

THE IDIOM IN TSONGA

- A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY

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by

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PREFACE

In presenting this dissertation I wish to express my indebtedness to the following people for invaluable assistance in one direction or another prior to, and during the course of the preparation of this study.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

1.1. This study concerns itself with a particular class of expressions found in Tsonga, a Bantu language of the South Eastern Zone, spoken in the Republic of South Africa and Portuguese East Africa, by a community of two million people. Most of the expressions in this study, however, are those used by the Tsonga people who inhabit the North and Eastern Transvaal areas in the Republic of South Africa. The expressions which constitute this study are known as idioms.

1.2. Idioms have long been recognised as constructions peculiar to a language, which cannot be literally translated into another, and the meanings of which cannot be gathered from their component parts. These expressions are vigorous, graphic and natural, and they add beauty and effect to both the spoken and written forms of language. Writing which is almost destitute of idioms very often gives an impression of flatness. On the other hand idioms if overworked, reach a degree of frequency that deprives the writing of freshness, as can be seen in "Ntsakisi."¹⁾ However, if used with skill, idioms enhance the artistic value of a work as can be seen in "Masungi"²⁾ and "Mahlasela Hundza"³⁾ which works abound in idioms of sheer literary beauty.

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1. Nkhombo - Ntsakisi (Van Schaiks Ltd., Pretoria, 1962.)
 2. Ntsanwisi, H.W.E. - Masungi M'fana ka Maxele (A.P.B. Johannesburg.)
 3. Ntsanwisi, H.E. - Mahlasela Hundza (A.P.B., Johannesburg.)

STUDIES ON IDIOM:

1.3. In languages such as English, Afrikaans and French much has been written on this subject. As regards the Bantu languages, hardly anything has been done systematically in this field except for a few compilations by men who have not been trained linguistically for the task, with the result that these compilations offer nothing as far as scientific methodology is concerned. In "Marema ka Dika"¹⁾ Rakoma has made a good collection of Northern Sotho idioms and proverbs and their meanings without any attempt to discuss them from a linguistic point of view. In Zulu Syntax and Idiom,²⁾ Doke devotes one chapter to the study of idiom in Zulu. This chapter is very important and illuminating from the point of view of methodology. In Tsonga nothing has so far been published on this subject. Ndhambi has however, collected a few idioms, proverbs and their meanings in an unpublished manuscript with the misleading title "Ririmi ra Mutsonga"³⁾ (The language of the Tsonga). No attempt has been made in this manuscript to describe them scientifically.

AIM OF THE STUDY:

1.4. The aim of this study is sixfold:-

- (a) To define and identify the idiom in
Tsonga.
- (b) To explain the origin of Tsonga idioms.

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1. Rakoma - Marema ka Dika (Van Schaiks Ltd., Pretoria, 1962).
 2. Doke - Zulu Syntax and Idiom (Longmans, Green & Co., London).
 3. Ndhambi - Ririmi ra Mutsonga (Unpublished manuscript).

- (c) To discuss the incidence of figures of speech in the Tsonga "idiom".
- (d) To describe the different patterns of idiom formation in Tsonga.
- (e) To outline the content of Tsonga idioms.
- (f) To provide students of Tsonga with a systematic list of idioms in general use together with their meanings.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION USED

1.5. This study is based primarily on data which has been gathered during field research stretching over a period of four years, in Letaba, Soutpansberg and Bushbuckridge districts, in the North-Eastern Transvaal. I also conducted some research in Portuguese East Africa during July, 1963. In the latter area, owing to limitations of time it was not possible to cover a very wide field. All that was possible was to form certain impressions which may be confirmed or rejected after a comprehensive research survey of the area. On the whole it appears that most of the idioms used in the North and North-Eastern Transvaal are understood with ease by the people in Portuguese East Africa.

1.6. The information used for the study was also obtained from various sources. Most of the idioms based on mythology and various folkloric forms were obtained from "The Life of a South African Tribe" Vol. I and II.¹⁾ "Vutlhari bya Vatsonga".²⁾ (The Wisdom of

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- 1. Junod, H.A.J.: The Life of a South African Tribe. Vol. I & II Second Edition (Macmillan Ltd., London).
 - 2. Junod, & Jaques: Vutlhari bya Vatsonga, Second Edition, (Swiss Mission in S.A. Johannesburg).

the Tsonga-Shangana People), a collection of proverbs has also provided a good number of idioms found in this study. Many of the proverbs found in this book can also pass as idioms; it is these that have been included in this study. "Vutlhari bya Vatsonga"¹⁾ abounds in idioms based on animal folklore, idiomatic forms based on proverbs and on different phases of Tsonga life and culture. In addition some idioms based on history and figures of speech, were obtained from "Swivongo swa Machangana".²⁾ These are idioms which are employed in Tsonga praise-names and praise-poems which constitute a very important aspect of Bantu poetic art. In addition, many idioms of different morphological and phonological types were gathered from contemporary Tsonga writings especially the following: "Masungi M'fana ka Maxele,"³⁾ "Mahlasela-Hundza"⁴⁾ and "Ntsakisi wa Tahana N'wanjiyana".⁵⁾ These three Tsonga novelettes abound in idiom of a very virile nature. The idioms gathered from other Tsonga books constitute an insignificant number, with the result that the books have not been cited at all. "Marema ka Dika"⁶⁾ and "Zulu Syntax and Idiom",⁷⁾ were also used as sources of information and comparison; it was striking to note the similarity of many of the idioms found in these three languages - Tsonga, Northern Sotho and Zulu.

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1. Ibid.
 2. Jaques - Swivongo swa Machangana, Swiss Mission in S.A.).
 3. Ntsanwisi, H.W.E. : Op. cit.
 4. Ntsanwisi, H.E. : Op. cit.
 5. Nkhombo : Op cit.
 6. Rakoma: Op cit.
 7. Doke : Op cit.

INFORMANTS:

1.7. Some of the idioms in this study were gathered from people in tribal courts, church meetings, tribal festivities, School-board meetings, ceremonial meetings and ordinary conversations without the people realising that I was paying special attention to their language. Special mention must be given to the following people, who were my principal informants:-

a. Rev. Gabriel Macabi (Age : 65)

Born and brought up in Portuguese East Africa. Education: Trained first as a teacher; and then as a minister of religion at Ricatla in Portuguese East Africa. He worked in the Transvaal for a number of years.

b. Mr Double Zamulele Joshua Mtebule (Age : 40)

Born and brought up in the Letaba district, Transvaal, and speaks the Nkuna dialect of Tsonga. Education: Attended primary school at Shiluvane, Letaba district. Secondary and Normal training at Lemana College, Soutpansberg district. University education with the External Division of the University of South Africa. Credited with 8 B.A. degree courses including Tsonga III and Geography III. Parents: Both mother and father were born and brought up in the Letaba district, Transvaal and speak the Nkuna dialect of Tsonga. Occupation: Sometime Tsonga Language Supervisor of Schools, and now Principal of Bankuna Secondary School in the Letaba district.

c. Mr Jan Stanely Shimati (Age : 50+)

Born and brought up at Elim, Soutpansberg district. Education: Attended primary school at Elim and trained as teacher at Lemana College. Secondary education at Mariannhill, Natal. Parents: Both parents born and brought up in the Soutpansberg district, Northern Transvaal and speak the N'walungu dialect of Tsonga. Occupation: Principal of Elim Practising School, Soutpansberg district and Honorary Secretary of the Synodal Commission, Tsonga Presbyterian Church (Swiss Mission in South Africa).

d. Mr Etienne Penyisi Ndhambi (Age : 50)

Born and brought up in the Sibasa district, Northern Transvaal. Education: Primary school at Valdezia and trained as a teacher at Lemana College, Soutpansberg district. Parents: Both parents born and brought up in the Sibasa district, Northern Transvaal. Occupation: Supervisor of Schools in the Sibasa district. Author of Tsonga Anthology "Swiphato swa Xitsonga," a novel "Mambuxu" and a Tsonga Language Manual "Xitsonga xo Saseka" written in conjunction with S. C. Marivate.

e. Mr Abel Zabulon James Myakayaka (Age : 50)

Born and brought up in the Letaba district, Northern Transvaal. Education: Primary school education at Shiluvane, Letaba

district. Trained as a teacher. Lemana College. Parents: Both born and brought up in the Letaba district and speak the Nkuna dialect of Tsonga. Occupation: Principal: Shiluvane Higher Primary School, Letaba district, Northern Transvaal.

PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED IN COURSE OF STUDY:

1.8. In studying idioms one is confronted, apart from the many other questions there may be of the current meaning of an idiom, by the problem of the origin of or allusion to it. Furthermore, it was not an easy task to gather idioms from many would-be informants. In the first place many seemed not to understand what I was after. Without any linguistic training, they seemed to be blissfully unaware of the difference between literal and idiomatic language. Those who had a hazy idea, could again not see the difference between idiom and proverb, with the result that one had to plod slowly through this uncharted labyrinth of language.

1.9. After this initial set-back, I decided on another approach which yielded more satisfactory results. I approached my informants with a list of key words, and cited one or two idioms based on the word and asked for the meanings of these expressions. From there I proceeded to ask for additional expressions based on the word or for different expressions of a similar nature. These they were able to provide, and to my great delight, more often than not they rendered

the meanings of the idioms they gave me in alternative idioms, and in that way aided my research considerably without their observing it.

1.10. The idioms in this study are those in current use. It being a descriptive study no attempt was made to look for obsolescent or obsolete idioms. Furthermore, as Antal points out "synchrony is more important because language is a system of signs. This is manifestly accepted by everybody, although they stop there and do not usually draw the conclusion from this decisive realisation".¹⁾ In spite of what has been said above, one comes across idioms and expressions which are somewhat obsolete, and occasionally it has seemed interesting to include some which are obsolescent or obsolete in the sense that, though not in vogue to-day, they are used or at least understood by the older generations of the speakers of the language.

1.11. The final hurdle encountered in the actual documentation of the study was the rendering of the Tsonga idioms into English. This proved to be a more difficult task than I had imagined. As the work progressed it became evident to me that people express concepts and ideas in terms of the language which they speak; the Tsonga people think in terms of Tsonga culture, and their ideas, thoughts, concepts and experiences of life, and mode of expression are all of a piece with their language pattern. This was found to be more so with idioms which, as Pearsall Smith points out, are

1. Antal: Questions of Meaning (Mouton & Co. - the Hague) p. 15.

characterised by what he calls "the expressiveness of irrelevant phrases, which often show a breaking loose, a love for the absurd, a reluctance to submit to reason so that the human mind seems to prefer irrelevance as appealing to the imagination and adding to a phrase's vividness and charm".¹⁾

1.12. For this and other reasons, and to add to the better understanding of the idioms by non-speakers of Tsonga, a literal translation of Tsonga idioms followed by their English equivalent or idiomatic translation has been done. A comparison of the literal translation with the idiomatic translation, will support the contention made earlier that the meaning of an idiom cannot be ascertained from its component elements e.g.

Ku ba hansi (to hit the ground) when used idiomatically means "to fail";

Ku ba xuma (to hit money) when used idiomatically means "to pay out a sum of money", etc.

1.13. As far as idiomatic translations are concerned, it will be seen from the above examples that no attempt has been made to proceed from meaning to meaning. This as Antal points out is impossible. In all translations in this study, therefore, an attempt was made to follow his thesis that, "translation as a process, is nothing more than an activity in which a denotatum indicated by the meaning of another language is rendered by the meanings of the language into which the translation is made".²⁾

1. Pearsall Smith: Words and Idioms cited by V.H. Collins in A Third Book of English Idioms (Longmans) Preface p. vii.
2. Antal: Op cit. p. 87.

ARRANGEMENT OF IDIOMS:

1.14. The arrangement of idioms poses many problems. As a result scholars and authors adopt different methods of arrangement consonant with the different aims of their studies. Usually, scholars prefer the alphabetical method in which the leading word, which may be a verb or a noun, is used as a basis of classification to determine under which letter of the alphabet the idiom is placed.

1.15. In Marema ka Dika,¹⁾ a collection of Northern Sotho idioms and proverbs, Rakoma has arranged his idioms alphabetically. In Chapter 1 Section (i) he has arranged verbal idioms alphabetically, with the leading verb determining the letter of the alphabet under which the idiom is placed. In Chapter 1 Section (ii) he employs an alphabetical scheme as well in arranging substantival and possessive idioms. In this section the leading word in the idiom is the noun. This arrangement makes reference quite easy.

1.16. In Diane le Maele a Setswana,¹⁾ a collection of Tswana proverbs, idioms and riddles, Seboni has divided the work into two sections; the first comprising idioms and proverbs; the second devoted solely to riddles. In the body of the whole book an alphabetical scheme of arrangement has been followed. Seboni's arrangement is, however, not commendable because he has grouped proverbs and idioms without the slightest attempt at distinguishing these two different literary forms.

1. Rakoma: Op cit.

2. Sebone: Diale le Maele a Setswana, Lovedale Press, 1962.

1.17. In English many scholars of idiom have also adopted the alphabetical scheme of arrangement mainly because it provides an easy means of reference. Wood's English Verbal Idioms¹⁾ and Collins's A Book of English Idioms.²⁾ In the latter book the idioms appear in alphabetical order according to the first significant word in each. In this way an index based on this principle of classification is automatically supplied. In Words and Idioms,³⁾ Pearsall Smith has followed a different scheme based mainly on the sources from which an idiom has originated. In this scheme the following grouping has been followed. Idioms of nautical origin; inland and fresh water phrases; idiomatic phrases from the chase, from hounds and horses; canine idioms from dog-fighting and domesticated animals at home; idioms from wild birds; idiomatic phrases from the fruit and vegetable garden; idioms connected with houses and buildings; idioms derived from fire; idioms derived from food and eating and bodily idioms. Nowhere in the body of Pearsall Smith's work is an alphabetical arrangement found. This arrangement, good, as it may be, from the point of view of the origin of idioms, is, however, not satisfactory from the point of view of reference. In addition to that the paragraphs in which the different groups of idioms appear are not numbered, and this makes reference difficult if not impossible.

1.18. In the Appendix of Tsonga idioms and their meanings, an alphabetical scheme of arrangement has been followed. The leading word in the idiom has been

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1. Wood, F.T.: English Verbal Idioms (Macmillan London, 1964).
 2. Collins, V.H.: A Book of English Idioms (Longman's London). 1961.
 3. Pearsall Smith: Op. cit.

used to determine under which letter of the alphabet the idiom is placed. Tsonga verbal idioms have been arranged in their basic infinitive form. Idioms which incorporate derived verbal forms of a particular verb stem, have been placed alphabetically under the particular verb stem from which they have been derived. Under the verb stem Ku cina (to dance) are classified the idioms under which it, and its derived forms may enter; e.g.

Ku cina ngoma (to dance a drum) i.e. "to suffer".

Ku cinisa munhu (to cause a person to dance) i.e. "to worry a person". etc.

