound occurs. For instance, certain sounds were replaced because of the influence of other preceding sounds. Most of the stop sounds which occur in clusters were retained unchanged in Venda adoptives.

### 3.3.3 Syllable adjustments

The syllable structure of Venda was discussed in section 3.2.4. The focus here will be on the syllable structure adjustment to adopted words which do not conform to the Venda syllable structure. We shall begin by looking at adjustment on consonant clusters and then at adjustments to closed syllables, i.e. word final syllables which end with consonants.

#### (a) Adjustments to consonant clusters

It was already indicated at the beginning of this chapter that consonant clusters, except for the nasal compounds, are not characteristic of the Venda language.



Therefore, when consonant clusters occur in the source language, they are modified in one way or another when adopted into Venda. Here we shall be looking at the different strategies which are employed by the Venda language to modify consonant clusters from foreign languages. Only clusters in words from English and Afrikaans will be considered in this section. We shall begin by looking at clusters which occur in the word initial position ( i.e. clusters which serve as **onsets**).

### Clusters which occur in word initial position

The following English and Afrikaans consonant clusters can occur in the initial position of a word where they serve as onset syllables:

*/pr/, /br/, /pV/, /tr/, /dr/, /gr/, /kV/, /kr/, /gV/, /bV/, /fV/, /fr /, /s+C/* etc.

#### 1. English consonant cluster: */pr/*

The consonant cluster */pr/* is simplified (i.e. broken up) by inserting a vowel which is either [ɔ] or [u]. This can be clearly seen from the following examples:

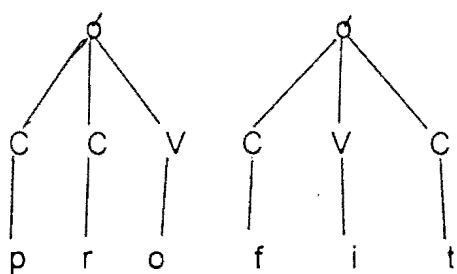
Eng.profit	>	Ve.purofiti/ porofiti
Eng.prophet	>	Ve.mupurofita/ muporfita
Eng.prosecute	>	Ve.phurosikhutha
Eng.project	>	Ve.purodzhekiti
Eng.promote	>	Ve.-puromota/ poromota
Eng.program	>	Ve.purogireme /porogireme
Eng.prose	>	Ve.purosa / porosa
Eng.protein	>	Ve.puroteini/poroteini
Eng.president	>	Ve.puresidennde
Eng.press	>	Ve.purese
Eng.principal	>	Ve.phirisipala

Eng. <b>printer</b>	>	Ve. <b>phirintha</b>
Eng. <b>priest</b>	>	Ve. <b>mupirisita</b>
Eng. <b>prefect</b>	>	Ve. <b>phirifekhithi</b>

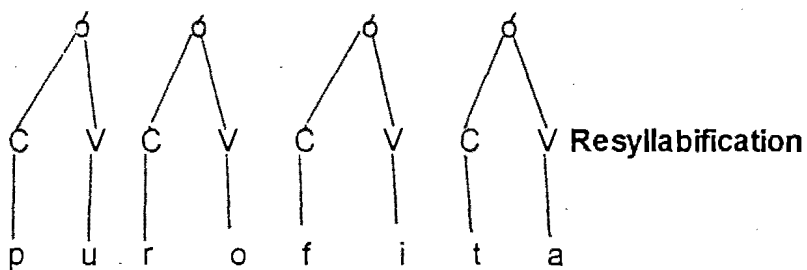
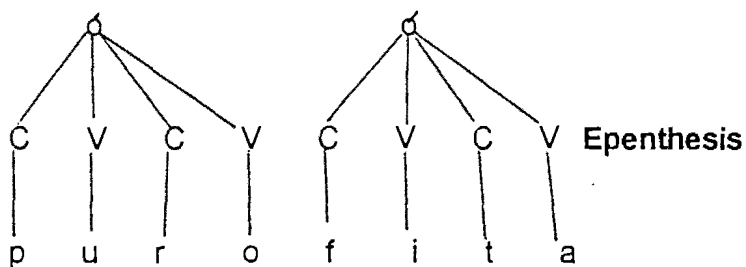
From the examples given above the following observation can be made:

- (i) All the **pr** clusters are broken up by an epenthetic vowel.
- (ii) The choice of the epenthetic vowel is determined by the process of assimilation. Assimilation in this case can be seen as occurring in two ways. First, the epenthetic vowel assimilates to the preceding consonant. In most of the examples given above, the realisation of the epenthetic vowels **u** and **o** is due to the influence of the preceding bilabial consonants. The influence of bilabial consonants on the realisation of back epenthetic vowels has been noticed in other languages such as Northern Sotho (Kruger 1965), Sotho (Warmelo 1929), Shona (Chimhundu 1982), Zulu (Nkabinde 1968). Back vowels, like bilabial consonants, involve lips in their production. This may be the reason for a back vowel, particularly **u**, to be inserted after the bilabial consonants.

Assimilation can occur in vowels across syllable boundaries. Some of the epenthetic vowels have variants, e.g **puromota** ~ **poromota**, **purosa** ~ **porosa**. In these examples **u** alternates with **o**. The realisation of **o** in **poromota** and **porosa** is due to assimilation to the succeeding vowel. Vowel assimilation can also be seen in examples such as **phirisipala**, **phiritsha**, **mupirisita**. The epenthetic vowel **i** in these examples is due to assimilation to the succeeding vowel. The insertion of epenthetic vowels within the consonant cluster **pr** can be represented in the word **profit** as follows (Carlisle 1991:79):



Underlying representations



### 2. English consonant cluster: /brl/

Eng. <b>break</b>	>	Ve. <b>bureiki</b>
Eng. <b>brush</b>	>	Ve. <b>bulatsho</b>
Eng. <b>brake</b>	>	Ve. <b>biriki</b>

The epenthetic vowels [i] and [u] in the above examples have simplified the consonant cluster /brl/. In the first two examples the epenthetic vowel is [u]. The influencing factor here is the bilabial consonant [b]. However, this is not the case in the third example. Here the bilabial consonant [b] is followed by a front vowel [i]. It appears that this vowel is a result of vowel assimilation. The vowel [i] of the diphthong **ei** which succeeds the cluster **br** has retrogressively influenced the realisation of the epenthetic vowel [i].

### 3. English consonant cluster: /pl/

The consonant cluster /pl/ is separated by inserting the vowel [u]. As has already been mentioned, this epenthetic vowel is determined by the preceding bilabial consonant [p] and also by vowel assimilation.

Eng. <b>plan</b>	>	Ve. <b>pulene</b>
Eng. <b>plank</b>	>	Ve. <b>bulannga</b>
Eng. <b>plastic</b>	>	Ve. <b>pulasitiki</b>
Eng. <b>pleat</b>	>	Ve. <b>piliti</b>
Eng. <b>plot</b>	>	Ve. <b>puloto</b>
Eng. <b>plug</b>	>	Ve. <b>pulaga</b>
Eng. <b>plumber</b>	>	Ve. <b>mupulambara</b>
Eng. <b>planet</b>	>	Ve. <b>pulanete</b>
Eng. <b>plate</b>	>	Ve. <b>pulethi</b>
Eng. <b>plantation</b>	>	Ve. <b>pulantheseni</b>

The epenthetic vowel [ɪ] in the adoptive **piliti** requires a brief comment. The choice of this vowel is determined by the vowel [ɪ] of the succeeding syllable.

#### 4. English consonant cluster : /tr/

The consonant cluster /tr/ is simplified by inserting the vowel [ɪ]. The choice of this vowel is determined by the alveolar consonant **t** which precedes.

Eng. <b>trunk</b>	>	Ve. <b>thir<sup>^</sup>angga</b>
Eng. <b>truck</b>	>	Ve. <b>thir<sup>^</sup>akha</b>
Eng. <b>tray</b>	>	Ve. <b>thir<sup>^</sup>ei</b>
Eng. <b>traffic</b>	>	Ve. <b>thir<sup>^</sup>afiki</b>
Eng. <b>triangle</b>	>	Ve. <b>thir<sup>^</sup>aengele</b>
Eng. <b>trophy</b>	>	Ve. <b>thir<sup>^</sup>ofi</b>
Eng. <b>tropic</b>	>	Ve. <b>thir<sup>^</sup>opika</b>

The influence of the alveolar consonants on the realisation of epenthetic vowel [ɪ] can be explained by considering the similarities between these types of sounds. Alveolar sounds are produced when the tongue is in a high position and with the

lips spread. The vowel [ɪ] also shares these articulatory features. It seems that this epenthetic vowel is preferred in this cluster because of these phonetic similarities (Hermanson 1991).

#### 5. English phoneme cluster: /dr/

The consonant cluster /dr/ like the /tr/ cluster is simplified by inserting the high vowel [ɪ]. The choice of this vowel is also determined by the alveolar consonants or dental [d̪].

Eng. driver	>	Ve. d̪iraiva
Eng. drum	>	Ve. d̪iramu
Eng. drill	>	Ve. d̪irili
Eng. drug	>	Ve. d̪iraga
Eng. dribble	>	Ve. d̪irivhuala
Eng. drawer	>	Ve. d̪irowara
Eng. drama	>	Ve. d̪irama

The fact that some of the English alveolars are realised as dentals in Venda does not affect our hypothesis of the influence of the alveolar sounds on epenthetic vowel [ɪ]. The alveolar of the source language is the one that seems to influence the realisation of [ɪ].

#### 6. English consonant cluster: /gr/

The vowel [ɪ] is interposed between the consonant cluster /gr/ in the following examples:

Eng. gravel	>	Ve. giravhulo
Eng. grease	>	Ve. girisi
Eng. grammar	>	Ve. girama
Eng. gram	>	Ve. gireme

Eng.grey > Ve.gireyi

In some cases the consonant cluster is broken up by the epenthetic vowel [u]:

Eng.grocer > Ve.gurozara

Eng.group > Ve.gurupu

Eng.groovy > Ve.guruvi

Eng.grudge > Ve.giradzhi

The choice of the epenthetic vowel in the examples given above seems to be due to the influence of the vowel which immediately follows the cluster. It appears the epenthetic vowel [u] occurs when the **gr** cluster is followed by a back vowel, i.e. **u** or a diphthong such as [əu]. In all the positions where the cluster is not followed by a back vowel, the epenthetic vowel is **i[ɪ]**.

#### 7.English consonant cluster : /kV/

The consonant cluster /kV/ is separated by the epenthetic vowel **i[ɪ]** or **u[u]**:

Eng.club > Ve.kilabu

Eng.class > Ve.kilasi

Eng.climate > Ve.kilima

Eng.clinic > Ve.kililiki

Eng.clutch > Ve.kilatshi

Eng.club > Ve.kilaba

Eng.clerk > Ve.kilaka

Eng.closet > Ve.kulosehe

Eng.clock > Ve.kuloko

The choice of the epenthetic vowel also seems to be determined by the nature of the vowels that immediately follow the cluster. From the examples given above the epenthetic vowel [u] occurs in cluster which are immediately followed by a back

vowel while [ɪ] occurs when the cluster is followed by any other vowel which is not a back vowel.

### 8. English consonant cluster : /gV/

The cluster /gV/ is broken up by inserting the vowels [ɪ] or [u]. The choice of the epenthetic vowel [u] seems to be mainly determined by the influence of the vowel following the consonant cluster.

Eng.globe	>	Ve.gulupu
Eng.glue	>	Ve.guluu
Eng.glottal	>	Ve.gulotala
Eng.glucose	>	Ve.gulukhousi

The insertion of the epenthetic vowel [ɪ] in the first example seems to be determined by the non-back vowel [ʊ] which follows the cluster gl. In all the other examples, as already mentioned the realisation of the epenthetic vowel [u] seems to be a result of the influence the back vowels following the cluster.

### 9. English consonant cluster : /bV/

The consonant cluster /bV/ is broken up by inserting the back vowel [u], as can be seen from the following examples:

Eng.blouse	>	Ve.bulausu
Eng.block	>	Ve.buloko
Eng.blue	>	Ve.buluu
Eng.blazer	>	Ve.buleizara

In all the examples given above, the epenthetic vowel [u] is inserted. The occurrence of this vowel in the first three examples may be explained by the influence of the back vowels which follow the cluster bl. However, But this

explanation is countered by the epenthetic [u] in the last example. The cluster in this example if followed by the diphthong ei. This diphthong has nothing to do with backness. In this instance it appears the influence of the bilabial consonant [b] offers a better explanation. As already mentioned, the bilabial consonants play an important role in the realisation of the epenthetic vowel [u] in Venda adoptives, even overriding the potential influence of the vowel following the consonant cluster.

#### 10. English consonant cluster : /fV/

The cluster /fV/ is broken up by the epenthetic vowel [u] and [i] in Venda:

Eng.flour	>	Ve.fulauru
Eng.flat	>	Ve.fulethe
Eng.flute	>	Ve.fuluthu
Eng.flag	>	Ve.fulaga
Eng.flask	>	Ve.fulasiki
Eng.flannel	>	Ve.fulanele
Eng.flu	>	Ve.fuluu
Eng.floor	>	Ve.fuloro
Eng.flea market	>	Ve.filiimakete
Eng.flicker	>	Ve.-filikhara

The epenthetic vowels [u] and [i] have been used in these examples to separate the consonant cluster **fl**. The realisation of the epenthetic vowel [u] appears to be due to the influence of the bilabial characteristics of the denti-labial sound **f**. This is not the case in the last two examples. Here the vowel [i] has been used to break down the cluster. The choice of this vowel is due to assimilation with the succeeding vowel. Although vowel assimilation may also be used to explain the realisation of the epenthetic vowel [u] in words such as **fuluthu** and **fuluu**, this does not rule out the influence of the bilabial characteristics of the consonant **f** in these examples.



### 11. English consonant cluster: fr

The adjustment of the consonant cluster /fr/ in the following examples is interesting. The cluster /fr/ is broken up by the epenthetic vowels [ɪ] and [u]:

Eng. fridge	>	Ve. firidzhi
Eng. frill	>	Ve. firili
Eng. France	>	Ve. Furannsi / Fura
Eng. Frank	>	Ve. Furenge
Eng. frame	>	Ve. fureme
Eng. fresh	>	Ve. fureshe

While the epenthetic vowel [u] can be explained with reference to bilabial characteristics of the consonant [f], the epenthetic vowel [ɪ] cannot be explained by this factor. The epenthetic vowel [ɪ] is realised in the first two examples. It is interesting to note that all the other syllables (i.e. medial and final) in these first two words are characterised by the vowel [ɪ]. Therefore the occurrence of the epenthetic vowel [ɪ] in the cluster fr may be regarded as being due to assimilation with the succeeding vowel i.e. vowel [ɪ].

### 12. The onset consonant clusters discussed above also occur in Afrikaans.

The way in which the Afrikaans consonant clusters are treated is no different to that of English. The vowels interposed between the Afrikaans clusters are the same as those in English adoptives. Therefore the Afrikaans consonant clusters will not be treated separately here since this will not bring any new evidence to this study. Instead, we shall only give a few examples:

Afr. profeet	>	Ve. mupurofita/ muporofita	'prophet'
Afr. brood	>	Ve. vhurotho	'read'
Afr. plaas	>	Ve. bulasi	'arm'
Afr. trein	>	Ve. <sup>ˆ</sup> tireni	'rain'

Afr.drom	>	Ve.ḏiromu	`rum'
Afr.draad	>	Ve.ḏirata	`wire'
Afr.blaar	>	Ve.bulara	`tobacco leaf'

### 13. English and Afrikaans consonant cluster: /s+C/

The consonant cluster /s+C/, is very common in English and Afrikaans adoptives in Venda. The following illustrate some of these clusters:

/sp-/ , /st-/ , /sk-/ , /sl-/ , /sn-/ etc.

Eng.station	>	Ve.tsẖitshi "station"
Eng.stamp	>	Ve.tsẖitembe "stamp"
Eng.scheme	>	Ve.tsẖikimu
Eng.Scottish	>	Ve.Tsẖikotshi
Eng.scarf	>	Ve.tsẖikhafu

The examples given above show the adjustment of consonant cluster /s+C/ in the word initial position (i.e. onset syllables). These clusters are adjusted by replacing the consonant **s** with the noun prefix **tshi-** of class 7. The replacement of **s** in this cluster by the prefix **tshi-** seems to have been motivated by morphological factors rather than phonological ones. Thus assimilation to the following vowels does not play a role in these examples. One would expect the sound **s** to be retained and the epenthetic vowel to be inserted between the cluster, or the **s** to be deleted, as is the case with verb roots. Instead the **s** sound is interpreted as the prefix **tshi-**. The same changes occur to Afrikaans clusters with /s+C/ as onsets. Consider the following examples:

Afr.speiker	>	Ve.tsẖibigiri	`nail'
Afr.stoel	>	Ve.tsẖidulo	`chair'
Afr.steen	>	Ve.tsẖidina	`brick'
Afr.skuld	>	Ve.tsẖikolodo	`debt'

Afr.skeer > Ve.tshigero 'scissor'

***A few remarks on the adjustment of consonant clusters to adopted verb roots***

Although the adjustment of clusters in some adopted verb roots is the same as that of nouns, this is not the case with all roots. The consonant clusters in certain verb roots are reduced to single consonants by means of deletion. Consider the following examples:

Eng.discharge > Ve.-tshatsha  
 Afr.skuld > Ve.-koloda  
 Eng.stamp > Ve.-<sup>^</sup>temmba  
 Afr.skeer > Ve.-gera  
 Afr.spook > Ve.-puka  
 Afr.sterk > Ve.-<sup>^</sup>tereka  
 Afr.straf > Ve.-<sup>^</sup>tarafa  
 Afr.span > Ve.-pana  
 Eng.scheme > Ve.-kima

In the first example the initial syllable has been deleted. In the other examples it is only the first element of the cluster, namely, s which has been deleted. If these clusters had been in nouns, the prefix *tshi-* of class 7 would have been used to break up the cluster. From these examples we can see that clusters are adjusted in a unique way in some verb roots. Consonant deletion also occurs in verb roots which have no initial clusters, e.g.:

Eng.report > Ve.-pota

The first syllable has been deleted in the example given above.

*The adjustment of clusters that occur in medial and word-finally*

The changes that occur to clusters which occur in the initial position sometimes differ from that of clusters that occur in medial and word final position. Let's look at the following English examples:

Eng.fullscap	>	Ve.fulusikepe /fuluskepe
Eng.custard	>	Ve.khasit <sup>ʌ</sup> adi /khastadi
Eng.passport	>	Ve.phasipoto /phaspoto
Eng.basket	>	Ve.basikete /baskete
Eng.biscuit	>	Ve.basikitsi /baskitsi
Eng.bastard	>	Ve.basit <sup>ʌ</sup> ere /bastere

Although the /s+C/ consonant clusters in the initial position of the adopted nouns generally become /tshi/, this is not the case in these example. The /s/ sound is retained and an epenthetic vowel may be inserted or it can be left out, as can be seen from the adoptives in the second column. In the adoptives in the second column the cluster is retained. The insertion of the epenthetic vowel, as already indicated, is due to a constraint against the sequence of consonants in one syllable, yet the occurrence of consonant clusters in the examples given above shows a relaxation on this language constraint. The consonant constraint against the occurrence of clusters may be violated by people who have a thorough knowledge of the source language sound system. Such people often prefer to reproduce the sound clusters without modifications.

The consonant clusters which occur in the final position of words may also be modified. Consider the following Afrikaans examples:

Afr.dorp	>	Ve.dorob <sup>ʌ</sup> o	'town'
Afr.kart	>	Ve.gara <sup>ʌ</sup> ta	'card'
Afr.verf	>	Ve.firifa	'clean (floor)'
Afr.tolk	>	Ve.dologi	'interpreter'

Afr.melk	>	Ve.melege	`milk'
Afr.kerk	>	Ve.kereke	`church'
Afr.hark	>	Ve.haraga	`rake'
Afr.geld	>	Ve.tshelede	`money'

In these examples the following clusters occur:

*/-rp/, /-rt/, /-rf/, /-lk/, /-rk/, /-lt/, etc.*

In all the examples the cluster is broken up by a vowel which in each example is determined by the vowel of the preceding syllable. In other words, the choice of the epenthetic vowel is due to the process of assimilation, whereby the epenthetic vowel assimilates to the vowel of the preceding syllable.

#### **(b) Adjustment to words which end with closed syllables**

Certain words adopted from foreign languages such as English and Afrikaans end with consonants. This type of syllable is referred to as a **closed syllable**. Closed syllables are not permitted in Venda, with a few exceptions of some ideophones. Therefore, whenever a foreign word which ends with a consonant is adopted to Venda, some modifications to such a syllable are inevitable. The modifications occur in different ways. In some instances a vowel is inserted whereas in others the final consonant is deleted. These processes will be discussed below. We shall begin by looking at the instances where the vowel is added onto words that end with consonants.

##### **(i) Vowel epenthesis**

Words which end with a consonant, with the exception of ideophones, are not acceptable in Venda. Such words or syllables are adjusted by adding a vowel onto them. Consider the following examples:

Afr. broek	>	Ve.vhurukhu	`trouser'
Afr. brood	>	Ve.vhurotho	`bread'
Afr. boor	>	Ve.vhoro	`drill machine'
Afr. boer	>	Ve.livhuru	`boer/farmer'
Afr. bybel	>	Ve.bivhili	`bible'
Afr. band	>	Ve.bannda	`belt'
Afr. boek	>	Ve.bugu	`book'
Afr. bout	>	Ve.baudu	`bolt'
Afr. brug	>	Ve.buroho	`bridge'
Afr. botter	>	Ve.bodoro	`butter'
Afr. lekker	>	Ve.legere	`sweet'
Afr. plek	>	Ve.bulege	`place'
Afr. blik	>	Ve.lulege	`tin'
Afr. geld	>	Ve.tshelede	`money'
Afr. kart	>	Ve.garata	`card'

The choice of the epenthetic vowel in these examples is mainly due to vowel assimilation. The epenthetic vowel is determined by the vowel of the preceding syllable(s). However, the epenthetic vowel may also be determined by the nature of the preceding consonant, as can be seen from the following examples:

Eng.glove	>	Ve.gilavu
Eng.steam	>	Ve.tshitimu
Eng.drum	>	Ve.djramu
Eng.scheme	>	Ve.tshikimu

In all these examples the epenthetic vowel is [u] and is preceded by a bilabial consonant or a consonant with bilabial characteristics. As already mentioned, bilabial consonants or consonants with bilabial characteristics seem to have some influence in the realisation of the back vowel [u] (cf. Van Warmelo 1929, Whiteley 1967; Nkabinde 1968; Hermanson 1991). The vowel [u], like the bilabial consonants, involve the lips in its production.

The bilabial conditioning can also be realised with Afrikaans adoptives:

Afr.kam	>	Ve.gamu	`comb'
Afr.dam	>	·Ve.damu	`dam'
Afr.riem	>	Ve.rimu	`ream'
Afr.drom	>	Ve.ḍiromu	`drum'
Afr.blom	>	Ve.bulomu	`flower'

In the following examples the bilabial conditioning did not apply. Instead the epenthetic vowel assimilated to the preceding vowel.

Eng.gram	>	Ve.gireme	
Afr skelm	>	Ve.tshikeleme	`crook'

It is not clear in these two examples as to why the epenthetic vowel did not assimilate to the bilabial consonant /m/ to be realised as a back vowel. In other words, it is not clear what prevented the application of a bilabial conditioning rule in these examples since in all of them there is the bilabial consonant /m/ which provides the necessary condition for it to apply. In some words, 'blom' for example, the epenthetic vowel may be determined by vowel assimilation as well as assimilation to the preceding consonant. Thus the Afrikaans word "blom" may be pronounced as **bulomu** (bilabial conditioning) or **bulomo** (vowel assimilation). One speaker may use these forms interchangeably. It seems there is no clear principle which determines the application of any of these types of assimilation.

The choice of the epenthetic vowel in the word final position may also be influenced by alveolar consonants:

Afr.trein	>	Ve.tireni	`train'
Afr.dres	>	Ve.ḍiresi	`address'
Afr.klas	>	Ve.kilasi	`class'

The realisation of the epenthetic vowel [ɪ] in these examples may be explained by the preceding alveolar nasal [n] and [s]. The influence of alveolars on the realisation of front vowels has already been discussed in the previous sections.

#### A few remarks on the adjustments of word final consonants in verb stems

The manner in which final consonants are adjusted in adopted verbs is different from that of the other word groups.

Afr.duur	>	Ve.- <u>d</u> ura	'expensive'
Afr.kerk	>	Ve.-kereka	'attend church service'
Afr.tolk	>	Ve.- <u>d</u> ologa	'interpret'
Afr.leer	>	Ve.-lera	'learn'
Afr.terk	>	Ve.- <u>t</u> ereka	'strike'
Afr.werk	>	Ve.-vherega	'work'
Afr.skuld	>	Ve.-koloda	'borrow'
Afr.hark	>	Ve.-haraga	'rake'
Eng.report	>	Ve.-pota	
Eng.deposit	>	Ve.-diposita	
Eng.brake	>	Ve.-birika	
Eng.brush	>	Ve.-burasha	
Eng.drill	>	Ve.- <u>d</u> irila	
Eng.short	>	Ve.-sho <sup>h</sup> tha	

In all these examples the final vowel is [a]. In Venda verbal stems end with vowel [a] in positive constructions. Therefore the realisation of the vowel [a] in these examples cannot be explained by phonological factors, but by morphological factors. All the phonological rules discussed above do not seem to apply here. If the verbal stems given above are used in negative constructions, the final vowel will change to [ɪ]. This indeed shows that the final vowel in adopted verbal stems is determined by morphological factors.



## (ii) Consonant deletion

Although the nasal consonant can form a syllable in Venda, it cannot do so as a coda (the consonant which occupies a final position in a syllable). The following examples show how English coda, a nasal in this regard, is adjusted in Venda:

Eng.station	>	Ve.tsh <u>i</u> t <u>i</u> t <u>h</u> shi
Eng.location	>	Ve.lok <u>h</u> eshi
Eng.kitchen	>	Ve.k <u>h</u> ishi
Eng.garden	>	Ve.ng <u>a</u> de

The segment [n] in the examples given above is deleted. The reason for such deletion appears to be due to the fact that it resembles the locative suffix **-ni** of Venda. It seems that the speakers of the language delete this consonant to avoid confusion between nouns and locatives. The word **tshitithshi** is a noun whereas **tshitithshini** 'at the station' is a locative form derived from the noun **tshitithshi**. From the nouns **lokhishi**, **khishi**, **ngade** the following locatives can be derived respectively, viz. **lokhishini** 'in the location', **khishini** 'in the kitchen', **ngadeni** 'in the garden'.

It is clear that the deletion of the final consonant [n] is determined by semantic and morphological factors rather than purely phonological factors.

### 3.3.4 Tonal adaptation of adoptives in Venda

As was mentioned in the previous section, Venda is a tone language. Words adopted from foreign languages are adapted to the Venda tonal system. Here we shall only consider words adopted from non-tonal languages such as English and Afrikaans. Studies done so far on the adaptation of words from non-tonal languages have established that the stressed syllables in such languages are realised as high tone in African languages (cf. Kruger 1965; Chimhundu 1982; Britz 1983). In this section we shall see whether this is also applicable to Venda

adoptives. The words adopted from other languages appear to be subjected to Venda tonal patterns. Nouns, for example, have their own specific tonal pattern, particularly with regard to prefixes. Poulos has this to say with regard to nouns:

"...one can make the blanket statement that Venda noun prefixes are low-toned in nature, with the exception of class 2b, which is high. In other words, the basic tone on the noun prefix is generally low (L)" (1990:569).

Noun prefixes are assigned to adopted nouns. Some of these noun prefixes are overtly marked whereas others are not. We shall first consider the assignment of tone to nouns with overtly marked prefixes:

Eng.typist	>	Ve.mùthaiphi	
Eng.planner	>	Ve.mùpulani	
Eng.machine	>	Ve.mùtshini	
Eng.apple tree	>	Ve.mùapula	
Eng.stamp	>	Ve.tshì <sup>^</sup> temmbe	
Eng.station	>	Ve.tshì <sup>^</sup> titshi	
Afr.skool	>	Ve.tshikolo	'school'
Afr.boer	>	Ve.liv <sup>^</sup> huru	'farmer'
Afr.boom	>	Ve.mùbomo	'tree'

All the prefixes in these examples are marked with a low tone. This therefore indicates that the Venda prefix tonal pattern has not been affected by the incorporation of adopted nouns. What is interesting in these examples is the correlation between the stressed syllables in the source languages and the assignment of a high tone in Venda. In cases where the onset in the source language consists of consonant clusters, the first segment is realised as a prefix. This prefix always has always a low tone. The second segment of the cluster becomes part of the stem and, if it is stressed in the source language it is assigned a high tone in Venda. In all the examples given above, the prefixes are overtly marked and have low tone. All the stressed syllables which come after the prefixes

are marked with high tone. While the examples given above seem to give the impression that stressed syllables are assigned a high tone in Venda, there are other examples which do not comply to this generalisation:

Eng.deacon	>	Ve.mùdikóní
Eng.president	>	Ve.mùpùrìsìdénndé
Eng.prophet	>	Ve.mùpòròfítà
Eng.lorry	>	Ve.lòrí

The discrepancy in the realisation of tone in these examples may be explained by considering Afrikaans as the source of these words instead of English. Let us consider their Afrikaans counterparts:

Afr.diaken	>	Ve.mùdikóní
Afr.presi'dent	>	Ve.pùrìsìdénndé
Afr.pro'feet	>	Ve.mùpòròfítà'
Afr.lor'rie	>	Ve.lòrí

The stressed syllables in these examples are realised as high tones in Venda. Therefore, tone can also help in distinguishing between the adoptives from Afrikaans and English, especially with regard to words which are similar in these two languages.