Furthermore, in the case of each entry the meaning of the idiom is given.

1.19. This arrangement has been preferred largely because it provides an easy means of reference. Secondly, in the case of idioms, it groups together the different idiomatic combinations into which a verb stem and its derived forms may enter. This is especially the case with verbs of motor signification which are generalised in meaning, and therefore capable of throwing off idioms of great variety and richness. The verb stems Ku ba (to hit); Ku huma (to catch); Ku nghena (to enter) etc. are cases in point. (Cf. Appendix Nos. 25 - 73; 402 - 432; 641 - 659). Each of these stems and their derivatives are capable of entering into no less than thirty idiomatic combinations. In this way the different idioms into which a word may enter are treated together.

1.20. Finally, as an additional aid to easy reference, all the idioms appearing in the appendix have been numbered.

ORTHOGRAPHY:

1.21. The orthography used in this study is the current official orthography, which is phonemic for all intents and purposes. It is the consolidated orthography for Tsonga as published in the Bantu Education Journal of October, 1956 (Vol. II, 8) and as amended in October, 1960 (Vol. VI, 8).

DEFINITION AND IDENTIFICATION OF IDIOMS

WHAT IS AN IDIOM?

2.1. Many definitions of the term idiom are found, and it is noteworthy to observe that, to a very great extent these definitions are similar in both phraseology and meaning. In this study, however, only four of the many definitions will be cited and discussed with a view to bringing to the fore those characteristics which are necessary before any speech form in a language may be classified as an idiom.

2.2. It is, however, necessary to point out that the term idiom may be used in different ways with different meanings. Generically, the term idiom refers to the form of speech peculiar to a people or nation. This means that the language of a people or nation has only one characteristic idiom, peculiar to itself, which permeates its whole structure and communicative system. Secondly, the term idiom may also be applied to mean a writer's style i.e. the mode of expression characteristic of a writer. It may also be used in Pearsall Smith's definition to mean "particularly, those forms of expression, of grammatical construction, or of phrasing, which are peculiar to a language, and approved by its usage, although the meanings they convey are often different from their grammatical or logical signification".¹⁾ (The Oxford Dictionary has almost an identical

1. Pearsall Smith: Words and Idioms (Constable & Co., London 1957).

definition to that of Pearsall Smith. It defines an idiom as "a form of expression, construction, etc., peculiar to a language; a peculiarity of phraseology approved by usage, and often having a meaning other than its grammatical or logical one".¹⁾ Next comes Fletcher's definition which states that, an idiom is "an expression peculiar to a language, sanctioned by usage; it may be grammatical or ungrammatical; literally it may be meaningless; nevertheless it has a definite meaning to those versed in the idiom of the language".²⁾

2.3. These definitions are undoubtedly couched in good English, and are good, as far as they go, but they are somewhat general in meaning and therefore capable of including other forms of expression, such as figures of speech. Finally, there comes Doke's definition: "An idiom is a structural form or a form of expression peculiar to a language, and one which reflects the genius of a language and the psychological workings of the speakers of such a language".³⁾ This definition is acceptable in the sense that, though it has psychological undertones, it is basically linguistic in character, but it also neglects to mention specifically certain characteristic features of the idiom, such as its fixed character and unpredictability of meaning. "Wemuka nengwenya" (he went off with a crocodile, i.e. a crocodile took him) or "Zavela ngamakhandu" (only their heads appeared; lit. they appeared by their heads) are typical Zulu idioms".⁴⁾ To me "wemuka nengwenya" and "zavela

1. Oxford English Dictionary.

2. Fletcher: Manual of Modern English (Maskew Miller, Cape Town) p. 24.

3. Doke: Bantu Linguistic Terminology (Longmans, Green & Co. London) p. 119.

4. Doke: Ibid.

ngamakhandanda" are not only structural forms but fixed structural forms of words which "go together", whose meaning cannot be logically ascertained from their component parts. Doke's definition does not mention these two important aspects of the idiom. It is therefore incomplete and unsatisfactory in those respects. A restatement of Doke's definition is therefore necessary.

2.4. In this study which concerns itself with the descriptive study of the idiom in Tsonga, the term idiom will be defined as a fixed structural form or a fixed phrasal pattern of words which go together, peculiar to the genius of a language as regards grammatical structure, accepted by usage; and the meaning of which cannot be logically or literally ascertained from its component parts.

2.5. In Tsonga, as in many languages, a great many expressions are found which are stated in fixed structural forms or fixed phrasal patterns of words which go together, such as a particular verb with a noun, a particular pair of nouns, a particular pair of verbs, a particular figurative expression, a particular copulative construction, etc., to express a certain idea. In Tsonga, cases in point are:

Ku tsema vun'anga (to cut medical practice)
i.e. "to qualify as a medical practitioner".

Tolo na rini? (Yesterday and and when?) i.e.
"never!".

Hansi ne henhla (up and down) i.e. "all over".

Ku halata mati (to spill water) i.e. "to urinate".

Xilwa na dzana (one who fights a hundred) i.e. "a brave man".

Ku va ni nhloko (to have a head) i.e. "to suffer from headache".

Ku pela ni dyambu (to set with the sun) i.e. "to die at sunset".

2.6. Fixed phrasal patterns or fixed expressions such as these are called idioms. They are typical of Tsonga. A person not familiar with the genius of the language or with its usage cannot gather the meanings of these expressions from their component elements i.e. from the different words which constitute them. Some of these expressions may seem illogical but they have been accepted and decreed as good usage by the speakers of the language. As is the case with language in general, idiom is not a matter of logic or grammatical principles. As Max Black states of language: "It is truistic that language grows erratically as a jungle and that the attempt to forecast its change or to control it has about as much chance of success as the attempt to cultivate the Sargossa sea".¹⁾ In English for instance, there seems "to be no reason why we should not write 'he fulfilled his word', 'ruin stared at his face', or 'in a bad hour'. But idiom requires 'he kept his word', 'ruin stared him in the face', 'in an evil hour', and there is no more to be said".²⁾

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1. Max Black: Models and Metaphors: Studies in Language & Philosophy (Cornell University Press, New York, 1962) p. 135.
 2. Rowe & Webb: A Guide to the Study of English (Macmillan & Co., Ltd., London, 1945) p. 191.

IDIOM AND PROVERB:

2.7. Idioms, though in the main fixed phrasal patterns of words which go together, are not as rigid in form as proverbs, which do not allow of any slight syntactic alteration or rearrangement of their component elements. In all contexts in which it appears the form of the proverb remains fixed and unchangeable. Furthermore the proverb has other distinct characteristics peculiar to it. It is figurative and didactic in nature; usually it is short and pithy and packed with the wisdom of the ages. In Tsonga as in Bantu in general, the proverb has also certain structural features such as rhyme, alliteration and parallelism i.e. balanced parts e.g.

Xandla yana, xandla vuya (hand go, hand come) i.e. "one good turn deserves another".

Tiko a xi etleli ku etlela fusi (the country never sleeps, the fallow field sleeps) i.e. "there is no peace in the country".

In these two examples, to which a good many can be added, one notes in addition to the truisms expressed, "a structural balance, and a balance of ideas, which extend from contrasted words and phrases of similar grammatical function".¹⁾

2.8. Contrasted with the proverb, the idiom is not didactic in tendency; though figurative it does not necessarily express a truism in symbolic language; it expresses ideas. Formally it is a fixed structural form of words which go together, a structural pattern sus-

1. Schapera: The Bantu speaking Tribes of South Africa (Maskew Miller, Cape Town, 1956) p. 308.

ceptible to slight modifications within the basic pattern i.e. when used, its syntactic position can be moved progressively, and its morphology may be modified by formative addition, to appear again, in modified set patterns which fit in with the mood, tense and conjugation of the sentence into which it is incorporated.

2.9. The idiomatic expression:

Ku dlaya mavele (to kill maize) i.e. to have
a good harvest"

will be used to illustrate the different modified idiomatic patterns in which it may appear. It will suffice to give only examples in the different tenses of the indicative and potential moods, first person, positive and negative conjugations.

I n d i c a t i v e M o o d

2.10. Positive conjugation

Present tense: Ndzi "dlaya mavele". (I get a good harvest).

Future tense: Ndzi ta "dlaya mavele". (I will get a good harvest).

Perfect tense: Ndzi "dlaye mavele". (I have a good harvest).

Past continuous perfect: A ndzi "dlaye mavele". (I had a good harvest).

Past tense: A ndzi "dlaya mavele". (I used to have a good harvest).

Past future: A ndzi ta "dlaya mavele". (I would have a good harvest)

2.11. Negative Conjugation

Present tense: A ndzi "dlayi mavele". (I don't get
a good harvest).

Future tense: A ndzi nga "dlayi mavele". (I will not
get a good harvest).

Perfect tense: A ndzi nga "dlayangi mavele". (I did
not have a good harvest).

Past continuous Perfect: A ndzi nga "dlayangi mavele".
(I did not have a good
harvest).

Past tense: A ndzi nga "dlayi mavele". (I used
not to have a good harvest).

Past future: A ndzi nga ta "dlaya mavele". (I would
not have a good harvest).

P o t e n t i a l M o o d

2.12. Positive conjugation

Present tense: Ndzi nga "dlaya mavele". (I can make
a good harvest).

Present continuous: Ndzi nga va ndzi "dlaya mavele".
(I can be making a good
harvest).

Perfect tense: Ndzi nga va ndzi "dlayile mavele". (I
could have made a good
harvest).

Past Perfect: A ndzi nga va ndzi "dlayile mavele". (I could
have made a good harvest).

Past continuous: A ndzi va ndzi nga "dlaya mavele".
(I could make a good harvest).

2.13. Negative Conjugation

Present: Ndzi nge "dlayi mavele". (I can't make a good harvest).

Present continuous: Ndzi nga va ndzi nga "dlayi mavele". (I can't be making a good harvest).

Perfect tense: Ndzi nga va ndzi nga "dlayangi mavele" (I can't have made a good harvest).

Past Perfect: A ndzi nga va ndzi nga "dlayangi mavele". (I can't have made a good harvest).

Past continuous: A ndzi va ndzi nga "dlayi mavele". (I could not have made a good harvest).

2.14. The above paradigms are on the whole illustrative of the slight morphological and syntactic modifications undergone by idiomatic expressions based around verb stems. The distinctive feature in the above examples is that the idiomatic expression "ku dlaya mavele" is composed of the predicate and object. In the different tenses it will be noted that the verb stem, though in some instances modified by prefixal or suffixal addition, still remains contiguous to the noun, thereby preserving the basic pattern or formal structure of the phrasal pattern.

2.15. The fixed nature of idiomatic expressions may be seen chiefly in idiomatic patterns in which certain words are paired together e.g.

Nkuku ni mbhaha (cock and hen) i.e. "boy and girl".

Mfula ni ribye (nut and stone) i.e. "irreconcilable enemies .

Moya ni nyama (air and meat) i.e. "heart and soul".

Mani na mani (who and who) i.e. "everyone".

Mboo ni ndzhole (bull and calf) i.e. "penis and testicles".

Tolo na rini? (yesterday and when?) i.e. "never".

Tolo ni tolweni (yesterday and day before yesterday) i.e. "in days gone by".

Gwambe na Dzavana (Gwambe and Dzavana) i.e. "the ancestors of the Tsonga people".

Tihlo hi tihlo (eye for eye) i.e. "tit for tat". etc.

2.16. In the above examples we note idioms which consist of fixed phrases in which a pair of words are habitually used together for the sake of emphasis or effect. The same phenomenon obtains in English. "A large class of English idioms consists of phrases 'in which two words are habitually used together for the sake of emphasis' e.g. hue and cry; fits and starts; free and easy; hard and fast; by and by; over and over; round and round; bag and baggage; safe and sound; spick and span". etc.¹⁾

2.17. In use these idioms cannot be altered or varied at all as they consist of words which go together.

1. Eric Partridge: The Concise Usage and Abusage - A Short Guide to Good English. (Hamish Hamilton, London, 1955) p. 89.

FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE, IDIOM AND MEANING

2.18. In the definition of the term idiom (cf. 2.4.) it was stated that the meaning of an idiom cannot be gathered logically from its component elements. In idioms, words generally undergo a change of meaning i.e. the literal meaning of a word is shifted to a contextual sense or figurative meaning. In linguistics this phenomenon is termed semantic change or change of meaning. Semantic change as Gray and Wise point out, "is a term of many applications."¹⁾ Changes of meaning come about because of the impossibility of retaining the original meanings of words through the different phases and shifting experiences of life. As Hayakawa has pointed out: "No word has exactly the same meaning twice".²⁾ Because of this, it is found that very many linguistic forms are employed for more than one typical situation.

2.19. The familiar names for parts of the human body have acquired many contextual senses. A resemblance between the well known and the less well known has resulted for instance in English in "the head of an army, of a procession, of a household, or of a river, of the eye of a needle, and the hooks and eyes of a dress, of the teeth of a saw, of the tongue of a shoe or of a wagon; of the neck of a bottle and of a neck of the woods; of the arms, legs and back of a chair; of the foot of a mountain; of the hearts of celery."³⁾ In the foregoing figurative expressions the words head, mouth,

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1. Gray & Wise, : The Bases of Speech (Harper & Brothers, New York, Third Edition, 1959). p. 372.
 2. Hayakawa, S.I.: Language in Thought and Action (Allen & Unwin, London, 1952) p. 28.
 3. Saporta, S.: Psycholinguistics - A Book of Readings (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York, 1961) p. 245.

eye, teeth, tongue, neck, arms, legs, back, foot and hearts have meanings slightly different from their basic or normal significations. These subtle shifts of meaning are easily comprehended by the speaker of English as they are very near to the basic meanings of the words. Tsonga also abounds in many such expressions in which words are used in various contexts with marginal or transferred meanings. The word nhloko (head) has the following transferred meanings attached to it: gist, principal, chief, brain and memory as the following examples will show:-

Nhloko ya mhaka (the head of a matter) i.e.
"the gist of a matter".

Nhloko ya xikolo (the head of a school) i.e.
"the principal of a school".

Nhloko ya tiko (the head of a country) i.e.
"the chief".

Nhloko yo olova (a soft head) i.e. "an intelligent brain" or "agood memory".

2.20. Mbilu (heart) has the following transferred meanings attached to it:- courage, patience, nature, feeling and memory as the following examples will show:-

Mbilu ya xinuna (manly heart) i.e. "a courageous nature".

Mbilu yo leha (a long heart) i.e. "patient in nature".

Mbilu ya xisati (womanly heart) i.e. "effeminate behaviour".

Mbilu yo enta (deep heart) i.e. "humane and wise".

All these figurative expressions, which seem to be obvious "imply the use of anthropomorphic similes and they involve some feature of polysemy or semantic radiation".¹⁾ These figurative expressions are, however, not idioms in the true sense of the word although they have transferred meanings as is the case with idioms. But some of them may be turned into idioms by an accompanying form e.g. they may be combined with verbs to form idioms as follows:-

Ku vona nhloko ya mhaka (to see the head of a matter) i.e. "to discern the gist of a matter".