Some of the adopted nouns which have no overtly marked prefixes but begin with a stressed syllable are realised as high tones and the non-stressed ones as low tone. Let us look at the following examples:

Afr.kamp	>	Ve.gámmbà	'camp'
Afr.pampier	>	Ve.bámmbírí	'paper'
Afr.winkel	>	Ve.vhéngélè	'shop'
Afr.kamer	>	Ve.kámárà	'room'
Afr.kam	>	Ve.gámú	'comb'

Afr.draad	>	Ve.dírátá	'wire'
Afr.kettel	>	Ve.gédélà	'kettle'
Eng.cup	>	Ve.kháphù	
Eng.cake	>	Ve.khékhé	
Eng.team	>	Ve.thímú	
Eng.driver	>	Ve.díráivà	
Eng.truck	>	Ve.thírákhá	
Eng.drama	>	Ve.dírámá	
Eng.drill	>	Ve.dírílí	
Eng.club	>	Ve.kílábú	

In the above examples stressed syllables of the source languages tally well with the high tone syllables in Venda. However, the following examples seem to deviate from the generalisation made above. There does not appear to be a clear explanation for these exceptional forms.

Afr.kerk	>	Ve.gèréké	'church'
Eng.referee	>	Ve.réfiri	
Eng.caravan	>	Ve.khàràváni	
Eng.committee	>	Ve.kòmítí	
Eng.company	>	Ve.khàmphání	
Eng.recipe	>	Ve.risípí	

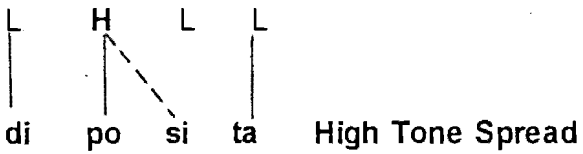
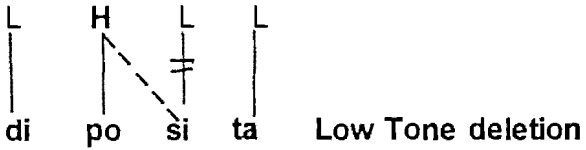
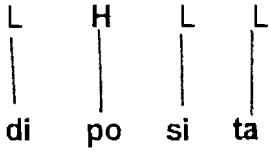
The assignment of tone on verbal stems also seems to be based on the stress-tone relationship:

Afr.duur	>	Ve.-dúrà	'expensive'
Afr.ry	>	Ve.-réilà	'drive'
Afr.laai	>	Ve.-láisà	'load'
Afr.kerk	>	Ve.-kérékà	'attend church service'
Afr.tolk	>	Ve.-dólógà	'interpret'
Afr.leer	>	Ve.-lérà	'learn'

Afr.werk	> Ve.-vhérégà	'work'
Afr.skuld	> Ve.-kólódà	'borrow'
Afr.hark	> Ve.-hárágà	'rake'
Eng.report	> Ve.-pótà	
Eng.deposit	> Ve.-dìpósità	
Eng.brake	> Ve.-bíríkà	
Eng.brush	> Ve.-búráshà	
Eng.drill	> Ve.-dírílà	
Eng.freeze	> Ve.-fírízà	
Eng.short	> Ve.-shóthà	

As can be ascertained from the above examples, the stress on the initial syllables of English and Afrikaans words is usually realised as high tone in Venda. All the final syllables are realised as low tones. This is typical of the tonal behaviour of verbal stems in Venda when used in isolation. The tonal pattern of a verb stem may change when certain morphemes such as verbal extensions are added to it.

What is interesting about the above examples is the assignment of tone to syllables which are not stressed in English and Afrikaans. The unstressed syllables would be expected to be realised as low tones in Venda, but this is not always the case in the examples given above. Unstressed syllables are realised as both high and low tones. This can be seen from adoptives such as **dipósità (LHHL)** < **Eng.deposit**. Here, the high tone occurs in the unstressed syllable **-si-**. The question, therefore, is what determines the assignment in such cases. In some instances the high tone, which corresponds to the stressed syllable of the source language, influences the tones of the succeeding syllables. In this case the high tone spreads to the adjacent syllables. Tone spread in the adoptive **deposità** can be illustrated as follows:



In this example a high tone is spread to the adjacent low tone syllable to the right. The question may arise as to how one determines the tone of a syllable in a word. The guiding principle here is stress. As has been mentioned, the stressed syllables are more often than not perceived as high tones in Venda.

The following are more examples of words in which the high tone is spread to the adjacent low tone syllables:

dzhámú	(cf.Eng.jam)
khísí	(cf.Eng.kiss)
búgú	(cf.Afr.boek)
bégé	(cf.Eng.bag)
módóró	(cf.Eng.motor)
tshìkóló	(cf.Afr.skool)
pháthí etc.	(cf.Eng.party)

### **3.4 Concluding remarks on the effects of adoptives on Venda phonology**

The adoption of foreign words in Venda seems to have influenced the Venda sound system in many ways. Some of the language constraints against foreign forms appear to have been weakened. Certain new sounds like [θ], [ð], [ʃ] seem to be infiltrating the sound inventory of the language.

The effect of adoptives on the Venda sound system is evident from the way consonant clusters are adjusted to the language. Whereas consonant clusters are broken up by an epenthetic vowel in some cases, in others they are retained, especially in recent adoptives eg. -**d**rivhuala, khrimu, klabu, blasi etc. This is a violation of the **native phonotactic** and **syllable structure constraints**.

Despite these influences, the Venda language appears to have coped well in modifying other phonological aspects of adopted words. The **tonal constraint** seems to have applied in most of the cases.

### **3.5 Conclusion**

An attempt was made in this chapter to discuss the phonological adjustments of adopted words in Venda. Before the discussion on the phonological adaptation of foreign words to Venda was undertaken, the Venda sound system was outlined and different language constraints were discussed and exemplified. In discussing the phonological changes that adopted words undergo, different explanations were offered, namely, the phonetic approximation theory, the phonemic approximation theory, the generative approach, natural phonology, autosegmental phonology and the language constraints hypothesis. The autosegmental approach was used to explain some of the changes that have occurred to adopted words. With regard to the phonological modification of the adopted words processes such as substitution, assimilation, consonant harmony, consonant cluster simplification, adjustment to the syllable structure, etc. were discussed. An attempt was also made to show the adaptation of foreign words to the Venda tonal system. In conclusion, it appears

that although the language is coping well in adapting foreign word forms to its sound system it has also been affected by these foreign influences to some degrees. New sounds and sound sequences have been introduced to the language. This could well indicate that there is a weakening of some constraints in the Venda language.



## CHAPTER 4

**4.0 GRAMMATICAL ADJUSTMENT IN ADOPTIVE FORMS****4.1 Introduction**

Words adopted from other languages are adapted to the Venda grammatical structure. The word 'grammar' is used here to refer to both morphology and syntax. With regard to morphology we shall be looking at the morphological adaptation of foreign words to Venda. Here we shall consider the morphological adaptation of adopted words in different parts of speech such as nouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbs and conjunctives. We shall also look at some syntactic aspects of the adopted words. As our point of departure, we shall look at nouns since most of the words which have been adopted into Venda are nouns. But before discussing the adaptation to adopted nouns, the morphology of the Venda noun will be briefly outlined. This will help to provide a better understanding of the changes that occur to adopted nouns.

**4.2 Morphology and some syntactic aspects of the adoptive nouns in Venda.****4.2.1 The morphology of the Venda noun**

A noun can be described as "a word or group of words that refers to a person, place, or thing or any syntactically similar word" (Collins English Dictionary). In this regard a noun is defined according to its meaning and its syntactic behaviour. With regard to meaning, our focus will be mainly on the noun prefixes. The prefix indicates the general characteristics of a thing, person, animal or general category to which the thing named belongs in the mind of the speaker (Westphal 1945:90). This can be illustrated by the following examples:

<b>Muvenda</b>	(a Venda person)
<b>Tshivenda</b>	(Venda language or culture)
<b>Vhuvenda</b>	(some Venda characteristics)
<b>Kuvenda</b>	(small Venda person)

Different noun prefixes have been used in these examples with the noun stem - **venda**. The use of the different prefixes with this noun stem results in a shift of the meaning of the stem.

Secondly, the noun prefix has a classificatory function. In this case noun prefixes may be seen as occurring in different classes. This has long been established by Bantu linguists such as Bleek, Guthrie and Meinhof like, just to mention a few. According to Meinhof's ( 1906 ) system Venda noun classes can be listed as follows:

<b>Class</b>	<b>Prefix</b>
1	mu-
1(a)	∅
2	vha-
2(a)	vho-
3	mu-
4	mi-
5	li-
6	ma-
7	tshi-
8	zwi-
9	N-
10	dziN-
11	lu-
14	vhu-
15	u
16	fha-

17	ku-
18	mu-
19	ku-
21	di-

Nouns in Venda are therefore said to belong to anyone of these noun classes. However, according to Westphal (1946:47) "the principle of this classification is not known yet and will probably never be determined completely". What has been established so far is that noun stems may be assigned to the different classes on the basis of meaning and number. We have already indicated that prefixes affect the meaning significance of the noun stems. Therefore noun class prefixes have traditionally been taken to represent different semantic significances. Each noun stem is assigned to a class prefix according to the semantic significance which the speaker intends to express. Although Hendrikse and Poulos (1992) have come up with a new approach, they still acknowledge the role of semantic significance in the classification of nouns. Their approach will be discussed in relation to adopted nouns later in this chapter. They summarise the semantic significances of the different noun class prefixes of the Bantu languages as follows (here, only the classes that apply to Venda have been considered) :

<b>Class 1</b>	<i>Human beings</i>
<b>Class 1(a)</b>	<i>Proper names</i>
	<i>Kinship</i>
	<i>Personifications</i>
<b>Class 2:</b>	<i>Regular plural of Class 1</i>
<b>Class 2(b)</b>	<i>Regular plural of Class 1(a)</i>
<b>Class 3</b>	<i>Natural phenomena</i>
	<i>Body parts</i>
	<i>Plants</i>
	<i>Animals</i>
<b>Class 4</b>	<i>Regular plural of Class 3</i>
<b>Class 5</b>	<i>Natural phenomena</i>

*Animals*  
*Body parts*  
*Collective nouns*  
*Undesirable people*  
*Augmentatives*  
*Derogatives*

**Class 6**            *Regular plural of Classes 5 and 14*  
*Mass terms and liquids*  
*Time references*  
*Mannerisms*  
*Modes of action*

**Class 7**            *Body parts*  
*Tools, instruments and utensils*  
*Animals and insects*  
*Languages*  
*Diseases*  
*Outstanding people*  
*Amelioratives*  
*Derogatives*  
*Diminutives*  
*Augmentatives*  
*Curtatives (Shortness and stoutness)*  
*Mannerisms*

**Class 8**            *Regular plural of Class 7*

**Class 9**            *Animals*  
*People*  
*Body parts*  
*Tools, instruments and household effects*  
*Natural phenomena*

**Class 10**         *Regular plural of Class 9*

<b>Class 11</b>	<i>Long, thin entities</i> <i>Languages</i> <i>Body parts</i> <i>Natural phenomena</i> <i>Implements, utensils and other artefacts</i> <i>Augmentatives</i> <i>Derogatives</i>
<b>Class 14</b>	<i>Abstracts</i> <i>Collectives</i> <i>Location terms</i> <i>Infinitives</i>
<b>Class 15</b>	<i>Infinitives</i>
<b>Class 16</b>	<i>Location</i>
<b>Class 17</b>	<i>Location</i>
<b>Class 18</b>	<i>Location</i>
<b>Class 20</b>	<i>Derogatives</i> <i>Augumentatives</i> <i>Diminutives</i> <i>Mannerisms</i>
<b>Class 21</b>	<i>Augumentatives</i> <i>Derogatives</i>

(Hendrikse and Poulos 1992:199-201)

From the list given above we can see that "the traditionalists presented a typical interpretation of the system by assigning specific diverse significances to each and every class" (Hendrikse and Poulos 1992:202). Besides showing the semantic significances associated with different classes of noun prefixes, the list also shows, as already mentioned above, that noun class prefixes which have the same meaning may differ in terms of number. In this regard certain noun prefixes indicate singularity whereas others indicate plurality. Therefore noun stems may be appropriately assigned to different noun classes according to number. However,

the problem with regard to classifying nouns according to number is the fixed order of the singular-plural relationship. In this system nouns which belong to a **singular class**, let's say **Class A** are expected to belong automatically to **its corresponding plural class, class B**. Although most nouns seem to follow this trend there are those which do not seem to adhere to this principle, as will be seen later in our discussion of adoptive nouns. Thus some linguists like Zawawi (1979) feel that the allocation of nouns into different noun classes should not necessarily mean that nouns are put into rigid and fixed classes. In other words noun stems can be changed from one class to another. The traditionalist approach also seems to create the impression that nouns can be clearly classified according to their semantic significances which are expressed by the noun prefixes; this does not seem to be the case. We have seen from the foregoing discussion that the principle of semantic significance, though it may be useful in the classification of certain nouns in Venda, is not without problems. There is still the problem of certain significances that are found in more than one class. If we take, for instance, a semantic significance such as **Body parts**, we note that they occur in nouns of **Classes 3 & 4, 5 & 6, 7 & 8, 9 & 10 and 11**. The difficulty here concerns the allocation of a noun stem referring to body parts to a particular class. This difficulty will be clearly illustrated in the section on the allocation of adoptives to different noun classes. It is because of problems such as these that some linguists have sought other ways of classifying the nouns of a language. Amongst these scholars are Denny and Creider, as cited in the article on "A continuum interpretation of the Bantu noun class system" by Hendrikse and Poulos (1992), who came up with other principles which may be used in the classification of nouns. According to them the bulk of the noun prefixes may be associated with **configurational** or **shape** meanings. These criteria yield to the following classes of noun prefixes:

**(a) Prefixes which denote kinds of entities**

These prefixes are used in nouns which denote things which have "real or distinct existence" (Collins Concise Dictionary). Nouns in these classes will, according to them refer to kinds of people, tools and animals. Therefore most of these nouns

are those which are found in classes 1/2, 7/8 and 9/10 (Hendrikse and Poulos 1992:201).

**(b) Prefixes which denote spatial and shape configurations**

Denny and Creider (1986) describe configuration classes as those in which class prefixes denote characteristics such as the shape of the entity designated. Here properties such as roundness, length and size play an important role. With regard to shape certain entities may have a solid shape (e.g 3/4, 5/6 or an outline shape such as the nouns of class 9/10, 11/10. "The contrast between 'outline' and 'solid' shape is a contrast between objects which have clear profiles, edges or boundaries such that there is a difference between an outside and an inside, and objects which do not have this characteristic" (Denny and Creider 1986:217). We will not go into detail with this approach since our objective is to merely lay a background for our discussion of adoptive nouns. Hendrikse and Poulos (1992:202) summarise the significance of Denny and Creider's approach as follows:

"Denny and Creider, in their analysis, make a significant contribution by abstracting away from the details of each class and attempt to regroup some of the classes in terms of general semantic notions such as kind and shape" (Hendrikse and Poulos 1992:202).

Even though, Hendrikse and Poulos commend the contribution made by Denny and Creider to the classification of noun prefixes, they express their dissatisfaction with the fact that the analysis does not show the deeper underlying principle of the whole system. They therefore propose an approach which is based on four fundamental semantic parameters, namely:

- (a) Concreteness (Classes 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10)
- (b) Attribution (Classes 11,12,13,19,20,21,22)
- (c) Spatial orientation (Classes 16,17,18,23)
- (d) Abstractness (Classes 14,15)

They summarise their hypothesis in the following manner

"We would, in the meantime, like to hypothesize in terms of the views expressed above that the speakers of these languages systematize the referents of their noun universe in terms of at least these four semantic parameters. Thus although cultures may differ as to the detail of the subcategories distinguished within each one of these parameters, they all seem to organize the noun universe in terms of major categories based on the four parameters referred to above" (Hendrikse and Poulos 1992:203).

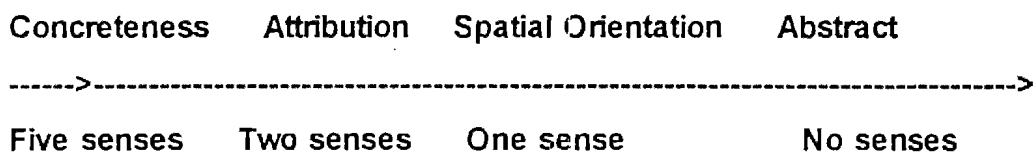
The advantage with this approach is that it attempts to provide some basic principles which underlie a speaker's perception and classification of the entities designated by the different nouns. According to this approach

"...**homo sapiens** sorting and categorization of these objects primarily alludes to the perceptual (i.e. concrete) properties of these objects. Furthermore, these properties are qualitatively evaluated by **homo sapiens**, hence the sorting of objects in terms of selective qualitative **attributes**. He also perceives objects relative to some or other fixed point both in space and time, hence spatial categorization of objects. Finally, abstracts such as qualities and activities are brought into the noun universe by means of nominalizations, hence the **derivational** mechanisms in the system" (Hendrikse and Poulos 1992:204).

The four parameters are considered to have some cognitive basis rather than just occurring arbitrarily. The "notion of concreteness may form the basis of the whole system...a concrete entity is one that can be perceived by the various senses." (Hendrikse and Poulos 1992:204). According to them the concrete entities can be seen, heard, touched, smelt and tasted. Using the concreteness criterion, they were able to establish a continuum which starts from one extreme pole comprising entities which can be perceived by all five senses to the other end where none of the senses is involved. They regard the Bantu nouns as organized along this



continuum. At the one end of the continuum will be the nouns with the most concrete perceptual saliency and at the other extreme of the continuum will be nouns which express abstract notions. They represent the continuum for the Bantu noun universe as follows:



(Hendrikse and Poulos 1992:204)

From this continuum it is clear that at least five senses are involved in the perception of concrete things, though not simultaneously. Only two senses are involved in the notion of attribution. Attribution has to do with the perception of size and shape. In this regard visual and tactile senses are involved. According to Hendrikse and Poulos "attributive nouns can metaphorically take on an abstract significance of emotive perceptions (e.g. where size and shape elicit certain attributes, hence the common use of augmentatives and diminutives to express derogation and amelioration). Finally, there are the spacial and abstract nouns. Since they cannot be perceived by any sense, abstract nouns are mainly due to derivational mechanisms in the language system.

Hendrikse and Poulos's proposal appears to have come close to providing a solution to Westphal's problem of finding the underlying principle to the classification of nouns in Bantu. In the following discussion, we shall assess the extent to which this approach can explain the assignment of adoptive nouns to the different noun classes in Venda.

#### 4.2.1.1 Morphological adjustment in the adoption of nouns

The adoptive nouns in Venda are subject to various morphological adjustments in Venda. Zawawi (1979:61) raises very interesting and thought provoking questions

pertaining to the grammatical or morphological adaptation of foreign nominals to a language. Some of the questions he raises will be paraphrased below since they are pertinent to our study:

- (1) Which 'foreign' words have been incorporated into the language lexicon?
- (2) To which of the traditional "Noun Classes" have the nouns of non-Bantu origin been allocated?
- (3) What criteria have been used in assigning these nouns to these classes?
- (4) Do these criteria lead us to understand better the morphological and syntactic structures of the language?
- (5) Has the introduction of nouns of non-Bantu origin to a Bantu inventory of nouns affected the traditional classification of the language "Noun classes," either by changing the morphological patterns of their concordial agreements or by introducing new morphological forms?
- (6) What other changes in the grammatical patterns have occurred as a result of the introduction of these nouns of non-Bantu origin?
- (7) Is it possible to formulate new rules on the basis of these new patterns which will incorporate the whole lexicon of the language nouns, Bantu and non-Bantu?
- (9) Is it possible to predict the grammatical patterns of future nouns of non-Bantu origin?

Our discussion in this chapter will address the issues raised by these questions. First we shall consider the question of the allocation of prefixes to adoptive nouns. It is an established fact that when words of non-Bantu origin are incorporated into a Bantu language they are modified to fit in with the prefix system of the language. The prefix system of Venda and other African languages was briefly discussed in the previous section and will serve as a frame of reference for the subsequent discussion on the prefixes assigned to adoptives.

#### 4.2.1.1.1 Affixing class prefixes to adopted nouns

This section will attempt to address the questions raised in (1), (2) and (3) above, all of which revolve around the issue of assigning class prefixes to adoptives. Only adopted nouns from English and Afrikaans will be taken into consideration. As already mentioned, nouns are assigned to classes when they are adopted. The main question here is what determines the choice of one class prefix for a particular adopted noun stem over another. There are various factors which serve as criteria for the assignment of prefixes to adopted nouns. These factors will be discussed herebelow:

##### (a) Conversion of initial element to independent prefix

Studies done in other African languages on the morphological adaptation of foreign words (Van Warmelo 1929; Whiteley 1963; 1967; Hansford & Hansford 1989; Chimhundu 1982; Poulos 1990) have shown that in some adoptives the first syllable contains sound elements which are similar or identical to the sound/sounds of one or other of the noun prefixes, and as such the original syllable undergoes slight modifications in order to be accommodated into the class system of Venda. This can be clearly seen from the following examples:

(1) Afr.meneer	>	Ve.mu <u>ṅ</u> eri (1)	`a male missionary'
		vha <u>ṅ</u> eri(2)	`male missionaries'
(2) Eng.machine	>	Ve.mu <u>t</u> shini (3)	
		mi <u>t</u> shini (4)	
Eng.mat	>	Ve.me <u>t</u> he (3)	
		mi <u>m</u> ethe (4)	
Afr.mandjie	>	Ve.ma <u>n</u> gi (3)	`basket'
		mi <u>m</u> anngi (4)	`baskets'
Afr.mark	>	Ve.ma <u>r</u> aga (3)	`market'
		mi <u>m</u> araga (4)	`markets'
Afr.moer	>	Ve.mu <u>r</u> u (3)	`nut (on a bolt)'

		mimuru (4)	'nuts'
Afr.motor	>	Ve.modoro (3)	'car'
		mimodoro (4)	'cars'
Afr.museum	>	Ve.mesiamu(3)	'museum'
		mimesiamu(4)	'museums'
Eng.match	>	Ve.metshe (3)	
		mimetshe (4)	
Eng.matches	>	Ve.matshesi (3)	
		mimatshesi(4)	
Eng.map	>	Ve.mepe (3)	
		mimepe (4)	
Eng.mineral	>	Ve.munirale (3)	
		minirale (4)	

The prefixes in the above examples have been allocated on the basis of the close similarity between the initial consonant of the adopted nouns and the first consonant of the Venda class prefix **mu-**. It seems that the class prefix is allocated to the singular form only, and then the plural prefix is allocated on the basis of the class to which the singular noun belongs. This criterion of allocating prefixes to adopted noun stems on the basis of initial syllable resemblance is not without problems. Firstly, even though the adopted nouns all have the segment /m/ as the initial syllable, they are allocated to class 1/2 or class 3/4, e.g. **muneri (Afr.meneer)**, plural **vhaneri** and **mutshini (Eng.machine)**, plural **mitshini** respectively. This shows that even though the allocation of the class prefix to adoptive nouns is made on the basis of the initial sound resemblance, the actual class to which the noun is assigned may be determined by other factors. In order to determine to which class the adopted noun is assigned, other factors such as semantic content also need to be considered. The second problem that one encounters is the fact that there are many other adoptive nouns which do not seem to adhere to this principle of initial syllable resemblance. This can be illustrated with the following examples:

Eng.mile	>	Ve.maila	(9)
		dzimaila	(10)
Eng.million	>	Ve.milioni	(9)
		dzimilioni	(10)
Eng.metre	>	Ve.mithara	(9)
		dzimithara	(10)
Eng.mini	>	Ve.mini	(9)
		dzimini	(10)

It is not clear why the adoptive nouns in the above examples have not been allocated to class 3/4 since their initial syllables resemble these class prefixes.

The approximation hypothesis may be used to account for the allocation of prefixes in the following examples. In these examples, the **consonant clusters** begin with **s**. The **s** sound is realised as the prefix **tshi-** in Venda. It appears that when **s** occurs before a stop consonant, it is approximated to the the prefix **tshi-**.

Eng.stamp	>	Ve.tshitemmbe	
		zwitemmbe	
Afr.skool	>	Ve.tshikolo	'school'
		zwikolo	'schools'
Afr.stasie	>	Ve.tshitasi	'mission station'
		zwitasi	'mission stations'
Afr.straf	>	Ve.tshitarafu	'punishment'
		zwitarafu	'punishments'
Eng.station	>	Ve.tshititshi	
		zwititshi	
Eng.scheme	>	Ve.tshikimu	
		zwikimu	
Eng.square	>	Ve.tshikwea	
		zwikwea	

Eng. <b>Scottish</b>	>	Ve. <b>Tshikotshi</b> Zwikotshi
Eng. <b>skipper</b>	>	Ve. <b>tshikhipha</b> zwickhipha
Eng. <b>scooter</b>	>	Ve. <b>tshikuta</b> zwikuta

As can be noted from above examples, the sound **s** in English and Afrikaans clusters is approximated to the nominal prefix **tshi-**. The prefix **zwi-** is a result of plural formation. Another example is that of Afrikaans words which begin with the consonant **b**. Such nouns are placed in class 14 which has the prefix **vh-**.

Afr. <b>brood</b>	>	Ve. <b>vhurotho</b> 'bread'
Afr. <b>broek</b>	>	Ve. <b>vhurukhu</b> 'trouser'
Afr. <b>brief</b>	>	Ve. <b>vhurifhi</b> 'letter'

Although this principle seems to apply well to the examples we have given above, it is still not clear why this is not the case with other adoptive nouns such as the ones given below. The consonants of the initial syllables in the examples below are very close in production to the Noun Prefix **tshi-** of class 7. Therefore, according to the approximation hypothesis, these adoptive nouns would be expected to be assigned to this class. As is shown below, this is not the case; instead these nouns are placed in Class 9.

Eng. <b>change</b>	Ve. <b>tshintshi</b>	(9)
Eng. <b>chain</b>	Ve. <b>tshaini</b>	(9)
Eng. <b>cheese</b>	Ve. <b>tshisi</b>	(9)
Eng. <b>chisel</b>	Ve. <b>tshesela</b>	(9)
Eng. <b>champion</b>	Ve. <b>tshampioni</b>	(9)
Eng. <b>chewing-gum</b>	Ve. <b>tshingamu</b>	(9)
Eng. <b>charge-office</b>	Ve. <b>tshatshaofisi</b>	(9)
Eng. <b>chamber</b>	Ve. <b>tshimba</b>	(9)

Eng. <b>cheque</b>	Ve. <b>tsheke</b>	(9)
Eng. <b>checkers</b>	Ve. <b>tshekasi</b>	(9)
Eng. <b>chalk</b>	Ve. <b>tshoko</b>	(9)
Eng. <b>chocolate</b>	Ve. <b>tshokoleithi</b>	(9)
Eng. <b>chimney</b>	Ve. <b>tshimini</b>	(9)

The failure of the approximation hypothesis can also be seen from the following examples:

Afr. <b>leer</b>	>	Ve. <b>l<sup>^</sup>eri</b>	(9) 'learn'
Afr. <b>lepel</b>	>	Ve. <b>lebula</b>	(9) 'spoon'
Eng. <b>lorry</b>	>	Ve. <b>lori</b>	(9)
Afr. <b>boor</b>	>	Ve. <b>v<sup>h</sup>oro</b>	(9) 'drill'
Afr. <b>boer</b>	>	Ve. <b>liv<sup>h</sup>uru</b>	(3) 'farmer'

In the first two examples one would expect the noun to be placed in class 5, because of the occurrence of the l consonant in the initial position (cf. Noun prefix **li-** of class 5). However, it should be noted that some adopted words which begin with the sound l are assigned to **Li-** class e.g.:

Afr. <b>lekker</b>	>	Ve. <b>l<sup>^</sup>egere</b>	'sweet'
Eng. <b>litre</b>	>	Ve. <b>li<sup>h</sup>tha</b>	

In the examples **v<sup>h</sup>oro** and **liv<sup>h</sup>uru** one would expect these nouns to be assigned to noun class **14** (where **v<sup>h</sup>u-** is the prefix). But this is not the case. These nouns are instead assigned to class **9** and **3** respectively. The former can be explained by the zero prefix class principle and the latter by taking into consideration semantic criteria. These two principles will be discussed in detail in the following sections. From the examples given above it appears that the initial consonant principle does not apply automatically in all cases. In some instances it is overridden by other factors such as the semantic and zero prefix principles.

(b) Allocation of class prefix on the basis of the semantic content of the adoptive noun

Adopted nouns may also be assigned prefixes on the basis of their meaning. In fact this is the traditional way of assigning prefixes to nouns. This approach was discussed under section 4.2.1, where it was indicated that noun prefixes carry semantic significances. As a result, certain adopted nouns are assigned to certain prefixes on the basis of their meaning. For instance, adoptive nouns which refer to human beings would, according to this criterion, normally affix the noun prefix **mu-** of **Class 1** in singular and **vha-** of **Class 2** in plural. This can be illustrated by the following examples:

Afr.boer	>	Ve.muvhuru	'farmer'
Afr.menner	>	Ve.mu <sup>u</sup> neri	'missionary'
Eng.prophet	>	Ve.muporofita	
Eng.evangelist	>	Ve.muevangeli	
Eng.deacon	>	Ve.mudikoni	
Eng.president	>	Ve.muphurusidennde	
Eng.zionist	>	Ve.muzioni	
Eng.bishop	>	Ve.mubishopho	
Eng.student	>	Ve.mutshudeni (Tshitshudeni)	
Eng.heathen	>	Ve.mu <sup>u</sup> hedeni	
Eng.christian	>	Ve.mukiresite	

There are, however, some adoptives which denote human beings but which are not assigned to this class (cf.Chimhundu 1982). Some of these adoptive nouns, as will be seen below, are assigned to class 5 and others to class 7 and 9. There are various factors that determine the allocation of the adopted nouns to these noun classes, namely, the zero prefix principle and the approximation hypothesis principle .