Ku ba nhloko (to strike the head) i.e. "to confuse".

Ku horisa nhloko (to cool the head) i.e. "to take a rest".

Ku kala nhloko (to lack a head) i.e. "to be stupid".

Ku leha mbilu (to be long-hearted) i.e. "to be patient".

Ku hela mbilu (to be finished of heart) i.e. "to be impatient".

Ku tlhava mbilu (to pierce the heart) i.e. "to hurt spiritually".

Ku hlomula mbilu (to remove the heart) i.e. "to impress".

2.21. Furthermore we note that figures of speech enter largely into the idiomatic phraseology of a language. In Tsonga metaphor, simile, euphemism, contrast

1. Simeon Potter: Modern Linguistics (Andre Dentsch, London Second Impression, 1960, p. 153).

and hyperbole are found as marked features of many idioms. For this reason some scholars speak of metaphorical and idiomatic similes. Thus:

Ku dya nkarhi (to eat time) i.e. "to squander time", and

Ku dya bulu (to eat conversation) i.e. "to converse",

are idioms based on metaphor. ✓

Ku va ni vurhongo bya rifu (to have death-like sleep) i.e. "to sleep like a log", and

Ku tala wonge sava (to be as plentiful as sand) i.e. "innumerable"

are idioms based on simile. ✓

Ku dlaya mali (to kill money) i.e. "to come by a lot of money", and

Ku fa hi ntirho (to die of work) i.e. "to be overburdened with work"

are idioms based on hyperbole. ✓

Ku halata mati (to spill water) i.e. "to urinate", and

Ku humela handle (to go outside) i.e. "to pass motions"

are idioms based on euphemism. ✓

Ku rhandza jomela (to love the drinking bowl) i.e. "to love liquor", and

Ku rhandza matlhari (to love assegais) i.e. "to be warlike",

are idioms based on metonymy. For further examples of the incidence of figures of speech in Tsonga idioms (cf. paragraphs 4.6. - 4.26.).

2.22. Again, taking examples from idioms which consist of words which are habitually used together for emphasis and effect, it is noted that they also can be used in one context with a literal meaning and in other contexts, situations or environments with figurative meanings. The following are cases in point:-

Nkuku ni mbaha (cock and hen) is used literally in the sentence "Ndzi vona nkuku ni mbaha" (I see a cock and a hen) but it is used idiomatically in the following sentence Vavanuna va kanele mhaka ya nkuku ni mbaha ehubyeni (the men are discussing a case involving a boy and a girl in court). This idiom alludes to the fact that a cock and hen cannot be left together in the run for a long time before they get into mischief. A boy and a girl do the same.

Ximanga ni kondlo (cat and mouse) is used literally in the sentence Ximanga ni kondlo swa tsu-tsuma (the cat and the mouse run) but it is used idiomatically in the sentence Va hanya bya ximanga ni kondlo (they lead a cat and mouse existence). A cat and a mouse are irreconcilable enemies and so the expression Ximanga ni kondlo becomes an idiom in certain contexts and situations to refer to people who cannot live happily together. Examples like these can be given ad infinitum. It is clear from these examples that words and phrases depending on their context, can have either a literal meaning or a figurative meaning. When used in its literal sense a word has one central meaning attached to it but when used in its figurative sense it can mean many different things. "Ludwig Wittgenstein got very near

the heart of the matter when he made his famous observation that 'the meaning of a word lies in its use'¹⁾

2.23. In Tsonga verb stems are the basis of many idiomatic expressions. In certain instances a particular verb stem is used with different nouns to form idioms. The verb stem ku ba (to hit, to beat, to thrash, to strike) may serve as good example. In its literal sense ku ba may be used in expressions such as:

Ku ba n'wana (to thrash a child)

Ku ba mufana (to thrash a boy).

Ku ba nhompfu (to strike the nose).

In the three examples cited above the words used have nothing but literal meanings attached to them, but when used in certain fixed patterns with different words it loses its literal meaning and assumes new meanings consonant with its new context, environment or situation e.g.

Ku ba hala ni hala (to hit there and there)

i.e. "to beat about the bush".

Ku ba hansi (to hit down) i.e. "to fail".

Ku ba henhla (to hit up) i.e. "to score a high mark", "to make a good impression".

Ku ba hi misava (to be hit by the earth)

i.e. "to suffer great misfortune".

Ku ba hi moya (to be hit by the air) i.e.

"to take a walk", "to get fresh air".

Ku ba mhaka (to hit a case) i.e. "to strike the truth".

1. Simeon Potter: Op. cit. p. 153.

Ku ba mhalamhala (to hit the sable antelope)
i.e. "to call people together to the royal
kraal".

Ku ba nyoka (to hit a snake) i.e. "to take
a meal".

Ku ba nomu (to hit the mouth) i.e. "to stop
a person from speaking".

Ku ba xihlungwana (to hit the roof) i.e.
(i) "to roof a hut" (ii) "to be very tall".

2.24. In the above examples the verb -ba has been used in expressions known as idioms. A study of these expressions shows that the words have undergone a change of meaning, the literal meaning having shifted to a figurative one. In some cases it is found that the idiomatic use of a verb does not change only its meaning but its nature as well e.g.

Ku yima tindleve (to stand ears) i.e. "to
be amazed".

Ku huma mbita (to come out pot) i.e. "to
start one's own establishment".

Ku fa dzenga (to die dignity) i.e. "to be
stupid".

The verb stems yima (stand), huma (emerge) and fa (die) are intransitive verbs but in idioms they change their nature and become transitive verbs as exemplified by the objects which follow them viz. tindleve, mbita and dzenga.

2.25. In the following examples in which the verb stem -khoma (catch) is the key word, the original meaning is still evident, but in the idiom it has as part of a semantic unit, lost its literal meaning:

Ku khoma ko hisa (to catch the hot place)

i.e. "to face a very great task".

Ku khoma mali (to catch money) i.e. "to

save money".

Ku khoma mbeleko (to catch birth) i.e. "to

sterilise a woman".

Ku khoma mberha (to catch dew) i.e. "to fall

down".

Ku khoma mbilu (to catch the heart) i.e. "to

attract or to impress".

Ku khoma munhu mavoko (to catch the hands

of a person) i.e. "to impede a person's progress".

Ku khoma munhu nomu (to catch the mouth of

a person) i.e. "to interrupt a person's speech".

Ku khoma ncila (to catch the tail) i.e. "to

obtain the last position in a race or task".

Ku khoma ndlela (to catch the road) i.e. "to

depart", "to set out on a journey".

2.26. In this study it was noticed that the verb stem -khoma can enter into no less than fifty idiomatic combinations, in each of which, it has as part of a unit, lost its literal meaning (cf. Appendix 480 - 529). Other

verb stems are also found in similar usage. The appendix at the end of this study abounds in many such examples.

2.27. Derivative forms of various verb stems are also used in similar contexts in which as parts of units they lose their literal meanings:

Ku ahlamela munhu (to open the mouth for a person) i.e. "to pick a quarrel with a person".

Ku ahlamisa nomu (to open the mouth) i.e. "to speak".

Ku tidyisa mahele (to cause oneself to eat cockroaches) i.e. "to bring poverty to oneself".

Ku dyohela munhu (to sin for a person) i.e. "to wrong a person".

Ku dzahisana fole (to cause each other to take snuff) i.e. "to be on the friendliest of terms".

Ku hiseka mbilu (to have the heart inflammable) i.e. "to be zealous".

Ku hlekana makovo (to laugh at each other's receding foreheads) i.e. "to laugh at each other's foibles".

Ku humesa mahlo (to bring out eyes) i.e. "to look amazed".

Ku tikhoma xihlaya (to catch one's cheek) i.e. "to look sad".

2.28. It must be mentioned, however, that there are many idioms for which even specialists cannot give precise explanations as to their origin or allusion e.g.

Ku nantswa tilo (to lick the sky) i.e. "to deny emphatically".

Ku tlulela henhla (to jump high) i.e. "to deny".

Ku tsema vun'anga (to cut medical practice) i.e. "to qualify as a doctor".

Ku boxa vukati (to pierce marriage) i.e. "to be comfortably married".

Ku hlangula munhu (to rob a person) i.e. "to rob a person of all his belongings".

Ku dya xivindzi (to eat the liver) i.e. "to marry a blood cousin".

2.29. It is clear from all the examples which have been discussed that Tsonga idioms are coined from words and particularly from phrases which have acquired meanings other than those to which they normally refer in their literal sense. This is a well-known linguistic phenomenon in which certain phrases acquire shifted meanings and are used as idioms for acts and instances more or less analogous to those from which they have originated. Tsonga has many "of these wild creatures of talk"¹⁾ used by its speakers to give expressiveness, brevity and vividness to the language. These will be listed with their meanings in the appendix at the end of this study.

1. Pearsall Smith: Op. cit. p. 178.

SELECTION OF IDIOMS:

2.30. Finally, it should be pointed out that it is mainly those expressions which are generally accepted as idioms that will be included in this study. These correspond largely with those which are generally referred to under "idiotisme"¹⁾ in French, and as "idiom" in its narrower English sense, meaning merely the idiosyncrasies of language, especially those phrases which are verbal anomalies transgressing either the laws of grammar or the laws of logic. However, in paragraph 4.29 - 4.30 certain forms have been included which strictly speaking, are not idioms in the narrower sense of the word applied in this study. These have been included because of the fact that they lie somewhere between "idiom" and "aphorism", but lean more towards idiom. They resemble idiom because they also may be used with either a literal or figurative signification. It has moreover been felt that a descriptive study of Tsonga idiom would be incomplete without mentioning these borderline cases.

2.31. Some idiomatic forms which have also been included are based on prosodic elements viz. tone (cf. 4.31 - 4.37). These also differ in form from the verbal phrases known as idioms but resemble "idioms" because they also may be used with either a literal or figurative signification depending on context.

1. "Idiotisme" is a sixteenth century borrowing through late Latin into French from Greek, was naturalised in English in the 17th century, but has now disappeared.

THE ORIGIN OF IDIOMS

INTRODUCTION

3.1. Idioms are forms of expression which are used constantly in the daily life of the people. In spoken and written Tsonga to-day, idiom is an established and integral element that, used with care, ornaments and enriches the language. Many of the idioms found in Tsonga are common in the Bantu language family, such as the idioms which have originated from the ritual life of the Bantu people or those based on organs of the body. These idioms seem to suggest that they originated before the Bantu people started on their different migrations to various parts of Africa. On the other hand some idioms found in Tsonga indicate very clearly that they are of fairly recent origin in that they have in them traces of European culture which can only be explained by European contacts. Idioms such as:

Ku devula hanci ya Jiwawa (lit.: to ride
Jiwawa's horse) i.e. "to swing"

has its origin in Joao Albasini (the Portuguese who ruled a group of Tsonga people who settled in the Soutpansberg about a century ago) who had a swinging gait when on horseback. The idiom

Ku vonela ebodleleni (lit.: to see in the
bottle) i.e. "to despise",

can have originated only after the Tsonga had come into

contact with European material culture which was responsible for the advent of the bottle amongst the Bantu-speaking people. I was not able to get any convincing explanation for the origin of this idiom.

Ku lwa ya Majarimana ni Manghezi (lit.: to fight of the Germans and the English) i.e. "to be engaged in a titanic struggle"

is an idiom which originated in the First World War (1914 - 1918) between Great Britain and Germany. The Tsonga associate this any fierce struggle between adversaries with the war between the Germans and English during 1914 - 1918. Hence the origin of the idiom. Idioms such as these could only have come into existence after the contact of the Tsonga with the Europeans in fairly recent times, and may, therefore, be said to be of fairly recent origin.

3.2. Idioms like all human speech, are after all a democratic product, "the creation, not of scholars and grammarians, but of unschooled and unlettered people. Men of learning may adopt them and popularise them, and make them flower into all the beauty of literary language; but their rarest blooms are grafted on a wild stock, and their roots are deep-buried in the common soil. From that soil they must still draw their sap and nourishment".¹⁾ It is evident from the foregoing statement that idioms are coined by people. They are coined to express different phases of life. Some people are more imaginative and creative than others, and the expressions which they

1. Pearsall Smith: Op. cit.

use to explain certain experiences and phases of life, may be so appealing, so picturesque and vivid that they are at once incorporated into the idiom-lore of the language as a means of effective communication. This is possible because, "the property of language which renders it such a powerful means of communication is that one can say something that has never been said before, and yet be perfectly understood, often without either speaker or audience being aware of the novelty".¹⁾ This is explained by the fact that although idioms "often show a breaking loose, a love for the absurd, a reluctance to submit to reason"²⁾ nevertheless they arise from familiar linguistic raw materials in novel and, at times, ungrammatical or illogical patterns. The context in which these raw materials are put together also helps towards the understanding of the novel utterance or idiom.

3.3. At times idioms originate when people striving to drive a certain point home, arrange words with such telling effect that the expression is at once accepted by the speech community and greatly used thereafter. A hunter who had been impressed by the beauty and gracefulness of the impala may have been responsible for the Tsonga idiom "ku saseka wonge i mhala" (as pretty as an impala). A hunter who had been struck by the bravery of the lion in the hunt may be responsible for the Tsonga idiom "vurhena wonge i nghala" (as brave as a lion).

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1. Hockett: A Course in Modern Linguistics: The Macmillan Company, New York, Second Edition, p. 157.
 2. Pearsall Smith: Op. cit.

A study of Tsonga idioms shows that they are of different origins. It is these origins that will be of concern to us in this chapter.

3.4. In Tsonga many idioms have originated from folk-lore. These may be termed folkloric idioms because they have their origin in the beliefs, legends and customs of the people. (On the whole it will be found that idioms designate all aspects of Bantu tribal life and experiences from which they have originated. Some of these origins will now be discussed.)

IDIOMS BASED ON MYTHOLOGY:

3.5. The Tsonga people like many other Bantu people believe in spirits. They believe mostly in the spirits of their dead ancestors (swikwembu). They believe that these spirits exercise great influence over the living so that there are many ritual practices which are performed to propitiate the spirits. There is as a result an elaborate system of idiom which is used as a means of contact with them on all occasions when offerings are made to them. Many of the expressions used incorporate the word "swikwembu" or "tilo" (heaven).

Ku etlerisa swikwembu (to cause the gods to sleep) i.e. "to pacify people of importance".

To-day this idiom is used to pacify any person who, if displeased with one, is likely to cause one harm.

Ku lata swikwembu (to send the gods to sleep) i.e. "to pacify people of importance".

Ku gandzela swikwembu (to give an offering to the gods) i.e. "to worship the gods".

This expression is used to-day to mean "to worship" without necessarily making an offering.

Swikwembu swi etelele (the gods are asleep) i.e. "all is well". For the Tsonga when

all things run smoothly and he finds himself at peace with the world he ascribes that to the fact that his ancestors are "sleeping well" because they have no complaints against him.