Eng.judge	>	Ve.dzhadzhi	(5)
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Eng.driver	>	Ve.diraiva	(5)
Eng.teacher	>	Ve.thitshere	(5)
Eng.inspector	>	Ve.tshipikitere	(7)
Eng.doctor	>	Ve.dokotela	(5/9)
Eng.nurse	>	Ve.nese	(5)
Eng.conductor	>	Ve.khondai	(9)
Eng.police	>	Ve.pholisa	(5)
Eng.principal	>	Ve.phirisipala	(5/9)
Eng.clerk	>	Ve.kileke	(5/9)
Eng.lawyer	>	Ve.loyara	(5/9)
Eng.professor	>	Ve.phurofesa	(1/9)
Eng.lecturer	>	Ve.lekhitshara	(1/9)
Eng.cook	>	Ve.guga	(5/9)
Eng.minister	>	Ve.minisita	(1/9)
Eng.soldier	>	Ve.liswole	(5)

From the examples given above, it may be noted that although the semantic principle may explain the allocation of some of these adopted nouns to their respective classes, in others it cannot. The adopted nouns given above fall into different classes, namely, classes 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10. Some of the adoptive nouns which are found in classes 5 & 6, 7 & 8 do not express the semantic significances that are normally expressed by native words in such classes. For example, the noun **thitshere** and **diraiva** which are allocated to classes 5 and 6, do not have the pejorative connotations usually expressed by nouns of these classes. The same applies to the adoptive noun **tshipikitere**; this noun does not have any derogatory meaning or diminution. These adoptives, therefore, seem to defy the principle of grouping nouns into rigid nominal semantic categories. This fact was also illustrated in our discussion of the allocation of class prefixes on the basis of the resemblance to the initial element of the class prefix. There we noted that the principle of semantic significance is very often not applicable. Because of the influence of adoptive nouns, certain classes which used to consist of nouns with common semantic characteristics now include many nouns which do not fit the

class definitions at all (cf. Zawawi 1979:68). For instance, the allocation of nouns like **vhurotho**, **vhurifhi**, **vhulege**, **vhurukhu** to **class 14** has nothing to do with abstractness, which seems to be the dominant feature of this class.

**(c) Allocation of adoptive nouns to a zero prefix class**

Most studies on the morphological adaptation of non-Bantu words to Bantu languages have shown that most of the adopted nouns are allocated to **Class 1 (a)**, **5 & 9** on the basis of the zero prefix. By 'zero' prefix we are referring to adoptive nouns which cannot be identified with any class prefix. Therefore according to the zero prefix principle such nouns are assigned to those noun classes with nouns that do not normally have overtly marked prefixes. Generally speaking, adoptive nouns are allocated to **1(a)** if the referent is human and **5 & 9** if the referent is non-human (Chimhundu 1982:66). These adoptive nouns could not fit into any of the other classes by virtue of the nature of their initial consonant. The following are examples of nouns that belong to **Class 1 (a)**:

Eng.father	>	Ve.fada
Eng.referee	>	Ve.refiri
Eng.captain	>	Ve.kaputeni

In **Class 5** we find the following nouns which have been allocated to this class on the basis of the zero prefix principle:

Eng.paper	>	Ve.phepha	
Eng.gate	>	Ve.gethe	
Eng.basket	>	Ve.basikete	
Eng.glove	>	Ve.gilavu	
Afr.tent	>	Ve.dennde	'tent'
Afr.tou	>	Ve.deu	'rope'
Afr.dam	>	Ve.damu	'dam'
Afr.drom	>	Ve.diromu	'drum'

Afr.blom	>	Ve.bolomu	'flower'
Afr.papier	>	Ve.bammbiri	'paper'

It appears that most of the adoptive nouns allocated to a class on the basis of the zero prefix principle are found in **Class 9**. This may be so because most of the native nouns which have unmarked prefixes in Venda are also found in this class. The following nouns have been allocated to **class 9** on the basis of having prefixes which are not overtly marked:

Eng.gravel	>	Ve.giravhulo	
Eng.fashion	>	Ve.fesheni	
Eng.kitchen	>	Ve.khishi	
Eng.cupboard	>	Ve.khabodo	
Eng.custard	>	Ve.khasitadi	
Eng.pick-up	>	Ve.phikhaphu	
Eng.jug	>	Ve.dzhege	
Eng.polish	>	Ve.pholishi	
Eng.porridge	>	Ve.phalishi	
Eng.watch	>	Ve.watshi	
Eng.diamond	>	Ve.daimane	
Eng.bicycle	>	Ve.baisigira	
Eng.rice	>	Ve.raisi	
Eng.mule	>	Ve.meila	
Afr.tapeit	>	Ve.tapita	'plastic tiles'
Afr.suiker	>	Ve.swigiri	'sugar'
Afr.trein	>	Ve.thireni	'train'
Afr.donkie	>	Ve.donngi	'donkey'
Afr.perd	>	Ve.bere	'horse'

The adoptive nouns allocated to this class seem to cover different semantic fields such as tools, instruments and household utensils.

Hendrikse and Poulos's approach seems to throw some light on this complex problem of the allocation of class prefixes to adoptive nouns. According to this approach speakers of a language sort and categorize whatever they perceive. The "sorting and categorizing of these objects primarily alludes to perceptual (i.e. concrete) properties of these objects" (1992:204). This criterion of concreteness appears to play an important role in the allocation of class prefixes to adopted nouns. All the adopted nouns which are allocated to classes **1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9** and **10**, primarily denote concrete entities, as the examples below show:

Eng.heathen	>	Ve. muhedeni	(1)	
		pl.vhahedeni	(2)	
Afr.motor	>	Ve. mo <sup>x</sup> odoro	(3)	'a car'
		pl.mimodo <sup>x</sup> oro	(4)	'cars'
Eng.gate	>	Ve. gethe	(5)	
		pl.magethe	(6)	
Eng.inspector	>	Ve.tshipiki <sup>x</sup> tere	(7)	
		pl.zwipiki <sup>x</sup> tere	(8)	
Afr.kamp	>	Ve.gammba	(9)	'camp'
		pl.dzigammba	(10)	'camps'

Hendrikse and Poulos hypothesis seems to give us some clue as to what actually happens when a speaker perceives foreign word forms. It is interesting to note that most of the adoptive nouns in Venda, particularly those from English and Afrikaans, represent foreign objects which have been introduced to the Venda people. The distribution of adoptive nouns in the classes given above depends on various factors. For instance, the physical properties of some of these objects may in one way or another influence the speaker in assigning an adoptive noun to a particular class. As already indicated, allocation may be made on the perception of things that are human as against non-human. In other instances, adoptives are allocated to certain classes according to the speaker's perception of their initial sounds, which are equated with certain class prefixes. Although the concreteness criterion is useful in the classification of some adopted nouns, in others it does not seem to

ough adopted nouns such as **vhurukhu**, **vhurotho**, **vhurifhi**,  
s, they are allocated to **class 14** which is associated with  
case, the allocation of the adopted nouns to this class is  
initial sound resemblance rather than their parameter of

of foreign objects or concepts may be influenced by other  
namely, size and shape. And according to Hendrikse and  
ze and shape may elicit certain attributes such as  
inutives, which may express derogation and amelioration.  
oy the way certain nouns referring to certain tribes or ethnic

sa person) (5)	pl.Mathosa (6)
te person) (5)	pl.Makhuwa (6)
lian person) (5)	pl.Magula (6)

the following in this regard:

feelings towards other ethnic groups are sometimes reflected  
which certain nouns are assigned. Thus, not all names of  
g to other tribes or ethnic groups occur in classes 1 and 2  
where they would be expected to be found. In fact, where  
other prejudice or adverse feeling shown towards a person  
then class 5 (with plural li-), rather than class 1 would be

It seems that most of the adoptive nouns in **class 5 & 6** are allocated to these  
classes to denote attributes such as size and shape which invoke certain attitudes  
in the speaker:

Afr.boek	>	Ve. <u>li</u> bugu	(5)	'big book'
		mabu <u>gu</u>	(6)	'big books'
Eng.stamp	>	Ve. <u>li</u> <u>te</u> mmbe	(5)	'big stamp'
		ma <u>te</u> mmbe	(6)	'big stamps'
Eng.skirt	>	Ve. <u>li</u> kete	(5)	'big skirt'
		ma <u>ke</u> te	(6)	'big skirts'

The adopted nouns given above were allocated to this class to denote the size and shape of the concrete things which they designate. The adoptive **bugu** is allocated to class **9** on the basis of the zero prefix principle. But here it is allocated to class **5** and **6** in the singular and plural respectively on the basis of the size and shape. The last two examples should be allocated to class **7** in the singular and **8** in the plural on the basis of the initial syllable resemblance principle. Instead in this case these nouns are allocated to classes **5** and **6** on the basis of the size and shape of the things they denote. With regard to spatial orientation, there does not seem to be an adoptive noun which is allocated to such class prefixes according to these properties. With regard to the last principle of **abstractness**, some adoptives like **vhurotho**, **vhurukhu**, **vhurifhi**, which denote concrete things, are allocated to class **14** which is associated with **abstract nouns**. As already indicated, these nouns are assigned to class **14** on the basis of their initial sound which resembles the **vh-** of class **14**. However, some abstract nouns which belong to this noun class may be derived from other concrete nouns:

vhukhuruku	'crookedness'	<	khurukhu	(Eng.crook)
vhukeleme	'criminality'	<	tshikeleme	(Afr.skelm)
vhurobane	'robbery'	<	u roba	(Eng.to rob)
vhukiresite	'christianity'	<	Khiresite	(Eng.Christ)

In this section, an overview was given of Hendrikse and Poulos's approach to noun class classification. This was then applied to the analysis of adoptives to demonstrate a possible approach to the classification of adopted nouns in a language. The semantic criterion seems to play a very important role in the

allocation of adopted nouns to different classes in Venda. As already indicated, under the semantic parameter of **concreteness**, there are at least ten noun class prefixes. Adopted nouns are allocated to these classes according to factors such as semantic content, the initial syllable resemblance principle, the zero prefix principle, etc. With the second parameter of **attribution**, **size** and **shape** may provide some clues as to the class to which a particular adoptive noun can be allocated to. However, as was indicated in the foregoing discussion, some nouns are allocated to certain classes on the basis of phonological factors. Usually, these are adoptive nouns which have been allocated to the class prefixes on the base of their initial sound elements which resemble those of the respective class prefixes e.g.:

Eng.inspector	>	Ve.tshipik <u>ere</u>	(7)
Eng.teacher	>	Ve.thit <u>shere</u>	(5)
Eng.driver	>	Ve.d <u>iraiva</u>	(.5)

The first example does not express a diminutive connotation as is the case with other nouns found in this class while the last two examples, although they belong to class 5, do not have derogatory connotations.

#### 4.2.2 Some syntactic aspects of adoptive nouns in Venda

In our definition of the noun we indicated that a noun may be defined according to its syntactic behaviour. With regard to syntactic behaviour, we shall be looking at the way in which and the extent to which adoptive nouns generate agreement concords. In Venda every noun class governs its own concords. Although the focus in this section is on the adoptive nouns, the influence of other African languages on Venda will also be considered. We shall begin by looking at the syntactic behaviour of adopted nouns from English and Afrikaans. Let's look at the following passages:

Mapholisa u bva duvha la mulovha vha vhukati na u toda muthu we a vhlaha munna-wa-vhane Vho-Ramalida, rabulasi a divheaho Seshego hothe.

Mapholisa a Soviet Union madekwe vho fara muriphabuliki mudivhalea a kha di bvaho u bviswa tshiduloni (Maumela and Madiba 1992:110).

(The police have since yesterday been busy looking for a man who has killed the late Vho-Ramalida, a well-known farmer throughout Seshego.

The police in Russia last night arrested a well-known republican who has been ousted from his position just recently.)

From the paragraphs given above, we find the following adoptive nouns: **mapholisa**, **rabulasi** and **muriphabuliki**. In the first paragraph, the subject concord **vha** is used to bring about agreement between the antecedent **mapholisa** and the predicate. The use of the concord **vha** is very surprising here since it is a concord which belongs to **class 2**. The concord **a** of **class 6** would have been expected as is the case in the second paragraph. In the second paragraph the concord **a** is used as well as **vh-**. One would have expected the zero concord **o** to have been used instead of **vh-**. The other adoptive nouns, viz, **rabulasi**, **muriphabuliki** have been used with concords which correspond to their classes. The different concords used with the adoptive noun **mapholisa** illustrate the gender conflict in the concordial system of the language as a result of adoption. It seems that the use of concords is sometimes determined by what the speaker wants to convey. The concord **vha** is used to show that although the adoptive noun **mapholisa** has been allocated to **class 6** it still denotes human beings. The speaker may use the concords of **class 1** and **2** with the noun **mapholisa** to show his or her respect to them as human beings, or else use the concords of **class 5** and **6** to express the derogatory connotation often attached to police. The gender conflict also occurs in some native nouns in Venda:

Khosi ya fano vha vhusa vhatu hvavo zwavhudi. A vha fani na dziñwe khosi dzine dza fara vhatu sa dziphuli. Khosi dzi itaho nga u rali dzi sala dzi dzothe vhatu vho pfuluwa. Avha khosi yashu vha funa vhatu vhothe sa



vhana vhavho. Mahosi mañwe vha a tama nyandano ine ya vha hone shangoni lashu.

(The chief of this place rules the people well. He is not like other chiefs who treat people like slaves. Such chiefs remain alone when the people have migrated away. This, our chief loves all the people like his children. Other chiefs admire the cooperation in our place).

In this passage the nouns **khosi** (cl.9), **dzikhosi** (cl.10) and **mahosi** (cl.5) have been used with different concords. The noun **khosi** is used with the concord **vha** of the nouns of **class 2**. The concord **i** would have been expected here. The use of the concord **vha** indicates that the noun **khosi** denotes a human being and it also shows respect. The noun **mahosi** has been used also with the concord **vha** of **class 2** instead of the concord **a**. However, in some instances a speaker may use the concord **a** to express certain semantic significances, namely, derogation or augmentation. The noun **khosi** has also been used with the concord **dzi**. This concord, in the first place, indicates plurality, and secondly shows the class to which this noun belong.

Whilst the adopted nouns from English and Afrikaans have had little impact on the Venda syntax, other languages, namely Shona, Northern Sotho and Tsonga, have had considerable influence on the syntax of the language, particularly in those areas where there is strong contact with these languages. The contact between Venda and these language was discussed in Chapter 1 and so, in order to avoid repetition, only a few examples are given here.

The influence of Shona is found in the standard language and in some instances, is only confined to certain sections of the Venda speech community, in this case, the Northern and North-eastern areas of Venda. The influence of Shona on Venda, as was shown in Chapter 1, also occurred at the syntactic level. In proverbs, riddles, folktales and songs one finds constructions such as the following:

Tsha nkunda **ndilipo** (Riddle).

The construction **ndilipo** is typically Shona. In Venda it should be **Ndi henefho**.

Vhomme **vha ka enda pi** (from the song **Funguvhu**)

(Where the mother have gone to?)

What is interesting in this example is the use of the Shona past tense maker **ka**.

Pembela **ndi ku pe nombe** (from the folktale **Mukukulume na dongololo**).

"Dance excitedly so that I should give you cattle"

Vha do sala **vha no thenga** zwavho (from the folktale **Mukegulu we a vha a sa funi n'wana wawe a tshi mala**) (They will remain enjoying with me).

Again in these songs we find the use of the concord **ku** instead of the Venda concord **u**, as well as the use of the present tense marker **no**. The use of the concord **ku** and formative **no** also characterise the Venda spoken in areas like Tshikundamalema and Manenzhe. Consider the following examples:

Munna **a no ya** fhi? "Where is the man going to?"

N'wana **a no gala** pano. "The child stays here."

Ndi **no la** vhuswa. "I eat food"

Ka Mutele **a ku endi** n'wana. "Hamutele is not good for a child visit"

The use of the formative **no** and **ku** is the result of intensive contact with the Lembethu, who inhabited the area before the Venda.

The influence of Tsonga was also discussed in Chapter 1. Only a few examples will be given here to illustrate its influence on Venda syntax.

**A ndi tshi khou da** musi ndi tshi mu vhona.

(cf. Tso. **A ndzi(ni) karhi ni ta** loko ni n'wi vona)

"I was coming when I saw him".

**A ndo ma** vheya hafha.

(cf. Tso. **A ndzi mavekile** laha.

"I had put them here".

Matombo **ama mo** kwashea.

(cf. Tso. Maribye **lawa/ lama ma** pandzekile.

"These stones have broken"

The use of the concord **ma** was discussed in chapter 1. The use of constructions such as **a ndo ma**, **a ndzi** etc. shows the impact of Tsonga on the Venda spoken in these areas. When it comes to the past or perfect tense construction however, Venda still uses the perfect tense marker **-o** instead of changing the verb stem, as is the case in Tsonga.

Northern Sotho has also influenced Venda syntax in areas such as Mulima and Mashamba. In these areas one finds constructions such as the following:

**Gi tswenya** vhanna khoroni.

(cf. NS. Ke tswenya banna kgorong)

**Wena u nwile** mafhi (cf. Mulaudzi 1992)

In these examples, the concord **Gi** (cf. NS. **ke**) is used instead of the Venda concord **ndi**. In the second example, the pronoun **wena** is used instead of **ene**. What is interesting here is the formation of the perfect tense construction. The suffix **-ile** is used with the verb stem **-nwa** to mark tense on the verb. The addition of new morphemes such as **-ile** shows the degree of Northern Sotho influence on the Venda spoken in these areas. According to Thomason and Kaufman (1988) the influence on the syntax of a language only occurs when there is strong or intensive contact between languages.

### 4.3 Adopted words and other word categories

Adoptives are also found in other parts of speech such as adjectives, verbs, conjunctives and adverbs.

#### 4.3.1 Adjectives

Venda has adopted a number of words pertaining to colour and number from other languages like Afrikaans, English and African languages. We shall begin by looking at the adoptives which have to do with colour.

##### Colour terms

The contact between Venda and other languages has led to the adoption of colour terms which previously did not exist in Venda. Consider the following examples:

Eng.blue	>	Ve.buluu
Eng.green	>	Ve.girini
Eng.brown	>	Ve.buraweni
Eng.maroon	>	Ve.meruni
Eng.pink	>	Ve.pinki
Eng.grey	>	Ve.gireyi

Although some of these colour terms have native counterparts such as **lutombo** for **blue**, **muroxwe** for **girini**, there is a strong tendency to use adopted words rather than native ones. The adopted terms for colours are preferred because of their specialised meaning. Venda has no terms which distinguish between the different kinds of **blue** as in English where there is **dark blue**, **sky blue**, etc. Colours such as **pinki** and **meruni** are in fact new to the Venda language. Otherwise the colours which are common in Venda are **mutswuku (red or pink)**, **mudala (blue, green)**, **mutshena (white)** and **mutswu (black)**. From these examples we can also note the difference which exists between the morphology of the adopted and the native

adjectives. The native adjectives are formed by the **adjectival concord** and **adjectival stem**, e.g

Adjective	adjectival concord	adjectival stem
mutswuku	mu	-tswuku
mudala	mu	-dala
mutshena	mu	-tshena

This is not the case with the adopted forms. Adoptives such as **pinki**, **buluu**, **meruni**, **girini** do not show the adjectival concord even when they occur with nouns which have overtly marked prefixes, e.g.:

Vhathu vha vhanna a vha koni u fhambanya muvhala mutswuku na wa pinki.  
 U do pfa muthu a tshi ndo ambara vhurukhu vhutswuku ngeno o ambara  
meruni. Vhañwe vho ambara tshikhipha tsha girini u do pfa vha tshi ri vho  
 ambara buluu. Khavho buluu na girini zwi a fana ndi muvhala mudala.

(Men do not distinguish between red and pink colours. You will hear a man saying he has put on a red trouser, yet the trouser is pink. Some claim that they have put on green skippers whereas they have put on blue ones. To them blue and green is one and the same colour).

From these passage we find adopted words such as **pinki**, **meruni**, **girini** and **buluu**. All these adjectives do not show the adjectival concord of the nouns they qualify. Native words such as **mutswuku** and **mudala** have the adjectival concords which are similar to the prefix of the nouns which they qualify.

### Number terms

Although the Venda have their own number system, there is a significant number of counting numbers adopted from other languages, English in particular. The most

interesting adoptives in this regard pertain to money:

Musalauno tshelede yo wa tshileme. Kale muthu o vha a tshi kona u renga vhurukhu nga hafukoroni. Ano maduvha a hu tshe na vhurukhu ha fhasi ha fifithi rannda. Saga ya mugayo ine zwino ya vho vhidza eithi rannda yo vha i disheleni fhedzi. Muthu o vha a tshi ri o fara sigisi paundu a pfa o fara tshelede vhukuma. Lofu ya vhurotho muthu o vha a tshi kona u i renga nga thubobo. Muthu o vha a tshi kona u renga kholomo nga thupaunzu-theni. Ano maduvha a huna kholomo ya fhasi ha thu-thauseni rannda.

(Nowadays the money has lost value. In the olden days one could buy a pair of trousers with half-a-crown. These days there are no trousers which are less than fifty rands. A bag of mielie meal which now costs eighty rands used to be ten shillings. A person with six pounds used to feel that he had a lot of money. One could buy a loaf of bread with two bob. One could buy cattle with two pounds ten. These days there are no cattle for less than two thousand rand.)

From this passage, the following adoptives can be identified:

Eng. <b>ten</b> shillings	>Ve. <b>disheleni</b> cf. sheleni dza fumi
Eng. <b>two</b> bob	>Ve. <b>thubobo</b> cf. masheleni mavhili
Eng. <b>six</b> pounds	>Ve. <b>sigisipaundu</b> cf. bonndo thanu na nthihi.
Eng. <b>two</b> pounds ten	>Ve. <b>thupaunzu-theni</b> cf. bonndo mbili na sheleni dza fumi.
Eng. <b>fifty</b> rands	>Ve. <b>fifithi rannda</b> cf. rannda dza mahumi matanu.
Eng. <b>two thousand</b> rannda	>Ve. <b>thuthauseni rannda</b> cf. rannda dza zwigidi zwivhili.

Some of these adoptives seem to have been introduced into the Venda speech community during the time the British monetary system was still used. This can be seen from the use of words such as **pounds**, **bobs** and **shillings**.

Sometimes Venda counting numbers may appear to be very long, especially when it comes to big numbers. Therefore adopted forms are preferred to native ones. Poulos (1990:81) expresses this point as follows:

"Another consideration worth noting, where exposure to various languages is involved, is the importance of choosing the simplest and perhaps shortest way of expressing a particular concept".

If we compare the following forms we will realise that the adopted forms are more concise compared to the native ones:

Mafobvu a thwendi-faifi o dzhena banngani a tswa rannda dzi linganaho ffifithi-faifi milioni. Vhanna avha vho vha vha tshi khou tshimbila nga Cressida ya thiri-litha. Mapholisa vho kona u fara muthihi we a vha a tshi khou shavha nga milenzhe. Khae vho kona u wana rannda dzi linganaho naini-hundirede-ffifithi-thauseni. Vhathu vha humbelwa u thusa mapholisa kha u fara mafobvu aya. Muthu ane a do neya vhutanzi nga hune mafobvu aya a vha hone, u do livhuwiwa nga thu-milioni rannda.

(Twenty-five thieves entered the bank and stole fifty-five million. These men were travelling in a three-litre Cressida. The police managed to arrest one man who was attempting to escape on foot. He was found with nine hundred and fifty thousands rands in his possession. People are requested to help the police to arrest these thieves. Any person who can give information about these thieves will receive a reward of two million rands.)

From this passage the following adoptives can be identified:

<u>thwendi-faifi</u>	(Eng.twenty-five) cf.mahumi mavhili na <u>thanu</u>
<u>ffifithi-faifi milioni</u>	(Eng.fifty-five million) cf.zwigidi zwa <u>zwigidi zwa mahumi</u>
<u>matanu</u>	na <u>zwitanu</u> .

- thiri litha** (Eng.three- litre) cf. **litha tharu**  
**naini-handirede-fifithi-thauseni** (Eng.nine-hundred and fifty-thousand) cf. **zwigidi zwa maḁana maṁanu na maṁa na mahumi maṁanu.**  
**thu-milioni** (Eng.two million) cf. **zwigidi zwa tshigidi zwivhili**

The examples given above demonstrate that the Venda counting numbers may sometimes become very cumbersome for speakers of the language. The use of adopted forms may thus be regarded as a more concise way of expressing the number of things referred to.

#### 4.3.2 Adopted verbal roots

There is a considerable number of verbal roots in Venda that have been adopted from other foreign languages. These verbal roots came into the language in various ways. Firstly, adopted roots may be derived from verb forms in the source language. Secondly, adopted roots may be derived from other word categories of a source language. Last but not least, verbal roots may be derived from adopted nouns in the recipient language. We shall begin by looking at instances where adopted roots are derived directly from the source language verb forms:

Afr.werk	>	Ve.-vherag-	`work'
Afr.laai	>	Ve.-lajis-	`load'
Afr.ry	>	Ve.reil-	`drive'
Afr.pos	>	Ve.-pos-	`post'
Afr.saag	>	Ve.-sah-	`saw'
Afr.sukkel	>	Ve.-sogol-	`suffer'
Afr.leer	>	Ve.-ler-	`learn'
Afr.tolk	>	Ve.-ḁolog-	`nterpret'
Afr.hark	>	Ve.-harag-	`rake'
Eng.win	>	Ve.-win-	
Eng.loose	>	Ve.-luz-	



Eng.record	>	Ve.-rikhod-
Eng.faint	>	Ve.-fenth-
Eng.iron	>	Ve.-ain-
Eng.polish	>	Ve.-pholish-
Eng.change	>	Ve.-tshintsh-
Eng.join	>	Ve.-dzhoin-

All the adopted roots given in the examples above have been derived directly from the source language verb forms. The following verb roots have, unlike the ones above, been derived from nouns:

Eng.ruler (n)	>	Ve.-rul-	`underline with a ruler'
Eng.torch (n)	>	Ve.-thotsh-	`shed torch light on something'
Eng.private (n)	>	Ve.-phuraiveth-	`work as unqualified teacher'
Eng.mechanic (n)	>	Ve.-khanikh-	`fix vehicles'
Eng.Coolie (pn)	>	Ve.-gul-	`rob'
Afr.Sondag (pn)	>	Ve.-sondah-	`attend Sunday church service'
Afr.kerk (n)	>	Ve.-kerk-	`attend church service'
Afr.sleutel (n)	>	Ve.- <u>lodel</u> -	`lock'

The examples given above show instances where verb roots are derived from nouns. In examples such as **-khanikh-** and **-lodel-** the initial syllables have been deleted. The problem with these verbal roots is ascertaining whether such derivations were made directly from the source language nouns or whether the nouns were adopted first and the verbal roots were then derived from them. The latter view seems to be the case with the examples given above. Verbal roots such as **-gul-**, **-phuraiveth-**, **-khanikh-**, **-sondah-**, and **-lodel-** do not occur in the source languages. These verb roots have been derived from the adopted nouns:

Eng.private	>	Ve.phuraivethe	:phuraveth-	`temporary teaching'
Eng.mechanic	>	Ve.makhanikhe	:khanikh-	`fix car engines'
Afr.Sondag	>	Ve.Sondaha:	:sondah-	`attend Sunday church

			service'
Afr.sleutel	> Ve.tshilodelo	-lod <u>e</u> l-	'lock'

The examples given above show how verbal roots are derived from adopted nouns. The process of deriving verb roots from nouns is also common to native words in Venda.

Adopted roots can be derived from foreign language adjectives. Consider the following examples:

Eng.right	>	Ve.-raith-	"make a right mark"
Eng.cheap	>	Ve.-tship-	"become cheap"
Eng.wrong	>	Ve.-ronng-	"get a wrong mark"
Eng.bad	>	Ve.-bed-	"perform badly in high-jump"
Afr.duur	>	Ve.- <u>d</u> ur-	"expensive"

Further derivations can be made from the adopted roots by means of verbal extensions. For example, from the adopted root **-pholish-** we can derive various verbal roots by using different verbal extensions, e.g. :

-pholish-el-	`polish for or on behalf of'
-pholish-is-	`cause or help to polish'
-pholish-an-	`polish each other'
-pholish-ulu-	`polish over again'
-pholish-iw-	`be polished'
-pholish-es-	`polish intensively'
-pholish-e-	`polishable'
-phoilsh-ekay-	`polish without care'

The examples above illustrate the fact that adopted verbal roots may be used with different verbal extensions, just as is the case with native verbal roots. Adopted verbs may, like the native verbs, be used in sentence constructions with or without

object elements. Verbs which are followed by direct objects are referred to as **transitive verbs** whereas those which are not followed by direct objects are called **intransitive verbs**. The transitivity of the verb roots with different extensions can be illustrated by the following examples:

Vhatukana vha do ri pholishela zwienda. A vha todi muthu ane a tou vha pholishisa vha sa funi. Vha tou u kombetshedzwa vha a tambisa pholishi vha sokou pholishekanya hothe-hothe. Hunwe vha pholishana ngayo mavhudzi. Vhatukana vhone vha toda zwienda zwi no pholishea. Zwienda zwo pholisiwaho ndi zwavhudzi. Hone wa zwi pholisesa zwi a tshinyala.

(The boys will polish the shoes for us. They do not like a person who forces them to polish against their will. If they are forced (to polish) they waste polish by just polishing everywhere. Sometimes they polish each other's hairs. The boys like shoes which are polishable. The polished shoes are beautiful. However, if they are overpolished they get spoiled.)

Given that there is no difference in transitivity between adopted verbs and native ones, we will not discuss this aspect any further.

### 4.3.3 Adverbs and conjunctives

#### 4.3.3.1 Adverbs

Adverbs are, according to Poulos (1990:397), words which

"...provide more information about the actual performance or carrying out of an action or state. ...they may indicate, inter alia, how, when, where and why an action or state is performed".

Further, he describes the function of the adverb as follows:

"There are also other secondary roles that an adverb may perform, such as, for example, when it can add emphasis to a qualificative form in the sense of "very" e.g. very bad/good/strong and so on".

Since some adverbs in Venda are derived from other parts of speech or word categories like nouns, pronouns, qualificatives, etc., it is common to find adopted words in their formations. Adoptive nouns may be used with the adverbial prefixes to form adverbs in Venda. Consider the following examples:

**Vele o kwasha tombo nga hamula (Afr.hammer)**

(Vele broke the stone with a hammer).

**Nwana o kandwa nga modoro (Afr.motor)**

(The child has been overrun by a car).