Ku rhandziwa hi swikwembu (to be loved by the gods) i.e. "to be fortunate".

The Tsonga ascribes all his good fortune or luck as coming from his gods. Thus when a man has escaped miraculously from certain death or grave injury, he is often heard to say swikwembu swa ka hina swa ndzi rhandza (our gods love me).

Ku rhuketeriwa hi swikwembu (to be cursed by the gods) i.e. "to be unfortunate".

To the Tsonga most of the misfortune which he encounters is ascribed to the displeasure of the gods whom he has offended in some way or other. Hence the curse. If someone close to him dies, the Tsonga is often heard to say Ndzi rhuketeriwe hi swikwembu (I have been cursed by the gods).

Ku fununguleriwa buwa hi swikwembu (to be viewed from the grave by the gods) i.e. "to incur the wrath of one's master".

This idiom is used to-day when one has offended one he can least afford to offend. It may be one's master or father.

Ku phahla swikwembu (to make an offering to the gods) i.e. "to pacify an important person especially by giving him some valuable present".

Ku va ni swikwembu (to have the gods) i.e. "to be possessed by demons".

It sometimes happens that some people get sick through worry or some such thing. The illness is ascribed to the gods, "they possess him U ni swikwembu. Such a person will never get well until "the gods show themselves."

Ku tlhasa swikwembu (to come out the spirits) i.e. "to regain one's health or senses".

To the Tsonga (as it has been noted in the previous idiom) there are some ailments which are ascribed to the gods, and before the gods appear, and show themselves, he won't recover at all. To-day this expression is used idiomatically to indicate that someone has recovered from a serious ailment e.g.

Ndzi hanyile, swikwembu swi tlhasile (I am well; the gods have appeared).

Ku landza swikwembu (to follow the gods) i.e. "to die".

To the Tsonga when a person dies his soul (moya) does not die. It becomes a spirit and follows the spirits of his ancestors. This shows that the Tsonga believe in the immortality of the soul, though in a different way from the accepted christian view. Instead of saying munhu u file (a person has died) the Tsonga often say U landze swikwembu (he has followed the gods).

Ku wela hi tilo (to be fallen on by heaven)

i.e. "to suffer great misfortune or tragedy".

To the Tsonga when a person suffers great misfortune "the gods have fallen on him" to crush him. A Tsonga man says Ndzi wele hi tilo (the gods (heavens) have fallen on me) when he has lost his wife or a beloved son or daughter.

Ku tshikiwa hi tilo (to be foresaken by

heaven) i.e. "to be in great misfortune or misery".

It is believed that a person suffers because the gods have forsaken him.

IDIOMS BASED ON SUPERSTITIONS AND CUSTOMS:

3.6. The Tsonga believe in witchcraft and believe that many people who get ill do so as a result of being bewitched by their enemies. Many idioms have originated from Tsonga beliefs and customs. A few examples of these idioms will now be discussed.

Ku va ni valoyi (to be with the witches)

i.e. "to be bewitched".

When a person is ill it is often heard that U ni valoyi (he is with the witches) i.e. "he is bewitched".

Ku dya hi valoyi (to be eaten by the witches)

i.e. "to be bewitched".

The Tsonga believe that witches delight in human flesh, so that when a person loses weight due to illness, the loss of weight is ascribed to the witches e.g. U dya hi valoyi (he is eaten by the witches) i.e. "he is bewitched".

Ku biya muti (to fence a village) i.e. "to medicate a village against witches".

The Tsonga have a belief that villages can be protected against witches. Hence the expressions ku biya muti (to medicate a village); ku tiyisa muti (to strengthen the village) i.e. "to medicate it as a protection against witches".

Ku xwela emutini (to wake up late in the village) i.e. "to be caught in a village bewitching people".

The Tsonga believe that if a village is "properly strengthened" all the witches who attempt to enter it with a view to bewitching the inmates, will be rendered helpless and will not be able to leave till morning when all the people in the village are awake. Hence the expression Noyi u swerile (the witch has slept late) i.e. "the witch has been caught".

Ku hisa muvabyi (to burn a patient) i.e. "to cause a patient's condition to deteriorate".

The Tsonga have a belief that certain people should not visit a person when he is ill because they may cause his condition to deteriorate, ultimately leading to death. People of low moral standards, witches, menstruating women etc. are taboo to a patient because they may "burn him", va nga n'wi hisa.

Ku va ni tinyarhi (to have the buffaloes) i.e. "to suffer from diseases caused by women".

It is very strongly believed amongst the Tsonga that it is dangerous for a man to have intercourse with a woman who is pregnant by somebody other than himself, or with one who has aborted or miscarried, as such intercourse

leads to serious illness ending in death. Any man who is said "to have the buffaloes" ku va ni tinyarhi is suspected of having had intercourse with women "who are not clean in the body" a va sasekangi emmirini. A man who dies from such illness is said "to have been killed by the buffaloes" U dlaye hi tinyarhi.

Ku ba hi tinhlolo (to be hit by the divining bones) i.e. "to be pointed out, to be found out".

In Tsonga it is believed that a witch can be identified by the divining bones. To-day any person found guilty of any offence may be referred to as having been "hit" by the divining bones, U biwe hi tinhlolo.

Byala bya timhisi (beer of the hyenas) i.e. "the beer set aside for grave diggers in a funeral".

To-day this idiom refers to the beer taken at a funeral.

Byala bya timhamba (beer of the gods) i.e. "ceremonial beer".

On certain occasions the Tsonga people make offerings of beer to the gods. However, only a small quantity of the beer prepared is poured out while incantations are made to the gods. Then large quantities of the beer which is left is used by all the people present.

Ku luma n'waka (to bite the year) i.e. "to eat the first fruit or crop of the season".

The Tsonga used to hold a ceremony where the first fruit or crop of the year was tasted. People were not allowed to eat of the new crop before this ceremony was held. Nowadays, though these ceremonies are no longer held,

when the people eat of the first crop of the year, they always say hi luma n'waka or hi luma nguva (we bite the season) i.e. "we eat of the first fruit of the season".

Ku phahla mariyeta (to perform an offering of reconciliation) i.e. "to bury the hatchet".

Amongst the Tsonga when two brothers have quarrelled seriously (after the death of their father) and are no longer on speaking terms, the younger of the two is forced to offer a beast in reconciliation to the elder brother. So that he in turn can propitiate with the spirits on behalf of the younger brother who has no direct contact with the spirits during the life time of his elder brother. In present day Tsonga the expression ku phahla mariyeta is used idiomatically to signify any act of reconciliation between two parties which have quarrelled.

IDIOMS BASED ON PROVERBS:

3.7. Next we come to a consideration of idioms associated with proverbs. Here we are faced with great difficulties because we have to decide whether the idiom gave rise to the proverb or vice-versa. The issue is further complicated by the fact that certain proverbs are so firmly embedded in our colloquial speech that they may, without stretching the definition far, pass as idioms. To me, however, it seems reasonable to suggest that the proverb came first and that the idiom, which has greater flexibility than the proverb, was

adapted from it. In some cases it seems clear that idioms are derived from proverbs by means of the abbreviation of the proverb, or by eliminating some words which constitute the proverb. In this way many Tsonga idioms seem to have originated. If we take as a point of illustration the idiom

Ku wa hi rivambu rin'we (to fall with one

rib) i.e. "to surrender without a struggle",

and the proverb

Ndlopfu a yi wi rivambu rin'we (an elephant

does not fall with one rib) i.e. "strong

man does not surrender without a struggle",

it seems very clear that the idiom will be better understood by a prior knowledge of the proverb. Therefore there is a stronger case for the contention that the proverb gave rise to the idiom.

Ku huhuta tihlo ra ndlopfu (to blow into an

elephant's eye) i.e. "to assist an elderly

person", is an idiom which has been derived

from the proverb: Tihlo ra ndlopfu va huhuta

(an elephant's eye is blown into) i.e. "you

may advise an elderly person".

Ku fihla min'wala (to hide one's claws) i.e.

"to hide one's violence", is an idiom which

has been derived from the proverb: Nghala yi

fihla min'wala ya yona (the lion hides its

claws) i.e. "a violent man conceals his

violence".

Ku kuma rhambu (to get a bone) i.e. "to come by something valuable", is an idiom which has been derived from the proverb: Mhisi yi kume rhambu (the hyena has got a bone) i.e. "a poor person has come by something valuable".

The following are examples of idioms derived from proverbs:

Ku wa hi rimhondzo (to fall by the trunk) i.e. "to come to grief through one's wealth", adapted from the proverb: Ndlopfu yi wile hi rimhondzo (the elephant has fallen on its trunk) i.e. "their wealth was their undoing".

Ku ba ngwenya hi sava (to hit the crocodile with sand) i.e. "to give riches to the wealthy", adapted from the proverb: U nga teki sava u ba ngwenya (do not hit the crocodile with sand) i.e. "do not give riches to the wealthy".

Ku va ngwenya (to be a crocodile) i.e. "to be well to do" adapted from the proverb: Munhu loyi i ngwenya (this man is a crocodile) i.e. "this man is very wealthy".

Ku va ni ntamu wa mhisi (to have the hyena's strength) "to be strong and evil", adapted from the proverb: I ntamu wa mhisi (it is the strength of the hyena) i.e. "it is the strength of an evil man".

Ku dlokodla nyoka (to poke at a snake) i.e.

"to provoke a peaceful person", adapted from the proverb: U nga dlokodli nyoka ntsena (do not provoke a snake without reason) i.e. "do not provoke a peaceful person without reason; he will hurt you".

Ku bela exilawini (to hit in the burrow) i.e.

"to hit on the spot", adapted from the proverb: Mhunti va yi bela exilawini (a duiker is hit on the spot) i.e. "settle a case immediately it arises".

Ku fela etinyaweni (to die in the bean-field)

i.e. "to be caught red-handed", adapted from the proverb: Mhunti yo fela etinyaweni (the duiker which died in the bean-field) i.e. "the culprit who was caught red-handed".

Ku tlula ka mhala (the spring of an impala)

i.e. "the parent's ways", abbreviated from the proverb: Ku tlula ka mhala ku letela n'wana wa le ndzeni (the springing of an impala teaches the young she bears while inside) i.e. "a child inherits many things from its parents".

Ku hlometela nhutlwa (to peep at a giraffe)

i.e. "to deal hastily with a case", adapted from the proverb: U nga hlometeri nhutlwa (do not peep at a giraffe) i.e. "do not deal hastily with a case".

Ku sasela vanungu (to prepare for the porcupines)

i.e. "to work hard for the benefit

of other people", adapted from the proverb: Mhandzela sasela vanungu (Ant-bear prepare for the porcupines) i.e. "a man who works hard for the benefit of other people".

Ku rhuma ndlopfu (to send an elephant) i.e. "to send a grown up person", adapted from the proverb: Mpfundla wu rhuma ndlopfu (the hare sends the elephant) i.e. "a young person may send an elderly person".

Ku ba xihlahla (to hit the bush) i.e. "to miss the culprit", adapted from the proverb: Va be xihlahla, va tshika mpfundla (they hit the forest and left the hare) i.e. "they have missed the culprit".

Ku hanya bya mpfundla (to live like a hare) i.e. "to live on deceit and cunning", adapted from the proverb: U nga hanyi vutomi bya mpfundla (do not lead the life of a hare) i.e. "do not live on deceit and cunning".

Ku hanya bya timfenhe (to live like baboons) i.e. "to lead a completely dissolute life", adapted from the proverb: Va hanya vutomi bya timfenhe (they lead the life of baboons) i.e. "they lead a dissolute life".

Ku banana hi rhambu ra mfenhe (to hit each other with a baboon's bone) i.e. "to exchange gifts with relatives only", adapted from the proverb: Va banana hi rhambu ra

mfenhe (they hit each other with a baboon's bone) i.e. "they exchange gifts on the basis of kinship".

Ku hlekana makovo (to laugh at each other's receding foreheads) i.e. "to deride each other whereas you have similar errors", adapted from the proverb: Timfenhe ti hlekana makovo (the baboons laugh at each other's receding foreheads) i.e. "people deride each other whereas they have similar errors".

Ku va ximanga na kondlo (to be cat and mouse) i.e. "to be opposite sexes", adapted from the proverb: Ximanga na kondlo swi nge tshami swin'we (a cat and a mouse cannot live together) i.e. "you cannot put two people of opposite sexes together without something untoward happening".

Ku hoxa kondlo enguleni ya timanga (to throw a mouse into a granary of monkey-nuts) i.e. "to lead the wicked into temptation", adapted from the proverb: U nga teki kondlo u hoxa enguleni ya timanga (do not throw a mouse into a granary of monkey-nuts) i.e. "do not lead the wicked into temptation".

Ku landza hi rihlakahla (to follow by the shining foam) i.e. "to pursue by following the track" adapted from the proverb: Humba va landza hi rihlakahla (a snail is pursued by following its foam) i.e. "a thief is

pursued by following his tracks, a matter is solved through the clues left behind".

Ku dlokodla mfutsu (to poke at a tortoise)

i.e. "to put someone on the alert", adapted from the proverb: U nga dlokodli nfutsu, u yi tlharihisa (do not poke at a tortoise for you will alert her) i.e. "do not put people on the alert for they will conceal all evidence".

Ku siya hi mfutsu (to be outrun by the tor-

toise) i.e. "to be exceedingly slow", adapted from the proverb: U nga siyi hi mfutsu yi nga ri na rivilo (do not be left behind by the tortoise whereas it has no speed) i.e. "do not be too slow in attending to things".

Ku hundzuka mavala (to change colours) i.e.

"to change one's attitude", adapted from the proverb: Lumpfana hundzuka mavala (chamelion, change your colours) i.e. "a change of attitude towards one".

IDIOMS BASED ON WILD ANIMALS

3.8. The Tsonga were great hunters, and for this reason many idioms depicting various facets of animal behaviour have found their way into the idiom-lore of the Tsonga. Of the wild animals it is the elephant, the lion, the hyena, the crocodile, the duiker, the baboon and the hare which have given rise to many idioms.

However, other animals have also contributed to our idiom-lore as we shall see in the course of this study. Examples of idioms associated with elephants and lions have already been given. A few more will follow:

Ku ba ndlopfu hi xibakele (to hit an elephant with a fist) i.e. "to make a very slight impression".

Nkarhi wa mahlamba-ndlopfu (the time of the elephant's bath) i.e. "the early hours before dawn".

Ku va ndlopfu (to be an elephant) i.e. "to be colossal".

Ku bohela xuma enengeni wa mpfuvu (to tie wealth to a hippo's leg) i.e. "to invest in a hopeless undertaking". The hippo will disappear into a pool with the wealth and nothing more will be heard of it.

Ku va ngwenya emutini (to be a crocodile in the village) i.e. "to be a champion fighter".

Ku tshama ni ngwenya emutini (to live with a crocodile in the village) i.e. "to live with a dangerous person in the village". The crocodile is a treacherous animal and therefore unsafe to live with.

Ku va mhisi (to be a hyena) i.e. "a hard and fearless worker".

Ku va ni matimba ya mhisi (to have the strength of a hyena) i.e. "to be very strong and evil". To the Tsonga the hyena is associated with evil and witches.

Vurhongo bya mhisi (sleep of a hyena) i.e.
"a very deep sleep".

Ku twa nyoka (to hear the snake) i.e. "to
feel hungry".

Ku miyeta nyoka (to quiten the snake) i.e.
"to eat".

Ku tiendla mhunti (to make oneself a duiker)
i.e. "to live in hiding".

Ku fela kondlo (to die for a rat) i.e. "to
be betrayed".

Ku yimbelela risimu ra chela (to sing a frog's
song) i.e. "to harp on the same string".

Ku va ni mahiri ya lumpfana (to have the
tricks of a chamelion) i.e. "to be a liar".

When the chamelion was sent by God to say
that man will not die, he lied and said
that man would die.

Ku va nkwahle (to be an iguana) i.e. "to be
foolish and sluggish".

IDIOMS BASED ON DOMESTIC ANIMALS AND POULTRY:

3.9. Domestic animals are constant companions of man. The result is that many idioms are found in the language which originate from man's experience with these domestic animals. Their habits and behaviour under different circumstances have given birth to many expressions which have added to the idiomatic wealth of the language.

3.10. From cattle, dogs, donkeys and fowls have originated a number of idioms. A few examples will now be discussed.

Ku senga homu hi rimatsi (to milk a cow on the left side) i.e. "to start a case in the wrong way".

Vutlhari bya le nhomfini (the trick of the nose) i.e. "very easy control". In order to control a beast the Tsonga have a rope which they pass through the noses and with aid of this rope they are able to direct the beast at will.

Ku va mbyana (to be a dog) i.e. "to be excessively fond of women". When a bitch is in heat dogs come from different directions and fight over her.

Ku vukula hi mbyana (to be barked at by a dog) i.e. "to be insulted or attacked by a poor person".

Ku vitana mbyana u khome nhonga (to call a dog while you are holding a stick) i.e. "to frighten people from whom you want a favour". People usually hit dogs with sticks so a dog will not move to a person who calls it while he has a stick in his hand.

Ku dlayela mbyana (to slaughter one a dog) i.e. "to curse someone". The dog is not used for meat amongst the Tsonga so if you offer dog's meat to a person you are cursing him.

Ku rhurhela mbyana (to offer hospitality to a dog) i.e. "to offer hospitality to an

ungrateful person".

Ku hoxa rhambu etimbyaneni (to throw a bone amongst the dogs) i.e. "to cause dissension amongst people". If you throw a bone amongst dogs they will fight over it.

Ngoma ya timbyana (circumcision of the dogs) i.e. "a time that never was or never will be".

Ku vukula tshuka (to bark at an ant-heap) i.e. "to speak on a matter on which you are not informed". An ant-heap is usually closed and it is dumb and no one knows what it has inside it.

Ku va nhundzu ya ximanga (to be the bundle of the cat) i.e. "to have no permanent place of abode". The cat does not bring up her kittens where she gave birth to them. She carries them from place to place - one day here, the next day there!

Ku va ximanga-tlatlani (to be a wild cat) i.e. "a man of a very fierce and wild nature". The wild cat is very fierce and not as docile as the domestic cat.

Ku hanya bya goya (to live like a wild cat) i.e. "to lead 'a secluded life". This idiom is used with particular reference to hermits and all persons who do not like to stay with other people.

Ku va huku (to be a hen) i.e. "to be cowardly". Hens are very cowardly and run away at the slightest provocation.

Ku handzela endzhaku tani hi huku (to scratch the ground backwards like a hen) i.e. "to labour hard without purpose". The hen scratches backwards and is thus not in a position to see what progress it is making.

Ku byela munhu swo mita hi huku (to tell a person what is swallowed by the hen) i.e. "to insult a person". Many of the things swallowed by hens are dirty and may not be spoken about in public.

Ku hanya hi ku handza (to live by scratching the ground) i.e. "to work for one's food". The hen gets its food by scratching the ground.

IDIOMS BASED ON LOCUSTS, BEES, WASPS AND OTHER INSECTS:

3.11. Expressions have come into use which show that the Tsonga also took note of the behaviour of seemingly unimportant things which formed part of his environment. Locusts, bees, wasps and other pests such as flies, butts, lice etc., play a role in Tsonga idiom lore. The following are examples of idioms which have originated in this way.

Ku khoma njiya (to catch a locust) i.e. "to fall". Young children are fond of catching locusts, and when they do so they usually go down on their knees.

Ku wonga njiya (to trick a locust) i.e. "to trick a wily person". Locusts are always

on the alert and one who wants to catch a locust must use all types of tricks.

Ku ntlhontlha tinyoxi (to poke at bees) i.e.

"to disturb dangerous people". Bees are at all times dangerous but moreso when disturbed.

Ku ntlhontha mimphi (to poke at wasps) i.e.

"to disturb a dangerous person".

Ku va ni xijaha xa nhwala (to have the youth-

ful exuberance of a louse) i.e. "to be vain to overate oneself".

Ku vulavula Xilungu xa nhwala (to speak English

of the louse) i.e. "to speak broken English".

Ku faya nsikiti (to crush a bug) i.e. "to use

vulgar language". A crushed bug has a very disagreeable smell and so has vulgar language.

Ku tidvisa mahele (to feed oneself on cock-

roaches) i.e. "to take credit for the work of another man". Cockroaches encroach on man's food and dwellings and behave as if the food and dwellings are owned by them.

Ku wela hi hele eswakudyeni (to have a cock

roach falling into one's food) i.e. "to be interrupted by someone who knows nothing about the matter under discussion".

Ku veka swakudya laha ku nga riki na mahele

(to put food where there are no cockroaches) i.e. "to eat". When food is eaten it disappears into the abdomen and intestines and cannot be reached by cockroaches. Thus

if a Tsonga asks for some food which he had left over, if it has been eaten he is told that: Byi vekiwe laha ku nga riki na mahele (it has been placed where there are no cockroaches) i.e. "it has been eaten".

Ku dlaya nsokoti hi nhonga (to kill an ant with a stick) i.e. "to get something by force". The Tsonga use sticks mostly for fighting. Anything which is taken with the aid of a stick is taken by force.

Ku va xikhongolotana xa nsindziso (to be a little centipede of trouble) i.e. "to be a troublesome person". The centipede is very troublesome and persistent, even if thrown away, it always comes back.

IDIOMS BASED ON WAYS AND HABITS OF THE PEOPLE

3.12. Many idioms in Tsonga are based on the ways and habits of the people. These are also idioms which arise from experience; and they deal with many aspects of tribal experience and community life, such as poverty, servility, homes, parent and child relationship, courts, war, courage, cowardice, marriage etc. A few examples of this type covering various facets of the ways and habits of the people will now be given.

Ku pfumala xa vumbirhi (to lack the second thing) i.e. "to be indigent". This expression applies to a poor man who is unable to make ends meet because of lack of means.

Ku va tala (to be an ash-heap) i.e. "to be wealthy". In an ash-heap different types of things are deposited, with the result that the soil in and around the ash-heap is very fertile and productive and therefore rich with a thick foliage of vegetation. This did not escape the observant eye of the Tsonga. A rich man was in this way likened to an ash-heap.

Ku va mbulwa (to be a yellow apple-tree) i.e. "to be docile". The yellow apple tree has no thorns and bends and breaks with ease. Both young and old are thus able to gain access to the fruit without difficulty. Thus any person who is docile and easy to manage is likened to the yellow apple tree.

Ku va vele ra mumu (to be mealie plant of the drought) i.e. "to be very lean". During the drought the mealie-plant withers and looks very thin. A lean person is thus likened to a lean mealie-plant during the drought.

Ku va manghimana xifaki xa mumu (to be the short mealie-cob of the drought) i.e. "a very short person". During the drought when rains are scarce the mealie-cob which manage to resist the drought are usually very thin for lack of nourishment. A very short person is likened to this tiny mealie-cob as he too is regarded to be short because

of having grown up without nourishment owing to hardship.

Ku va mfula ni ribye (to be the murula-pip and stone) i.e. "to be irreconcilable enemies". The Tsonga use a stone to crush the hard pip of the murula fruit in order to extract the edible nut inside. In this way the hard cover is destroyed in the process. For this reason the pip and the stone can never be friends.

Ku tima ndzilo hi ndzilo (to extinguish fire by fire) i.e. "to add fuel to the fire". If you add more fuel to fire it burns all the more. So it is with people they cannot be appeased by incitement.

Ku banana hi rhanga ro hisa (to heat each other with a hot squash) i.e. "to accuse each other of a serious offence". This applies where someone commits a crime and then leads two innocent people to suspect each other and quarrel bitterly over it. He has left them the "hot squash" with which they hit each other.

Ku va xitlhangu xa tluka (to be a shield of leaves) i.e. "to be no shield at all". One cannot shield oneself behind leaves for the enemy will see through them, so a shield of leaves is no shield at all.

Ku bvinva tlhari (to blunt the assegai) i.e. "to discourage or render useless the person

who protects you". The Tsonga use an assegai to protect themselves in war or in the hunt. A blunt assegai renders one vulnerable to one's enemies.

Ku va xilwa na dzana (to be one who fights a hundred) i.e. "to be a very brave person". It is only a brave man who does not turn tail even if the odds are against him. This type of idiom is, however based largely on hyperbole which enters largely into certain idiomatic forms used in the daily life of the people and is also found in praise-names and praise-poems of Bantu as a whole.

Ku yimisa ntshiva (to raise the mane) i.e. "to accept a challenge". When a lion is angered it raises its mane by way of challenge. Thus a person who assumes a threatening attitude when angered is said to "raise his mane".

Ku yimisa ncila (to raise the tail) i.e. "to turn tail". When bulls fight, the one which is defeated raises its tail as it turns away from its adversary.

Ku tota thyaka (to smear dirt) i.e. "to speak libelously of someone". If a man is smeared with dirt he appears reprehensible and so is anyone who is libelled. Hence the comparison.

Ku chayela gija (to sing someone a tune) i.e. "to slander a person". Amongst the Tsonga if you want a person to dance you sing a tune to which he must dance. If "you sing

someone a tune" you try to make him say what he does not say.

Ku khoma ndlela (to catch the road) i.e. "to go out on a journey".

Ku tshwa hi ndlela (to be scotched by the road) i.e. "to undertake a strenuous journey". Before the advent of modern transport, and even now, the Tsonga usually travel long distances on foot and in the process suffer heat and many deprivations along the way. Hence the idiom "to be scotched by the road".

Ku tsema mhaka (to cut a matter) i.e. "to settle a case". If a person wants to bring an end to anything he cuts it. So a case is also settled by "cutting it".

Ku va fole ni nhlava (to be aloe and tobacco) i.e. "to be inseparable friends".

Ku va munyu ni nyama (to be sald and meat) i.e. "to be inseparable friends".

Ku va ririmi ni marhi (to be tongue and saliva) i.e. "to be inseparable friends".

The last three idioms have the same meaning. The Tsonga have noticed that some things go well together. These have been woven into beautiful idioms which make reference to friendly relations between people. In the preparation of snuff, the Tsonga grind tobacco leaves and roasted aloe separately into a fine powder. These are then mixed into a fine blend till one cannot be

separated from the other. In the preparation of meat, a suitable quantity of salt is used, and it is cooked with the meat to make it tasty. This salt dissolves in the meat and becomes part and parcel of the meat. The tongue and saliva are always together in the mouth of living persons; the saliva moistens the tongue for the efficient performance of its functions. This mutual dependence of tobacco and aloe, salt and meat, and saliva and the tongue, has been employed ingeniously in the formation of idioms which refer to great friendship or sound relations between people. These then, are some of the aspects of life which have given origin to our idioms. But the real heart of Tsonga idiom lies elsewhere and will be seen in two special classes of idiomatic phrases which are closely related. The human body is responsible for the first of these two special types of idiomatic phrases which will now be discussed.

IDIOMS BASED ON THE HUMAN BODY

3.13. The Tsonga people have observed the human body very closely and from it has originated whole constellations of idioms of extraordinary beauty, variety and vividness. These idioms cover both the internal and external organs of the body. Approximately two hundred of the idioms which appear in the appendix to this study have their origin in the human body. In his study of English Words and Idioms, Pearsall Smith has referred to this type of idioms as "Bodily Idioms".¹⁾ In Tsonga the number of

1. Pearsall Smith: Op. cit. p. 279.

bodily idioms is enormous and a short list of these idioms which have originated from the body will be cited in this chapter:

Ku andlala mandla (to spread the hands) i.e.

"to accept with gratitude". This idiom originated from the fact that the Tsonga spread both hands gratefully when they receive a gift.

Ku andlala ririmi (to spread the tongue) i.e.

"to speak on end". This idiom has originated from the fact that when one speaks the tongue does not remain in one place but moves all over the mouth.

Ku ba mombo (to hit the forehead) i.e. (i)

"to drive a point home" (ii) "to concern directly" (iii) "to hit the mark". This idiom has originated from the fact that the forehead is a vital part of the human body and if hit by the enemy he usually scores decisively.

Ku ba nomu (to hit the mouth) i.e. "to stop

a person from speaking". The mouth is amongst other things employed in human speech, and if hit, the mouth is usually silenced.

Ku biha ngati (to be ugly of blood) i.e. "to

be dogged by misfortune". In order that the human body may function well pure blood should flow in its veins; once the blood is impure illness will result.

Ku boha mbilu (to tie the heart) i.e. "to act with great resolution". The Tsonga consider the heart to be the seat of all feelings; and for the performance of any task which concerns the feelings it must be disciplined to rise to the occasion.

Ku halata ngati (to pour out blood) i.e. "to kill". If a man loses blood he dies. This fact was not lost on the Tsonga. Hence the origin of the idiom.

Ku hlantswa nkolo (to wash the throat) i.e. "to take a drink". When anything is dirty it irritates either the eyes or the feelings and it must be washed. The same applies to the throat; when man is thirsty the throat is irritated, so it must be washed.

Idioms such as these where more than fifty different parts of the human body are used for vivid and vigorous expression are found not only in the Bantu languages but in other languages as well. In English, Pearsall Smith¹⁾ has collected more than two hundred of them.

IDIOMS BASED ON VERBS WHICH COMBINE WITH NAMES OF PARTS OF THE BODY:

3.14. Allied and working in unison with names of parts of the body are certain verbs - verbs of motion and effort as they have been called - which combine with

1. Pearsall Smith: Op. cit. pp. 279 - 292

the noun or adjunct which follow them to create idioms which describe bodily sensations with amazing power and vividness. These verbs are very prolific in idiom formation and enter into combinations, which throw off idioms of very great variety thus enriching our idiomatic wealth immensely.