**Vhakoma vho tumulwa tshanda nga mutshini (Eng.machine)**

(Vhakoma 's hand has been cut by the machine).

**Vhatukana vha do tuwa nga Swondaha (Afr.Sondag)**

(The boys will leave on Sunday).

Adoptives are also found in the formation of **locatives**. According to Crystal (1992:233) locatives are words which express "the idea of a place of a state or action". In the locatives below either prefixes or suffixes are added to adoptive nouns, as illustrated by the following examples:

**Mulalo o dzula kha bola (Eng.ball).**

(Mulalo has sat on a ball).

**Vhana vho dzula kha bugu (Afr.boek)**

(The children have sat on a book).

Vhatukana vha khou ya doroboni (Afr.dorp)

(The boys are going to town).

Tshikoloni hu a takadza (Afr.skool)

(It is nice to be at school).

In the first two examples the locative prefix **kha** is used with adoptive nouns whereas the locatives in the last two examples are derived by means of the locative suffix **-ni**. The use of either the prefix **kha** or the suffix **-ni** depends on what the speaker wants to convey. The prefix **kha** is used to mean 'at, on, to, in, from' etc. The suffix **-ni** may also be used to mainly to mean 'in, to'. The use of the locative prefixes and suffixes in adoptives is not different from native locatives.

The most noteworthy influence of foreign languages on this category is that of the adoptive adverb **badi** (Eng.bad). This adverb is often used to mean **-very, much** or **many**. Its meaning is equivalent to the Venda form **-nga maanda**. Its use can be seen from the following examples:

Mulovha ro la maswiri badi

(Yesterday we ate oranges very much).

Musidzana uyu o naka badi

(This lady is very beautiful).

Banzi lo rwiwa badi mulovha

(Banzi was bitten very much yesterday).

The adoptive **badi** has been used in the examples given above to express the notion of **-very**. In this case there is a shift of meaning. It is also interesting to note that the adopted adverb **badi** is used in the examples given above without adverbial prefixes, as is the case with other native words. The equivalent Venda meaning, namely, **nga maanda**, has a prefix **nga** followed by the noun **maanda**.

Another adopted adverb which is used very often in Venda is the word **futhi**. This word has been adopted from Zulu. In Venda it can be used as an adverb and as a conjunction. Here we shall only give the examples where this word is used as an adverb. (Its use as a conjunction is discussed in the next section.)

**Banzi lo farwa futhi nga mapholisa**

(Banzi was arrested again by the polices).

**Ndi do da futhi matshelo**

(I will come again tomorrow).

**Vha ni rwa futhi ni mmbudze**

(If they beat you again, you should tell me).

In these examples the adopted word **futhi** conveys the repetition of the meaning expressed by the verb. Although there is some reluctance by the Venda language planning bodies to recognize this word as part of the language, it is used so frequently that it cannot be ignored.

#### 4.3.3.2 Conjunctions

Conjunctions are described by Poulos (1990:445) as "words which introduce clauses". Here we shall be mainly concerned with conjunctions adopted from other languages. The following conjunctions have been adopted from other languages:

Afr.maar	>	Ve.mara	'but'
Eng.and	>	Ve.ende	
Zu.futhi	>	Ve.futhi	'moreover'

These conjunctives can be used in sentences as in the following examples:

Ema ndo mu mala, mara a thi mu funi. Nda funa ndi nga mu tala, ende ha ngo funzea. Vhabebi vhang a futhi a vha mu funi.

(I married Ema, but I do not love her. I may divorce her if I want, and she is not educated. My parents, moreover, do not like her.)

The conjunctions given above have their native counterparts. The conjunctive **mara** is used for **fhedzi**, **ende** for **nahone** and **futhi** for **hafhu**. As to the question why speakers use the adopted forms of these conjunctions instead of the native ones, the answer can be explained by extra-linguistic factors. Some speakers use these forms to display their knowledge of languages like English, Afrikaans and Zulu. It has been indicated in Chapter 2 that certain words have been adopted into Venda for prestige.

#### 4.4 The effects of adoptives on Venda grammar

From the foregoing discussion it has become apparent that the adoption of foreign word forms into Venda has affected the language's grammatical structure in one way or another. Nevertheless, the language appears to have successfully adapted most of the foreign word forms to its own grammatical system, except in certain areas which have been considerably impacted by other African languages such as Northern Sotho dialects, Tsonga and Shona. However, in most cases the influence is only restricted to particular sections of the speech community and never occurs in the standard language. This influence is not like that of English and Afrikaans, which impact on the standard language. Here we shall only consider the influences of foreign languages on the standard language. The effects of the adopted words on the grammatical structure of the standard form are not very great. Nevertheless, they will be discussed under separate heading for the sake of clarity. We shall begin by looking at the influence of adoptives on the morphology of the noun, and then the influence on other parts of speech.

#### 4.4.1 The effects on the morphology of the noun

It was indicated in the foregoing discussion on the morphology of the noun that adopted nouns seem to have adapted to the noun structure of Venda. In this case nouns from languages such as English and Afrikaans affix prefixes when they are taken over to Venda. Such prefixes may or may not be overtly marked. After receiving prefixes, these nouns are then assigned to a particular class prefix.

Although Venda has successfully incorporated the adopted nouns to its prefix system, it was affected in some ways. First, the impact can be clearly seen in the semantic significances of certain noun prefix classes. Traditionally, certain class prefixes are known to express certain specific semantic significances. In the preceding discussion it was shown how certain adopted nouns are allocated to noun class prefixes. Instead of being allocated to a class prefix on the basis of their meaning, they are sometimes allocated to a class prefix on the basis of the resemblance of their initial sound segment to a class prefix. This in a way weakens the semantic approach to the classification of nouns. There are many adopted nouns which have been allocated to **class 7** because they start with a **s+Consonant** cluster, yet they do not carry the meaning significance normally expressed by nouns of that class. Other adopted nouns have been allocated to **class 9** on the basis of their **zero prefix**. Zawawi (1979:134-135) describes this kind of change in the following manner:

"As a result of the assimilation of these non-Bantu elements the semantic function of some of the indicators has changed. These changes range from a blurring of a common feature in those nominals which were considered to form a group to the extension of semantic function in those units which originally had only one function....It may be that the original meaning of the indicator (traditional "Prefix") is still maintained even though a new reference or a new extension of meaning has been added".



The effect of adoptive nouns can also be noted in deviations in the class system with regard to **singular-plural pairings** in Venda. Traditionally class prefixes are grouped according to singular and plural forms. In other words each singular class is said to have its corresponding plural form. However, it appears that adoptives have introduced **singular-plural pairings** which are new to the language. This can be observed from the following examples:

<b>Singular</b>	<b>Plural</b>	
Muṭaliana	Maṭaliana	"Italians"
Muphothogisi	Maphothogisi	"Portuguese"
Mudzheremane	Madzheremane	"Germans"
Muindia	Maindia	"Indians"
Mugula	Magula	"Indians"
Mundevhele	Mandevhele	"Ndebeles"

These examples have to do with names which are indicative of nationality or tribes. It is very strange that **class 1** should take **class 6** as its plural. Normally nouns that belong to **class 1** take **class 2** as their plural and nouns which take the plural form in **class 6** are mostly those which belong to **class 5** in the singular. Some of the nouns given above may take **class 5** in the singular as a variant form, but this only occurs in instances where the derogatory significance is intended. In the plural there is no choice, the prefix remains the same, namely, **ma-**. These irregular singular-plural pairings may also be observed with names used to refer to different denominations:

<b>Singular</b>	<b>Plural</b>	
Muroma	Maroma	'members of the Roman Catholic'
Mudatshi	Madatshi	'members of the Dutch church'
Musavhatha	Masavhatha	'members the Sabbath church'
Muzioni	Mazioni	'Zionists'

It is not possible to use the plural prefix **Vha-** of **class 2** in the examples given

above. The use of the **ma-** prefix does not necessarily express the derogative meaning normally carried by such a class. Where the class prefix-5 is used in the singular it expresses some derogative connotations.

One other interesting example is that of the adoptive noun **thitshere (Eng.teacher)**. This noun belongs to **class 1(a)** in the singular or to **class 5** if the derogatory sense is intended. But in the plural it becomes **mathitshere** (teachers) which belongs to **class 6**. It is difficult to understand why this noun is not assigned to **class 2** in the plural since this is the normal plural class for nouns that belongs to **class 1** in the singular.

What we can observe from the examples discussed above is a change in singular-plural pairings of some noun classes, and this has resulted in the emergence of new genders. Chimhundu (1982:75) regards this change "as evidence of an expansion of the native class-number gender system".

#### 4.4.2 The effects on the concordial agreement system

The passages given in 4.1.2 clearly demonstrate how the incorporation of adopted nouns has further complicated the Venda concordial agreement system. Here it was illustrated that there does not seem to be a fixed correlation between the adopted noun and the concordial agreement it generates. It appears that the agreement concords are mainly determined by semantic factors rather than by syntactic factors. In the examples given in 4.1.2 the adopted noun **mapholisa (Eng.police)** was used with the agreement concord **a** in one instance and with the concord **vha** in another instance. This vacillation in the use of agreement concord, as indicated in the foregoing discussion, is not a novelty to the Venda language. Native nouns such as **khosi** may be used with the concord **i** or **vha** in the singular and **dzi**, **vha** and **a** in the plural. Therefore it is not necessary for this study to elaborate further on this issue here.

#### 4.4.3 Enrichment of the grammatical system of the language

The adoption of foreign words into Venda has enriched the language in various ways. Many words which belong to different parts of speech have been added to the language. There are many nouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbs and perhaps a few conjunctions which have been added to the language. All these words enrich the grammatical system of the language.

#### 4.5 CONCLUSION

In this chapter we have been looking at the grammatical adaptation of adoptives in Venda. We looked at the manner in which adopted words, particularly from English and Afrikaans, are adapted to the Venda grammatical system. We started by looking at the morphological adjustment that takes place when the adopted nouns from non-Bantu languages are incorporated into the Venda language. An attempt was made in this chapter to review the approaches used by Bantu linguists for the classification of nouns in African languages. The traditional approach which is based mainly on the semantic content of the nouns was first discussed. This approach attempts to provide semantic details for every class prefix. Secondly, the approach proposed by Denny and Creider (1986) was briefly outlined. In this approach nouns may be allocated to different classes according to **configurational** and **shape** meanings. Lastly, the hypothesis advocated by Hendrikse and Poulos (1992) was set out. According to these two linguists, nouns may be classified according to four fundamental semantic parameters, namely **concreteness**, **attribution**, **spacial orientation** and **abstractness**.

In the discussion of the morphological adaptation of the adopted nouns, it was pointed out that various factors are involved in the allocation of adopted nouns to different class prefixes. Here we discussed three different kinds of allocation of class prefixes, namely, allocation on the basis of the initial syllable resemblance to a class prefix, allocation on the basis of zero prefix and allocation on the basis of semantic content. Problems that are encountered when using these criteria were

also discussed. We also discussed the syntactic behaviour of adopted nouns, i.e. the manner in which adopted nouns, like the native ones, generate agreement concords. An attempt was also made to describe the grammatical adaptation of words in other parts of speech such as adjectives, verbs, adverbs and conjunctives. Lastly, the effects of adoptives on the grammatical system of Venda were discussed. Here it was established that Venda grammar has, in one way or another, been affected by the adoption of foreign words, though to a lesser degree than the Venda phonological and lexical systems.

## CHAPTER 5

## 5.0 CONCLUSION

This study has attempted to assess the changes that have taken place in the Venda language due to the influence of other languages. The influence of these languages on Venda came about as a result of contact. Some of these contacts occurred in the distant past whereas others are more recent or are still occurring. This study commenced with an overview of the historical background of the Venda language with the purpose of establishing the earliest contacts. To this end an attempt was made to establish the origins of the Venda. Different theories about the origins of Venda were discussed. Here it was established that the Venda, as they are known today, may have originated from Central Africa as well as locally. Certain Venda groups, the Singos for example, probably originated from somewhere in Central Africa. However, recent studies (Loubser 1988, 1989, 1991) have established that the first Venda people in the area north of the Limpopo originated locally as a result of the interaction or amalgamation between the Sotho-Tswana and the early Shona groups. This interpretation is supported by historical, archaeological as well as linguistic evidence.

Different contacts between the Venda language and other languages during migration were also discussed. The main focus here was on the Singo group. Although this group probably originated from Central Africa, it has not been possible to trace any contacts with languages spoken in that area. The picture only becomes clear when the Singo arrived in Zimbabwe. Here they came into contact with Western Shona groups, namely the Kalanga and Rozwi, and other Shona groups such as the Karanga. There is enough historical, archaeological and linguistic evidence to support argument that contact between Venda and Shona speaking people took place. The contact between Shona and Venda, as was indicated in this study, also occurred on the southern side of the Limpopo. Some Shona groups such as the Lembethu and the Twanamba inhabited this area before the Singo and other Venda groups arrived. When the Singos and other Venda

groups arrived, they then come into contact with these Shona groups.

Venda also came into contact with other languages spoken in this region, namely, Nguni, Sotho, Tsonga, English and Afrikaans. The Venda contact with these languages came about in various ways. In some instances the contact came about as a result of geographical proximity, and in others through urbanisation or westernisation. These languages have influenced Venda to various degrees. The influence of these languages is mainly on the lexicon. The term 'adoptives' was used in this study to refer to the linguistic forms transferred from other languages to Venda. The process of transfer is referred to as 'adoption'. The main concern of this study has been to look at the adaptation of foreign forms to Venda and their impact on the language. The adaptation of foreign words occur on the semantic, phonological and morphological levels.

With regard to the semantic level, the adopted words seem to fall into various semantic domains and adopted words have adapted semantically to Venda in various ways. Certain words have been taken over without any change of meaning. However, in some words there is a change of meaning. The meaning of adopted words in Venda has either been extended or narrowed. In some adoptives meaning extension occurred by adding figurative meaning to such words. Other adopted words have had their original meaning radically shifted, i.e. the original meaning of such words has been completely lost and a new meaning has been added to those words. Other semantic changes occur in the emotive value of the adopted word. Some adopted words acquire a pejorative connotation whereas others acquire an ameliorative connotation. The native words may also undergo semantic changes to adapt to new situations. The meaning of some native words may, just like the adopted words, be extended to accommodate new concepts which have been introduced into the speech community.

The adoption of foreign words into Venda has affected the language's semantic system in various ways. First, the adoption of foreign words into Venda has enlarged the language's lexicon. Hundreds of new words have been added to the

language. The addition of new words has also increased the number of synonyms in Venda. Some adopted words are used to replace taboo words in the language. In other words, adoptives are sometimes used to replace words which are forbidden or regarded as offensive in the language, consequently, the adoptive forms are regarded as being more acceptable or less offensive than their taboo counterparts. Adoptives may also have negative effects on the semantic system of the language. The adoption of foreign words has resulted in many homonyms in the Venda language. Homonyms usually cause confusion in the meaning or usage of some words. Adoption has also resulted in the loss of native words in Venda.