The following are examples of those verbs which combine easily with names of parts of the body to express its movements, feelings or attitudes:

(i) Ku ba (to hit); from which has come idioms such as the following:

Ku ba hi nenge (to hit with the leg) i.e.

"to walk bare foot" or "to go on foot",

the meaning here depends on context.

Ku ba hi ripfalo (to be hit by the diaphragm)

i.e. "to suffer qualms of conscience".

Ku ba mandla (to hit the hands) i.e. "to

express gratitude".

Ku ba ndleve (to hit the ear) i.e. "to listen

attentively".

Ku ba nhloko (to hit the head) i.e. "to con-

fuse".

Ku ba nyoka (to hit the snake 'intestine')

i.e. "to eat".

Ku biwa tsolo hi homa (to be hit on the knee

by a golf ball) i.e. "to be found guilty".

etc.

(ii) Ku fa (to die) from which have come the following examples:

Ku fa hi mbitsi (to die of pining) i.e. "to pine away".

Ku fa hi ripfalo (to die of the diaphragm) i.e. "to suffer from a guilty conscience".

Ku fa mahlo (to die eyes) i.e. (i) "to get blind", (ii) "to be illiterate".

Ku fa tindleve (to die ears) i.e. (i) "to get deaf", (ii) "to be disobedient".

Ku fa ripfalo (to die diaphragm) i.e. "to have no feelings or conscience whatsoever".

(iii) Ku khoma (to catch) is also another of these verbs around which is clustered a number of this type of idiom:

Ku khoma hi le ndzeni (to catch by the inside) i.e. "to have abdominal pains".

Ku khoma hi mbilu (to catch by the heart) i.e. "to keep in mind".

Ku khoma hi ndlala (to catch by hunger) i.e. "to feel hungry".

Ku khoma hi ndleve (to catch by the ear) i.e. (i) "to punish" (ii) "to overhear a remark".

Ku khoma hi xivundza (to catch by solitude) i.e. "to feel lonely".

Ku khoma hi tihlo (to catch by the eye) i.e. "to catch a glimpse of".

Ku khoma hi voko (to catch by the hand) i.e. "to take in hand", "to aid". etc.

CONCLUSION:

3.15. As has been pointed out in the course of discussion, Tsonga idioms have originated from various

sources. They cover the whole field of human experience as known to the Tsonga. They are a result of the observations of the people stored over a long period of time. As a result they are native to the Tsonga language. The images, comparisons, phrases and modes of expression of Tsonga idioms are essentially national in character, and smell and taste of the soil from which they grew.

3.16. All the afflictions of human-kind and the world around him, his fears and his sorrows; his joy and happiness; his hopes and aspirations; his wisdom and his foolishness; and the whole field of human endeavour and activity; and many more things have not been lost sight of; and idioms have come into being to give expression, to retranslate our abstract thoughts and concepts in a more vivid and concrete manner:

Ku boha ririmi (to tie the tongue) i.e. "to remain silent".

Ku boxa dyondzo (to pierce education) i.e. "to be well-educated".

Ku luma ndleve (to bite the ear) i.e. "to warn surreptitiously".

Ku luma xirhendze (to bite the heel) i.e. "to betray".

Ku luma meno (to bite the teeth) i.e. "to act with courage and determination".

Ku lumeka yindlu (to burn the house) i.e. "to create domestic trouble or discord".

3.17. There are also idioms which are of recent origin. These also are given a characteristic native

ring, which goes to show that for its survival, renewal and nourishment, Tsonga idiom returns to its native soil where every form of national speech has originated:

Ku dya mali (to eat money) i.e. "to spend money carelessly".

Ku dya hi tihanci (to be eaten by horses) i.e. "to lose money through gambling on horses".

Ku dya Xilungu (to eat Europeanlike) i.e. "to lead a European type of life".

3.18. In this way Tsonga idiom is able to adapt itself to the changing conditions, and thereby enables itself to give expression to new concepts which result from contact with European culture. This fascinating process will continue as long as Tsonga is spoken.

THE INCIDENCE OF FIGURES OF SPEECH IN THE
"TSONGA IDIOM"

INTRODUCTION

4.1. This chapter will concern itself with the incidence of figurative language in spoken and written Tsonga i.e. with the idiomatic expressions which occur in the spoken language and written language of present Tsonga speakers and Tsonga writers.

4.2. It is true that the terms "spoken" and "written" have more than one interpretation. In this study the term "Spoken Tsonga" should be taken to mean the Tsonga which is generally used by Tsonga people such as teachers, ministers of religion, etc., chiefs and councillors at tribal gatherings and ordinary people in the course of ordinary conversation. In this study the term "Spoken Tsonga" will also include colloquial but not slangy or vulgar language. The term "Written Tsonga" should be taken to mean the varieties of Tsonga which appear in printed books, newspapers, formal correspondence, formal discussions, and that we expect to hear in courts, formal occasions, church conferences and on various other formal and ceremonial occasions.

4.3. In Tsonga, there are so many expressions which are used in the language that we forget they are idiomatic. They have become part of the idiom of the language and

have greatly revitalized it. Most of these expressions which are first heard in spoken language have found their way into the written language. Present-day Tsonga authors make use of these expressions in their writings. Amongst these writers we may mention the authors of "Masungu M'fana ka Maxele".¹⁾ "Sasavona",²⁾ "Mahlasela-Hundza",³⁾ "Xaka"⁴⁾ "Ntsakisi",⁵⁾ "Muhlava",⁶⁾ "Makomba-Ndlela Series",⁷⁾ and "Vahlayi Series".⁸⁾

4.4. In spoken Tsonga to-day, and in the writings that have been cited above, we find many idiomatic expressions which are based on different figures of speech i.e. "a departure from the ordinary form of expression or ordinary course of ideas, with the object of making clearer or heightening the effect of one's subject".⁹⁾

4.5. In Tsonga various figures of speech such as metaphor, simile, metonymy, euphemism, hyperbole and contrast etc., have contributed very largely to the idiomatic wealth of the language. These and a few other forms will now be discussed.

IDIOMS BASED ON METAPHOR:

4.6. Metaphor is defined by Webster as: "A rhetorical figure of speech by which a word or phrase literally denoting one kind of object or idea is applied to

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1. Ntsanwisi, H.W.E. - Op. cit.
 2. Marivate D.C. - Sasavona (Swiss Mission, Johannesburg).
 3. Ntsanwisi, H.E. - Op. cit.
 4. Baloyi S.J. - Xaka (A.P.B., Johannesburg).
 5. Mkhombo J.F.C. - Ntsakisi - Op. cit.
 6. Shilubana & Ntsanwisi - Muhlava (The Nkuna Tribe, North Eastern Transvaal, South Africa) 1958.
 7. Ntsanwisi H.W.E. - Makomba-Ndlela Series
 8. - Vahlayi Series (Swiss Mission)
 9. George S. Fullan - A Class Book of English Grammar

another to suggest a likeness between them as in the 'ship plows the sea'".¹⁾ In free and fluid discourse in Tsonga, one finds many such expressions which literally mean one thing but figuratively another i.e. such expressions depending on use have extended or idiomatic significations. The following are cases in point:-

Tihlo ro saseka (a good eye) when used idiomatically has the significance of "connoisseur".

Tihlo ro hosi (the chief's eye) when used idiomatically has the significance of "the chief's representative".

Nhloko ya muti (head of a family) is a fixed phrasal pattern which idiomatically means "the father".

Munhu wa nhloko (the person of a head) is a fixed phrasal pattern which idiomatically means "an intelligent person".

Xandla xin'we (one hand) when used idiomatically has the significance of "one handful". Hence, swandla swimbirhi (two hands) i.e. "two handfuls"; swandla swinharhu (three hands) i.e. "three handfuls." etc.

Munhu wa ritiho (the person of a finger) is a fixed phrasal pattern with the idiomatic significance of "a thief".

Munhu wa ririmi (a person of a tongue) is a fixed phrasal pattern with the idiomatic significance of "a talkative person" or "a liar".

1) Webster's Dictionary.

4.7. The above examples have illustrated one form or pattern through which metaphorical extension or semantic radiation leads to the formation of idiomatic expressions in Tsonga. Another pattern is also seen whereby organs of the body are used with extended meanings to signify physical ailments idiomatically e.g.

Ku va ni nhloko (to have a head) i.e. "to suffer from headache".

Ku va ni nenge (to have a leg) i.e. "to suffer from a sore leg".

Ku va ni ndleve (to have an ear) i.e. "to suffer from earache".

Ku va ni mahlo (to have eyes) i.e. "to suffer from eyes".

Ku va ni ngati (to have blood) i.e. "to suffer from pneumonia".

Ku va ni xifuva (to have a chest) i.e. "to suffer from tuberculosis".

Ku va ni nhamu (to have a neck) i.e. "to have a sore neck".

4.8. The same pattern is also employed with words other than organs of the human body with idiomatic significations e.g.

Ku va ni swikwembu (to have gods) i.e. "to be possessed by the spirits or to be mentally unbalanced".

Ku va ni ntshiva (to have a mane) i.e. "to be aggressive".

Ku va ni ndhuma (to have sound) i.e. "to be notorious".

Ku va ni khombo (to have sorrow) i.e. "to be unlucky". etc.

4.9. In Tsonga a slightly altered pattern of the above is used in cases where the names of certain animals are used with figurative significations to refer to human beings. The significations may express favourable or unfavourable characteristics as the case may be e.g.

Ku va nghala (to be a lion) i.e. "to be brave".

Ku va ndlopfu (to be an elephant) i.e. "to be colossal".

Ku va mbyana (to be a dog) i.e. "to be poor".

Ku va xihari (to be a beast) i.e. "to be brutish".

Ku va ngwenya (to be a crocodile) i.e. "to be a champion".

Ku va nyoka (to be a snake) i.e. "to be treacherous".

Ku va xipene (to be a steenbuck) i.e. "to be fleetfooted". etc.

4.10. Some idiomatic expressions also based on metaphorical extension assume yet another form which is extensively used in Tsonga. The following are cases in point:-

Ku andlala ririmi (to spread the tongue) i.e. "to speak on end".

Ku andlala mhaka (to spread a matter) i.e. "to explain a matter in detail".

Ku ahlamela munhu (to open the mouth for a person) i.e. "to pick up a quarrel with a person".

Ku ba ngwenya hi sava (to hit a crocodile with sand) i.e. "to carry coal to Newcastle"

Ku bola nomu (to be rotten of mouth) i.e. "to be addicted to vulgar language".

Ku boha mhaka (to tie a case) i.e. "to finalise a case".

Ku chela hi mati yo hisa (to pour with hot water) i.e. "to do someone very great harm".

Ku celela timhaka hanshi (to dig cases down) i.e. "to hide the truth".

Ku dya ndzhaka (to eat a legacy) i.e. "to inherit a legacy".

Ku dya mali (to eat money) i.e. "to spend money".

Ku dya nkarhi (to eat time) i.e. "to waste time".

Ku dya munhu (to eat a person) i.e. "to cheat a person".

Ku dya tinhwala (to eat lice) i.e. "to live in poverty".

Ku dya mafurha (to eat fat) i.e. "to live in splendour". etc.

In the last six examples the verb ku dya (to eat) has been used idiomatically and has therefore figurative meanings in accordance with the set pattern into which it has been incorporated. In each case it dis-

plays a variety in shades of meaning.

IDIOMS BASED ON SIMILE:

4.11. A simile has been described as an explicit figurative comparison in that it states that one thing is similar to another. Dickenson states that in English "there are a large number of idiomatic similes which, while they explain themselves, are of interest, e.g.

as black as a crow. as white as a sheet.
as red as a cherry. as green as grass.
as brown as a berry".¹⁾

4.12. In Tsonga idiomatic similes are also found. These similes appear in different patterns, examples of which will now be given.

4.13. In Tsonga the most popular pattern of idiomatic similes employs the comparative formative wonge (like) e.g.

Ku saseka wonge i mhala (as beautiful as a gazelle).

Meno wonge i swifake (teeth like a mealie-cob) i.e. "clean, white teeth".

Mahlo wonge xitsatsayi (eyes like a glow-worm) i.e. "sharp brilliant eyes".

Nhompfu wonge i nyundzu (nose like a hammer) i.e. "a big nose".

Thyaka wonge i nguluve (as dirty as a pig).

Ntima wonge i nsiti (as black as charcoal).

Mona wonge i noyi (as cruel as a witch).

1. Dickenson: Juta's Practical English Course (Junior)
Juta's Co. Ltd., Johannesburg.

Vutlhari wonge mpfundla (as wily as a hare).

Marhengwe wonge i sekwa (as bow-legged as a duck).

4.14. A second pattern of idiomatic similes employs the prefix xi- of class 7 with nouns e.g.

Ku dya Xilungu (to eat European fashion) i.e.

"to live like a European".

Ku tikhoma ximunhu (to behave like a human being).

Ku tirha xihuku (to work like a fowl) i.e.

"to work without results".

Ku lwa xinghala (to fight like a lion) etc.

4.15. A third pattern employs nga and appears as follows:-

Ku tikhoma nga munhu (to behave like a human being).

Ku tirha nga mukhomiwa (to work like a slave).

Ku yimbelela nga mulungu (to sing like a European) etc.

Finally two other patterns have also been noted:-

Ku tsutsumisa ximbyana (to run like a dog).

Ku vulavurisa xiyena (to talk like him).

Ku dyisa xinguluve (to eat like a pig). etc.

and

Vurhongo bya rifu (deathlike sleep).

Vutlhari bya mpfundla (hear-like cleverness).

Vutomi bya khumbi (slave-like life).

Vuphukuphuku bya huku (hen-like stupidity).

etc.

IDIOMS BASED ON METONYMY:

4.16. Certain phrases and words in Tsonga are idiomatically used in the figure styled metonymy. This "is the use of a word for some other word closely related to it in meaning - container for the thing, material for that which is made from it, the tool for the act".¹⁾

4.17. Idioms based on metonymy can be seen in the following examples:-

Ku rhandza jomela (to love the drinking bowl) i.e. "to love liquor".

Ku tsakela n'wandhindhana (to love skirts) i.e. "to have a great weakness for the fair sex".

Ku rhandza matlhari (to love assegais) i.e. "to be fond of war".

Ku va mutshiveri (to be a kindler of the fire) i.e. "a wife".

Ku va wa xirhundzu (to be of the basket) i.e. "a woman".

Ku va nsati wa tihomu (to be a wife of the cattle) i.e. "a woman for whom lobola has been paid". In Tsonga it actually refers to a legally married woman.

4.18. In addition terms like nyimpi (war); yindlu (house); tiko (country); xitiko (hearth) are found in idiomatic expressions to mean, an army, a family, people and children respectively.

1. Gray & Wise - The Bases of Speech (Harper & Brothers) New York, Third Edition, p. 374.

IDIOMS BASED ON EUPHEMISM:

4.19. In spoken and written Tsonga certain idioms are found which are based on euphemism. Euphemism or decorous speech is a softened and indirect expression used "in place of the ordinary term when it might be supposed to have the effect of grating on or harrowing the feelings. For example, we say 'passed away' or 'fell asleep', instead of 'died'; 'weak' for 'half-witted', 'plain' for ugly; 'the old gentleman himself' for 'Satan'.¹⁾

4.20. Circumlocutions like these are employed in many languages to avoid causing embarrassment. Tsonga employs idioms based on euphemism to a considerable extent, e.g.

Ku halata mati (to spill out water) i.e. "to urinate".

Ku humela handle (to go outside) i.e. "to pass motions", "to defecate".

Ku tintshuxa (to untie oneself) i.e. "to give birth".

Ku tika (to be heavy) i.e. "to be pregnant".

Ku tikisa (to cause to be heavy) i.e. "to impregnate".

Ku xurhisa (to cause to be satisfied) i.e. "to impregnate".

Ku hlangana (to meet) i.e. "to copulate".

Ku tsutsuma (to run) i.e. "to be mad".

Ku hunguta (to decrease) i.e. "to kill".

1. Clarke & Muller: Op. cit. p. 251.

Ku etlela wansati (to sleep a woman) i.e.

"to copulate". etc.

4.21. Expressions like these are used in Tsonga not so much as a result of hypersensitivity or excess of delicacy. These idioms come in very handy where the direct word or expression is considered vulgar, offending or embarrassing. This type of expression differs greatly from the terms used by Americans for purposes of enhancing prestige e.g. "sanitary engineer for garbage collector beautician for hairdresser, exterminating engineer for rat catcher, etc."¹⁾

4.22. Idioms based on euphemism are to Tsonga what a shockabsorber is to a vehicle on a rough, uneven road, and not just mere verbal glorification of the commonplace as found in many American euphemistic expressions.

IDIOMS BASED ON EXAGGERATION:

4.23. In Tsonga one finds deliberate exaggeration in the use of words in idiomatic forms with no intention to deceive but to heighten the effect. This type of usage in speech is known as hyperbole.

4.24. In Tsonga hyperbole is extensively used in everyday language, and, as in Zulu, it forms no inconsiderable part of persuasive rhetoric. Of Zulu, Doke states "that exaggeration or hyperbole has entered the very language itself is evident from the use of certain common words in Zulu".²⁾

1. Mencken: The American Language - Fourth Edition. Cited by Anderson and Stageberg in Introductory Readings on Language (Holt, Rinehard & Winston, Inc. New York; p. 136.

2. Doke: Op. cit. p. 208.

4.25. In Tsonga idioms based on hyperbole are illustrated in the following expressions which are used day in and day out in the life of the Tsonga:-

Ku dlaya mavele (to kill maize) i.e. "to have a very large harvest of maize".

Ku nusa mali (to draw handfuls of money) i.e. "to earn much money".

Ku ntswa hi byala (to be brimful of beer) i.e. "to have imbibed a lot of beer".

Ku fa hi ndlala (to die of hunger) i.e. "to be very hungry".

Ku fa hi rirhandzu (to die of love) i.e. "to be very much in love".

Ku fa hi mbitsi (to die of disappointment) i.e. "to pine away".

4.26. In Tsonga the words "dlaya" and "fa" are amongst those which are greatly used in many idiomatic phrases based on hyperbole e.g.

Ku dlaya hi ntirho/ku dlawa hi ntirho (to be killed by work) i.e. "to be overburdened with work".

Ku dlaya hi ntsako/ku dlawa hi ntsako (to be killed by happiness) i.e. "to be overwhelmed with happiness".

Ku dlaya hi mbilu/ku dlawa hi mbilu (to be killed by the heart) i.e. "to be greatly concerned with".

Ku dlaya hi mavele/ku dlawa hi mavele (to be killed by food) i.e. "to lead a drunken life".

Ku dlaya hi nhloko/ku dlawa hi nhloko (to be killed by the head) i.e. "to suffer from excessive headache".

Ku dlaya hi n'wana/ku dlawa hi n'wana (to be killed by a child) i.e. "to be greatly worried with the life of one's child".

Ku fa hi torha (to die of thirst) i.e. "to be very thirsty".

Ku fa hi rifuwo (to die of wealth) i.e. "to be very wealthy".

Ku fa hi nhwana (to die of a girl) i.e. "to be head over heels in love with a girl". etc.

4.27. In Tsonga this type of idiom, which as Bain states, consists in magnifying objects beyond their natural bounds, so as to make them more impressive and intelligible"¹) is also seen in forms such as the following:-

A hi byala i mati (it is not beer, it is water) i.e. "there is an abundance of beer".

A hi vana i tinyeleti (it is not children, it is stars) i.e. "there are many children".

A hi vanhu i sava (it is not people, it is sand) i.e. "there are many people".

A ku hisi ko nuha (it is not hot, it smells) i.e. "it is very hot".

A nga yivi wo hlola (he does not steal he curses) i.e. "he is a notorious thief".

1. Bain: English Composition and Rhetoric.

Tinyama a to va tinyama (meat was meat) i.e.

"there was an abundance of meat".

Byala a ko va byala (beer was beer) i.e.

"there was an abundance of beer". etc.

4.28. This type of idiom is common in spoken Tsonga and spoken Sotho. In contemporary Tsonga literature it is seen especially in "Masungi M'fana ka Maxele" e.g.

"byala a byo khuluka"; (beer was flowing)

i.e. "there was any amount of beer";

"tinyama a to va tinyama"¹⁾ (meat was meat)

i.e. "there was meat for the taking"; etc.

In "Moeder Poulin", Franz illustrated the existence of this type of idiom in Sotho in an excellent literal translation "Mmallo", dié dag het ons geëet. Dit was maar net: Kom kyk! en niemand het weggegaan sonder om sy mond af te vee nie".²⁾ In this type of hyperbole when the Tsonga or Sotho want to exaggerate for the sake of creating effect they have a unique way of calling a thing another thing.

4.29. Finally, hyperbole is also noted in Tsonga praise-names and praise-poems, where the person praised is attributed with supernatural deeds much beyond his ability. But this falls outside the scope of the present study.

IDIOMS BASED ON CONTRAST

4.30. In language the principal figure which expresses contrast is known as antithesis. Fletcher

1. Ntsanwisi H.W.E.: Op. cit. p. 73.

2. Franz: Moeder Poulin (Nasionale Pers, Beperk, Kaapstad) 1946 pp. 1 - 2.

and Scealess define antithesis as "the balancing of one word or idea against another in such a way as to emphasize contrast".¹⁾

4.31. In Tsonga idioms are also found which are based on antithesis. These idioms are expressed in the form of a positive statement followed by its negative. Such idiomatic expressions which are encountered in daily usage usually indicate a state or stage which is fluid or uncertain. The following are a few examples illustrative of this usage:-

Ndzi dyile, a ndzi dyangi (I have eaten, I have not eaten) is an idiomatic way of saying, "I could do with a little more".

Swa antswa, a swi antswi (it is better, it is not better) is an idiomatic way of saying, "there is still room for improvement".

Hi swona, a hi swona (it is it, it is not it) is an idiomatic way of saying that, "it is not quite the truth".

Va hi amukerile, a va hi amukelanga (they welcomed us, they did not welcome us) is an idiomatic way of saying that, "the reception we got could have been warmer".

U fumile, a nga fumangi (he is rich, he is not rich) is an idiomatic way of saying that "he is not as rich as it is imagined".

Va etlerile, a va etlelangi (they slept, they did not sleep) is an idiomatic way of saying "they did not pass a very good night".

1. Fletcher & Scealess: High School English (Maskew Miller) Cape Town, p. 118.

IDIOMS BASED ON PROSODIC ELEMENTS

IDIOMS INCORPORATING NEGATIVE COPULATIVE + TONE

4.32. In Tsonga the negative form of certain simple copulative constructions is used in certain idiomatic expressions to signify a strong affirmative of such negative constructions which, in normal usage are not only morphologically negative, but semantically negative as well. This semantic change from negative to strong affirmative is effected through a marked change of tone on the base of the copulative. In both the normal negative form and the idiomatic form, there is a constant element viz. A hi. In the normal negative form the base of the copulative is articulated with a higher tone contour* than the constant element, whereas in the idiomatic form signifying a strong affirmative, the base is articulated with a lower tone contour than the constant element e.g.

<u>Ordinary Negative Statement.</u>	<u>Idiomatic Expression</u>
<u>A hi vánhú</u> (They are not people).	<u>A hi vànhù</u> (There many people).
<u>A hi ványíngí</u> (They are not many).	<u>A hi ványìngì</u> (They are many).
<u>A hi vánéné</u> (They are not good).	<u>A hi vànènè</u> (They are very good).

4.33. In Tsonga this idiomatic use of tone is found in negative copulative constructions derived from nouns, infinitives, adjectives and adverbs. A few illustrative examples will now be given:-

* Terminology used by Pike in Tone Language - A Technique for Determining the number of Pitch Contrasts in a Language, with studies in Tonemic Substitution and Fusion. (Ann Arbor, University Press, Michigan).

4.34. Idiomatic use of tone in negative copulative constructions with the noun as base:-

<u>Ordinary negative statement</u>	<u>Idiomatic expression</u>
<u>A hi tíhómú</u> (They are not cattle).	<u>A hi tìhòmù</u> (It's a lot of cattle).
<u>A hi vúnwá</u> (It's not a lie).	<u>A hi vùnwà</u> (It's a lot of lies).
<u>A hi váná</u> (They are not children).	<u>A hi vànà</u> (It's a lot of children).
<u>A hi tínjìyá</u> (They are not locusts).	<u>A hi tìnjìyà</u> (It's a lot of locusts).

4.35. Idiomatic use of tone in negative copulative constructions, with the infinitive as base:-

<u>Ordinary negative statement</u>	<u>Idiomatic expression</u>
<u>A hi kú básá</u> (It's not cleanliness)	<u>A hi kù bàsà</u> (It's very clean)
<u>A hi kú sáséká</u> (It's not beauty).	<u>A hi kù sàsèkà</u> (It's very beautiful).
<u>A hi kú swéká</u> (It's not cooking)	<u>A hi kù swèkà</u> (It's very good cooking).
<u>A hi kú lólóhá</u> (It's not laziness).	<u>A hi kù lòlòhà</u> (It is real laziness)
<u>A hi kú lórhá</u> (It's not dreaming).	<u>A hi kù lòrhà</u> (It is real dreaming).

4.36. Idiomatic use of tone in negative copulative constructions with the adjective as base:-

<u>Ordinary negative statement</u>	<u>Idiomatic expression</u>
<u>A hi vánéné</u> (They are not good)	<u>A hi vànènè</u> (They are very good).
<u>A hi ntsóngó</u> (He is not small).	<u>A hi ntsòngò</u> (He is very small).

<u>Ordinary negative statement</u>	<u>Idiomatic expression</u>
<u>A hi nkúlú</u> (He is not big).	<u>A hi nkùlù</u> (He is very big).
<u>A hi vántshwá</u> (They are not young).	<u>A hi vántshwà</u> (They are very young).
<u>A hi vátšanáná</u> (They are not few).	<u>A hi vátšanànà</u> (They are very few).
<u>A hi xímbísí</u> (It is not raw).	<u>A hi xìmbìsì</u> (It is very raw).

4.37. Idiomatic use of tone in negative copulative constructions with the adverb as base:-

<u>Ordinary negative statement</u>	<u>Idiomatic expression</u>
<u>A hi kùlé</u> (It is not far).	<u>A hi kùlè</u> (It is very far).
<u>A hi kúsúhí</u> (It is not near).	<u>A hi kùsùhì</u> (It is very near).
<u>A hi lómó</u> (It is not far).	<u>A hi lòmò</u> (It is very far).

VOCATIVE IDIOM.

4.38. Tsonga makes use of Noun + Demonstrative pronoun with vocative force in the formation of vocative idioms e.g.

- Xiphukuphuku lexi (This fool) i.e. "You fool".
- Ntlunya lowu (This idiot) i.e. "You idiot".
- Noyi loyi (This witch) i.e. "You witch".
- Xidakwa lexi (This drunkard) i.e. "You drunkard".
- Khamba leri (This thief) i.e. "You thief".

CONCLUSION

4.39. Most of the idioms based on figures of speech tend to be concrete rather than abstract. In some cases it has been noted as a general feature that idioms in which figures of speech abound are composed of phrases made up of two words with a lighter meaning than the word or action represented by the idioms, e.g.

From Ku rhundza (to urinate) has come the apt and concrete idiom: Ku halata mati (to spill water).

From Ku nya (to defecate) has come the apt and concrete idiom: Ku humela handle (to go outside).

In form these idioms are similar to verbal idioms based around verb stems.

4.40. In 4.26 and 4.30 are included examples of phrases, which the Tsonga use without any definite notion or consciousness of their origin e.g.

A nga yivi wo hlola (he does not steel, he curses) i.e. "he is a notorious thief".

A ku hisi ko nuha (it is not hot, it smells) i.e. "it is exceedingly hot".

Byala a ko va byala (beer was beer) i.e. "there was an abundance of beer".

Ndzi dyile, a ndzi dyangi (I have eaten, I have not eaten) i.e. "I could do with a little more".

These expressions have entered into the texture and diction of our literature and daily conversation and

may now be regarded as idioms of the Tsonga Language.

4.41. Finally, in 4.31. are included the idioms based on prosodic elements which like those which have just been discussed in 4.39 above, are expressions which are used extensively in our daily conversation, these expressions may also now be regarded as idioms. In many instances our speech is never adequate to express the wealth of human experience, and prosodics is also called into play, to embody our thoughts in idioms charged with eager life, making the experience more actual to ourselves and to those with whom we wish to communicate.

SYNTACTICAL PATTERNS OF THE TSONGA "IDIOM"

INTRODUCTION

5.1. In paragraph 2.4. the term idiom has been defined in its narrower sense as "a fixed structural form or a fixed phrasal pattern of words which go together, peculiar to the genius of a language as regards grammatical structure, accepted by usage; and the meaning of which cannot be logically ascertained from its component parts". This definition refers to those idiosyncrasies of a language, and above all to those phrases which are verbal anomalies, which transgress either the laws of grammar or the laws of logic. In Tsonga the ungrammatical phrases made acceptable by usage are the most obvious e.g.

Ku ba hi misava (to hit with the earth) i.e. "to be unfortunate" instead of Ku biwa hi misava (to be hit by the earth) i.e. "to be unfortunate".

Many cases like these are found in which the use of the active form of the verb instead of the normal grammatical passive is accepted by idiomatic usage e.g.

Ku dya hi nandzu (to eat by a case) i.e. "to be found guilty" instead of Ku dyiwa hi nandzu (to be eaten by a case) i.e. "to be found guilty".

Ku dlaya hi mavele (to kill with mealies) i.e. "to over-indulge in food or drink

instead of Ku dlawa hi mavele (to be killed by mealies) i.e. "to over-indulge in food or drink". etc.