The adaptation of foreign words also occurs on the phonological level. This study has shown that most of the adopted words in Venda have been adapted to the sound system of the language. The process of substitution was first considered. Here we discussed the replacement of sounds which do not occur in the sound inventory of the Venda language as well as the substitution of sounds which already exist in the language. The replacement of sounds which do not occur in the Venda sound inventory seems to be triggered by the **native segment constraint**. This constraint was shown to be active in the substitution of both vowels and consonants. However, as has already been mentioned, even though some sound segments occur in the sound inventory of Venda, they are for one reason or another replaced with different sounds. In most cases, the choice of the substituting sound seems to be determined by phonetic approximation, i.e. a foreign sound is replaced by one which is phonetically closest to it.

Phonological changes also occur to the syllable structure of adopted words. Words with a syllable structure which is not acceptable to Venda undergo some form of modification. Words with consonant clusters are adjusted by means of the insertion of an epenthetic vowel between the cluster. Adjustment also occurs to words which end with a consonant. Venda does not permit words to end with a consonant, with the exception of ideophones. A vowel can thus be added to the final consonant or the consonant can be deleted. The choice of the epenthetic vowel is determined by both phonological and morphological factors. With regard to phonological factors,

assimilation seems to play an important role in the choice of the epenthetic vowel. The epenthetic vowel assimilates to the vowel of either the preceding or succeeding syllable. However, assimilation may occur across a syllable boundary. The epenthetic vowel may also be determined by the nature of the preceding consonant. Bilabial consonants are usually followed by rounded epenthetic vowels whereas alveolar consonants are usually followed by unrounded ones. Morphological factors also play a role with regard the epenthetic vowels in adopted verbal stems. All the adopted stems, like the native ones, end with vowel *-a* in positive constructions and *-i* in negative constructions.

Adopted words from non-tonal languages such as English and Afrikaans are assigned tone when they are incorporated into Venda. It appears that the tone pattern follows the stress pattern of the word in its source language, i.e. stressed syllables are realised as high tones in Venda. Where adoptives do not seem to follow this pattern, some tonal changes are suspected. In this case the high or low tone is spread to the adjacent syllable.

The impact of adoptives on the Venda phonological system was also assessed. Here it was established that although the Venda language is coping well in adapting foreign word forms to its sound system, it has also been influenced to some extent in that new sounds and sound sequences have been introduced to the language.

Adopted words in Venda have also undergone some adjustment at the grammatical level (i.e. morphological and syntactic level). The focus here was mainly on adopted words from English and Afrikaans. These languages have a grammatical system which is different from that of Venda or other African languages. First, the morphological adaptation of adopted nouns was examined. Adopted nouns from non-Bantu languages acquire prefixes when they are taken over to Venda. The choice of these prefixes is determined by various factors. The class prefix has been assigned to adopted nouns in Venda on the basis of the initial syllable resemblance to a class prefix, the semantic content of the adopted word and on the basis of the

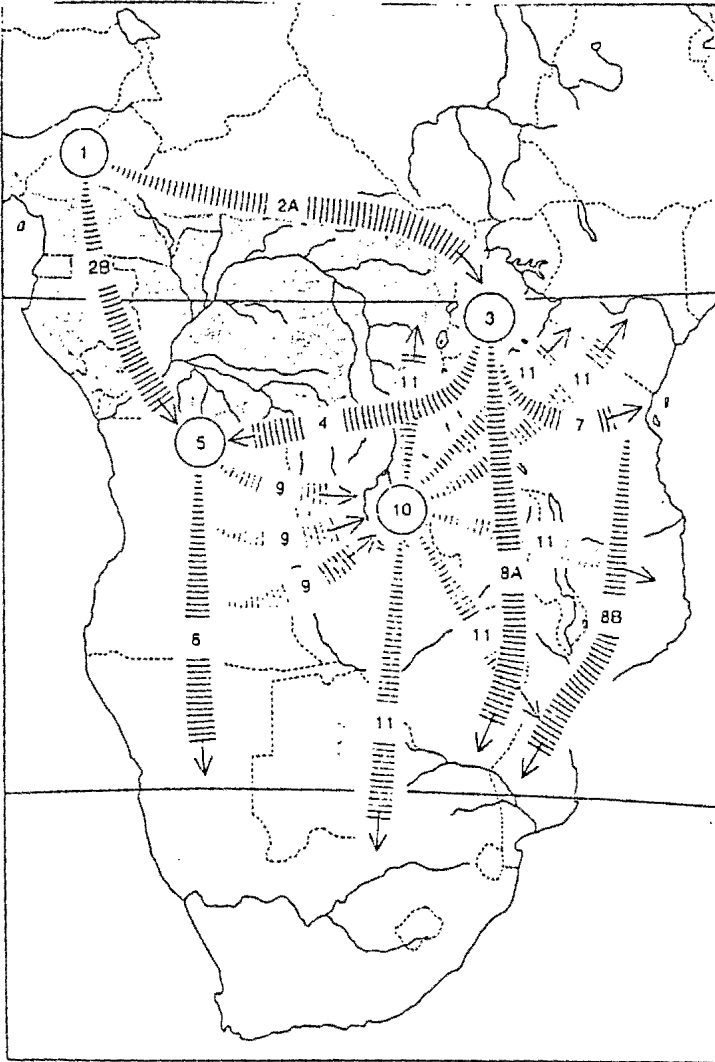


zero prefix in some classes. The morphological modification to adopted words in other parts of speech, namely adjectives, verbs, adverbs and conjunctives was also discussed. An attempt was made to describe the syntactic behaviour of adopted words such as nouns and verbs. With regard to the former, it was established that adopted nouns, like native nouns, generate agreement concords. Verbs on the other hand may affix different verbal extensions to express different meanings. Adopted verbs may occur in transitive as well as intransitive constructions. The effects of adoptives on the grammatical system of Venda were also assessed. It was established that the adoption of foreign words in Venda has affected the grammatical system of the language in a number of ways. The semantic significances of certain classes have been affected by the incorporation of foreign words into the language. The singular-plural pairings of some classes have also been affected. Some nouns which belong to **class 1** in the singular take the prefix **ma-** of **class 6** in the plural form. Furthermore, when this prefix is used with such nouns it does not express derogatory connotation, as would be the case with the native nouns which belong to this class. The addition of new nouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbs and conjunctives has enriched the grammatical system of the Venda language.

This study has attempted to provide as complete a picture as possible of the changes that occur to adopted words in Venda and the impact of such words on the Venda language. We hope that the evidence on adoptives in Venda presented here will help in the interpretation of the ongoing linguistic changes, not only in Venda, but in other languages too. This study also provides a good background for **corpus planning**. Corpus planning refers to a planned intervention to change the corpus of a language, i.e. its vocabulary, morphology, spelling and otherwise. Therefore, this study may throw some light on the effectiveness of adoption as a method of language development. The fact that there are many variations in the modification of adopted words also shows the need for further research on standardisation principles.

M A P N O. I

( This map was taken from Phillipson 1977:109)



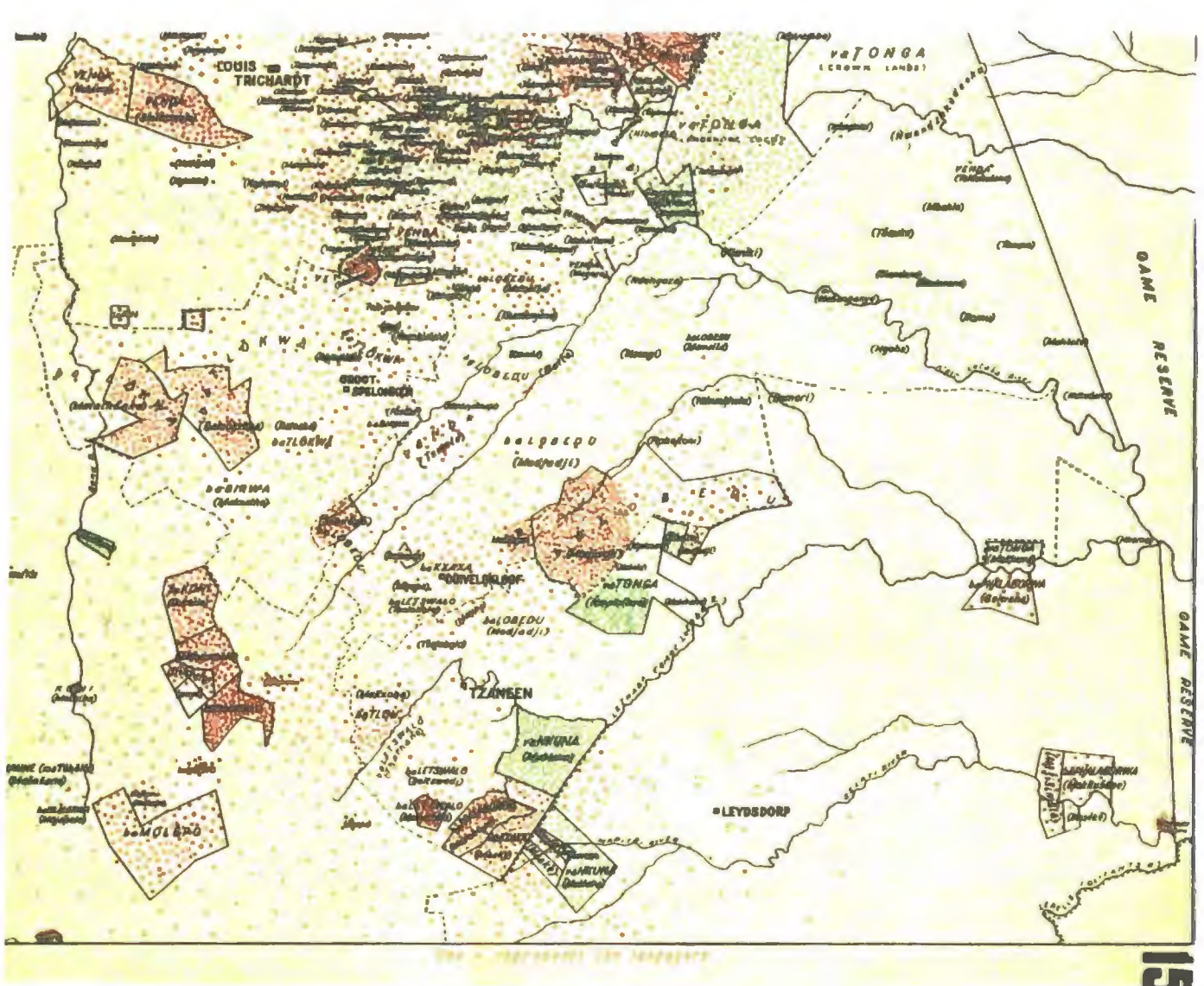
**HYPOTHETICAL PROGRESSION** of Bantu-speakers over some 2,000 years sees the language arising among a Neolithic people before 1000 B.C. (1). A dual movement then seems to have brought Bantu-speakers, some using iron, beyond the forest (3, 5). An east-to-west movement (4) reinforced southward expansion of languages ancestral to the Western Group (6). Early in the first millennium A.D. the eastern stream expanded to the south (7, 8). The western stream (9) gave rise to a center (10) that sent forth languages ancestral to the Eastern Group (11) in the 11th century A.D.



**M A P N O. III**

(A map showing the contact between Venda, Sotho and Tsonga in the South)  
(Warmelo 1935)

- NB. Green dots represent Tsonga speaking people.
- Round brown dots represent Sotho speaking people.
- Square brown dots represent Venda speaking people)

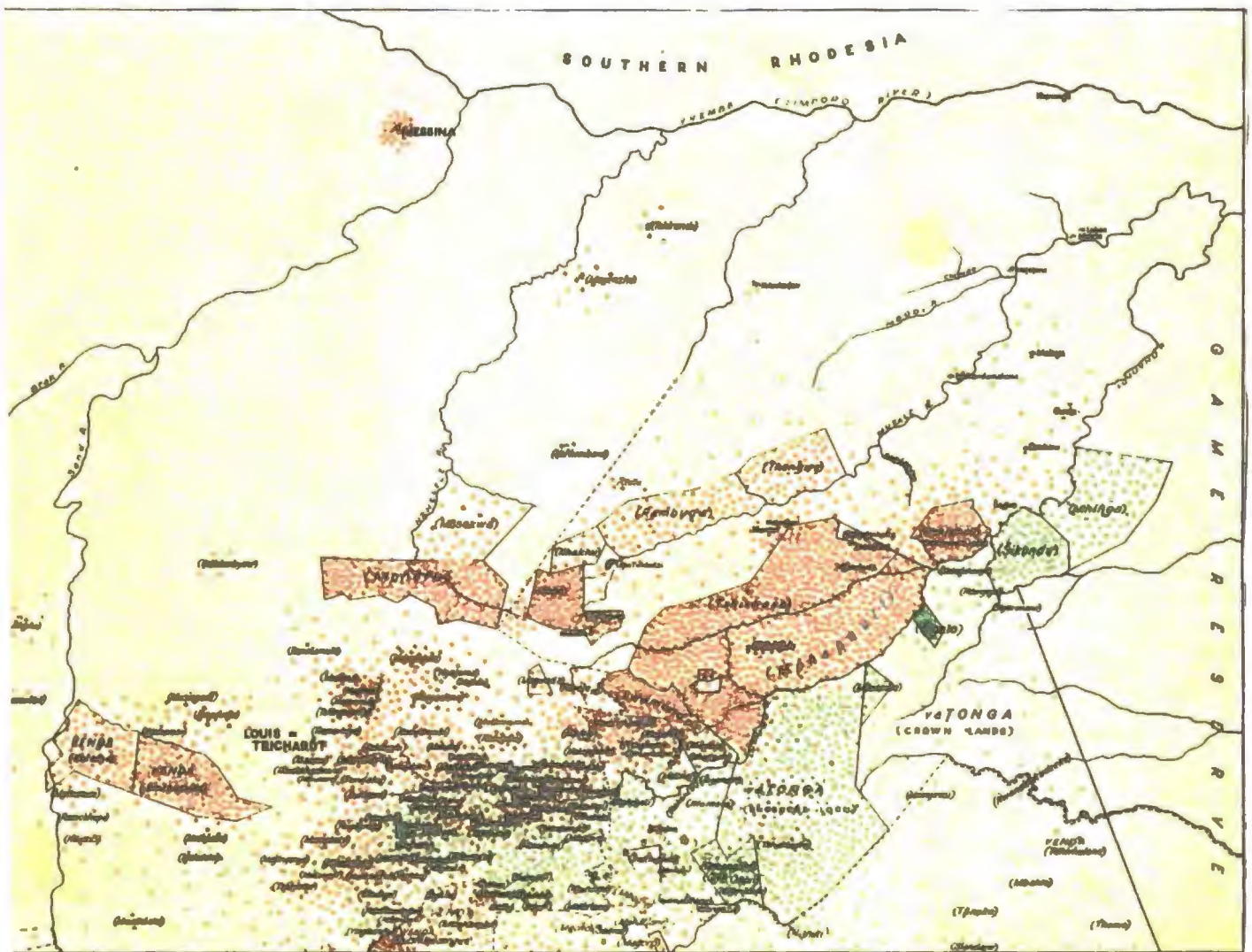


MAP NO. IV

(A map taken from Warmelo (1935) showing the contact between Venda and Tsonga in the North East.

NB. Brown dots represent Venda speakers.

Green dots represent Tsonga speakers.



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