5.2. Logical anomalies i.e. cases in which idiom infringes upon the laws of logic are numerous e.g.

Ku boxa dyondzo (to pierce education) i.e. "to be well-educated".

Ku dya xikweleti (to eat a debt) i.e. "to buy on account".

Ku dya vukarhi (to eat anger) i.e. "to see red". etc.

In French such phrasal patterns of words which go together, such verbal anomalies and idiosyncrasies of language fall under the term "idiotisme", and in Spanish "modismo".¹⁾

5.3. Very little will be said concerning the idiosyncrasies of Tsonga, the usages of syntax and grammar which are peculiar to it, without being grammatical or logical anomalies, since these matters fall outside the scope of this study. In spite of this, it may be noted that language favours certain patterns in the creation of its idioms. "This favouritism is part of the design of language at the time of observation, and is therefore properly reported in a descriptive study of language".²⁾

5.4. Tsonga like many Bantu languages favours certain patterns. Some of the patterns are not very

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1. "Modismo" is the Spanish counterpart of the French "Idiotisme" and is still in vogue to-day. It is a useful word and it is to be regretted that English has no term like it to-day.
 2. Hocket: A Course in Modern Linguistics (The Macmillan company, New York, p. 303.

elaborate but reveal certain tendencies which must be recorded. Some of the patterns are very prolific and constitute the majority of the idioms of the language. The idiosyncrasy of Tsonga is perhaps most strikingly exemplified in the use of verbs which enter into many idiomatic combinations. One of the largest classes of Tsonga idioms consists of predicate and object phrases formed by a collocation of a verb stem and a noun e.g.

Ku tsema nhlana (to cut the back) i.e. "to shock".

Ku dya hlovo (to eat the season) i.e. "to taste the fruit of the season". etc.

There are numerous idioms consisting of predicate and adjunct phrases formed by a collocation of verb and any one of the adverbial types e.g.

Ku ba hansi (to hit down) i.e. "to fail".

Ku tlulela henhla (to jump up) i.e. "to deny vehemently". etc.

Other patterns though not as prolific as those which have already been noted are also found. Some of the idiomatic patterns which have been noted in Tsonga will now be discussed.

IDIOMS INCORPORATING PREDICATE AND OBJECT:

5.5. In Tsonga idioms have been noted which incorporate a predicate followed by an object formed from a collocation of verb followed by a noun e.g.

Ku tsema mhaka (to cut a case) i.e. "to pronounce a verdict". e.g. Hosi yi ta tsema mhaka (the chief will cut the case) i.e. "the chief will pronounce the verdict".

Ku kandza rendzo (to stamp a journey) i.e.

"to prepare for a journey". e.g. "Vanhwana va ta kandza rendzo i.e. "the girls will make preparations for the journey".

Ku hayeka mhaka (to hang a case) i.e. "to

postpone a case". e.g. Huvo yi ta hayeka mhaka i.e. "the court will postpone the case".

Ku hloma matlhari (to dress assegais) i.e.

"to take up arms". e.g. Tiko ri hlome matlhari i.e. "the nation has taken up arms".

Ku khoma ndlela (to catch the road) i.e.

"to undertake a journey". e.g. Hi ta khoma ndlela mundzuku i.e. "we shall undertake the journey to-morrow".

Ku luma ndleve (to bite the ear) i.e. "to

warn surreptitiously". e.g. Ndzi swi tive hi leswi va nga ndzi luma ndleve i.e. "I knew it because I was warned surreptitiously". etc.

5.6. This pattern which is used to a considerable extent in Tsonga also reveals that "quality of using concrete expressions for conveying abstract ideas, and conveying them effectively and picturesquely into the bargain",¹⁾ which is characteristic of the Bantu languages as a whole. Such collocations of verb followed by noun are found in English idiom e.g. "make peace", "make love", "make friends", "go bail", "keep time".²⁾

1. Schapera: The Bantu Speaking Tribes of South Africa.
(Maskeu Miller, Ltd., Cape Town, 1956, p. 304).

2. Pearsall Smith: Op. cit. p. 257.

IDIOMS INCORPORATING PREDICATE FOLLOWED BY ADVERBIAL ADJUNCT:

5.7. In Tsonga idiomatic patterns are found in which a predicate is followed by an adverbial adjunct. The adjunct may be locative, instrumental, associative or agentive.

PREDICATE + LOCATIVE ADJUNCT:

5.8. This pattern is formed by a collocation of a verb and a locative e.g.

Ku phela hansi (to spit down) i.e. "to cease playing the fool". e.g. U ta swi phela hansi loko va n'wi bile i.e. "he will stop playing the fool after he has been thrashed".

Go itaa fantshe
Ku ba hansi (to hit down) i.e. "to fail". e.g. A swi pfuni u ta ba hansi i.e. "it is useless, he will fail".

Ku fela kona (to die there) i.e. "to persist". e.g. Wo fela kona hambani a tsandzeka i.e. "he persists although he fails".

Go fabela kwa morago
Ku tirhela endzhaku (to work backwards) i.e. "to deteriorate". e.g. Hi masiku wo tirhela endzhaku i.e. "he deteriorates day by day".

Go tshena ganony
Ku nghena enon'wini (to enter into the mouth) i.e. "to interrupt". e.g. U ndzi nghena enon'wini i.e. "he interrupts me". etc.

PREDICATE + INSTRUMENTAL ADJUNCT:

5.9. This pattern is formed through a collocation of a verb and an instrumental adverb e.g.

Ku fa hi ndlala (to die of hunger) i.e. "to be very hungry". e.g. Dyambu hinkwaro ra tolo a hi fa hi ndlala i.e. "we were very hungry the whole of yesterday".

Ku tshwa hi ndlela (to be burnt by the road) i.e. "to go on a journey". e.g. Mundzuku hi ta tshwa hi ndlela i.e. "we shall go on a journey to-morrow."

Ku hlamba hi timbilu (to be washed by the hearts) i.e. "to feel nauseous". e.g. Ndzi hlamba hi timbilu i.e. "I feel sick".

Ku tshama hi mavoko (to sit with the hands) i.e. "to be idle". e.g. Munhu loko a tshama hi mavoko u ta va xisiwana i.e. "an idle person will remain poor."

Ku ba hi ripfalo (to hit with the conscience) i.e. "to suffer qualms of conscience". e.g. Loko ndzi yiva ndzi ba hi ripfalo i.e. "when I steal I suffer qualms of conscience."

PREDICATE + ASSOCIATIVE ADJUNCT:

5.10. This pattern is formed by a collocation of verb followed by an associative Adverb e.g.

Ku tshama ni rifu (to sit with death) i.e. "to be in great danger". e.g. Hi nyimpi vanhu va tshama ni rifu i.e. "during the war people are always in great danger of death."

Ku pela ni dyambu (to set with the sun) i.e.

"to die at sunset". e.g. Kokwana u pele ni dyambu i.e. "Grandfather passed away at sunset".

Ku lwa ni swikwembu (to fight with the gods) i.e. "to struggle against fate". e.g. A nge humeleli hikuva u lwa ni swikwembu i.e. "he cannot succeed because he is struggling against fate".

Ku tsutsuma ni tiko (to run with the country) i.e. "to go mad". e.g. Mafemana u tsutsuma ni tiko i.e. "Mafemana is mad".

Ku famba ni nambu (to go with the river) i.e. "to get drowned". e.g. Hi nguva ya timpfula vanhu va famba ni nambu i.e. "during the rainy season many people are drowned".

PREDICATE + AGENTIVE ADJUNCT:

5.11. This pattern is formed by a collocation of a passive verb stem followed by an agentive adverb e.g.

Ku dyiwa hi mati (to be eaten by water) i.e. "to be drowned". e.g. Manana u dyiwe hi mati i.e. "Mother was drowned".

Ku dyiwa hi makoti (to be eaten by the vultures) i.e. "to die away from home". e.g. Vavanuna vo tala va dyiwa hi makoti. i.e. "many men die away from home".

Ku bohiwa hi nandzu (to be tied by a case) i.e. "to be found guilty". e.g. Loko u bohiwa hi nandzu wa riha i.e. "you pay the fine if you are found guilty".

Ku biwa hi tinhlolo (to be beaten by the divining bones) i.e. "to be declared a witch" e.g. Nsati wa yena u biwe hi tinhlolo i.e. "his wife was declared a witch.

Ku vukuriwa hi mbyana (to be barked at by a dog) i.e. "to be insulted by a person of no consequence". e.g. Munhu wa khombo u vukuriwa hi mbyana i.e. "an unlucky person is insulted by a person of no consequence." etc.

go gataka ka mato > to undermine

5.12. In English the predicate and adverbial adjunct pattern has also been noted by Pearsall Smith in idiomatic collocations in which "verbs of motion and energy give rise to idioms. They combine (as in 'make bold') with adjectives and adverbs - 'make good', 'make sure', 'hold true', 'run low', 'run short', etc.¹⁾. Other examples of this pattern are: to 'turn adrift', 'set afloat', 'forge ahead', 'keep aloof'. etc.

COPULATIVE PREDICATE + ASSOCIATIVE ADJUNCT:

5.13. This pattern is formed by a collocation of the copulative verb stem "va" followed by an associative copulative e.g.

go ma ke pelo

Ku va ni mbilu (to have a heart) i.e. "to be patient", e.g. Loko u tikhoma u ta va ni mbilu i.e. "if you restrain yourself you will cultivate patience.

1. Pearsall Smith: Op. cit. p. 257.

Ku va ni ritiho (to have a finger) i.e. "to have thieving propensities". e.g. Loko u loloha u ta va ni ritiho i.e. "if you are lazy you will be a thief".

Go nna le letswalo
Ku va ni ripfalo (to have a diaphragm) i.e. "to have a guilty conscience". e.g. Ndzi va ni ripfalo loko ndzi yiva i.e. "when I steal I have a guilty conscience."

Go nna le sebetse
Ku va ni xivindzi (to have a liver) i.e.

"to be brave", e.g. Vahloti va tinghala va fanele ku va ni xivindzi i.e. "lion hunters should be brave".

Go nna le thogo
Ku va ni nhloko (to have a head) (i) "to be intelligent", (ii) "to have headache" e.g. (i) N'anga yi fanele ku va ni nhloko i.e. "a doctor should be intelligent, (ii) Loko u tirha emun'wini u ta va ni nhloko i.e. "if you work in the sun you will get a headache".

Go nna le letswane "to be a liar"

IDIOMS INCORPORATING PREDICATE + OBJECT + ADJUNCT:

5.14. This pattern is formed by a collocation of a verb + noun followed by an adverb e.g.

Ku dlaya nsokoti hi nhonga (to kill an ant with a stick) i.e. "to take something by force". e.g. Va lo famba ni tihomu ta mina hi ku dlaya nsokoti hi nhonga i.e. "they took my herd of cattle by force".

Ku ba ngwenya hi sava (to hit the crocodile with sand) i.e. "to carry coal to Newcastle".

e.g. Ku nyika hosi xuma i ku ba ngwenya hi sava i.e. "to give wealth to a chief is like carrying coal to Newcastle".

Ku vona munhu hi tihlo rin'we (to see a person with one eye) i.e. "to ignore a person".

e.g. Loko munhu a karhata ndzo n'wi vona hi tihlo rin'we i.e. "if a person is troublesome I ignore him".

Ku tshwa tintiho hi mavunwa (to burn the fingers with lies) i.e. "to get into trouble because of lies". e.g. "Vanhu

lava nga tiviki ntiyiso va tshwa tintiho hi mavunwa i.e. "people who do not know the truth get into trouble through lies".

Go fima molele ka molele
Ku tima ndzilo hi ndzilo (to extinguish fire with fire) i.e. "to add fuel to the fire".

e.g. A swi sasekangi ku tima ndzilo hi ndzilo i.e. "it is not good to add fuel to the fire". etc.

IDIOMS INCORPORATING SINGLE VERB FORMS:

5.15. In Tsonga verbs are the dynamo of language. In addition to entering into different combinations to form idioms, it has been noted that certain verbs can be used according to context to express different idiomatic significations. In English V.H. Collins¹⁾ has examples of verbs which have idiomatic or figurative significations. The following are examples from his List of English Idioms: 'to buckle', 'to clinch',

1. V.H. Collins: Op. cit. paragraphs: 80, 129, 168, 232, 497, 543.

'to cream', 'to drop', 'to kid', 'to lionise', etc. In certain instances these verbs are used intransitively with idiomatic significations. In Tsonga certain verbs are also found which have specialised idiomatic significations even when used intransitively. This has been noted especially in the case of certain reduplicated verb stems, reflexive verb stems, applied verb stems, reciprocal verb stems and causative verb stems. In Zulu, Doke has noted the special figurative usages of some of these verb forms. Of the reflexive verb stem he states: "But with certain verbs, the constant use of the prefix has caused the verb to assume specialised idiomatic significances which are of considerable importance. The following are but a few of many such examples:-

ukwazisa (to cause to know)

ukuzazisa (to be conceited)

ukubusa (to govern)

ukuzibuza (to be comfortable)

ukudla (to eat)

ukuzidla (to be proud) etc.¹⁾

IDIOMS INCORPORATING REDUPLICATED VERB STEMS:

5.16. This is a pattern in which some reduplicated verb stems can be used intransitively with specialised idiomatic significances of their own.

Go khoma khoma

Ku khoma-khoma (to touch-touch) i.e. "to

thrash", as in the following expressions:

Ndzi ta ku khoma-khoma (I touch-touch you)

i.e. "I will thrash you". Va n'wi khoma-

1. Doke: Op. cit. pp. 225- 226.

khomile a kondza a rila i.e. "they thrashed him until he cried".

Ku khana-khana (to dance-dance) i.e. "to cry", as in the following expression:

Ta khana-khana (They dance-dance) i.e. "he is crying".

Ku yima-yima (to stand-stand) i.e. "to cure",

as in the following expression: Va ta ku

yima-yima, u nga vileli (Don't complain they will stand-stand you) i.e. "don't worry they will cure you".

Ku phasa-phasa (to trap-trap) i.e. "to mend"

as in the following expression: Xi phasa-phase! "mend it!"

Ku tova-tova (to pinch-pinch) i.e. "to make a mess" as in the following expression:

U lo tova-tova "he made a mess".

Go tshwanatshwana - "to witch"

IDIOMS INCORPORATING REFLEXIVE VERB STEMS:

5.17. A considerable number of reflexive verb stems are found in Tsonga which are not used with figurative significations only but have with usage developed specialised idiomatic significations:

Go uja
Ku tidya (to eat oneself) i.e. "to be proud"

as in the expression: Munene wa tidya

mpfhuka a vutiwa, (Munene eats herself

since she was engaged) i.e. "Munene is very proud since her engagement".

Go tshwana

Ku tikhoma (to catch oneself) i.e. "to be

well-behaved" as in the expression:

Vanhu va tsakela vana vo tikhoma (people like children who catch themselves) i.e. "people admire well-behaved children".

Ku tirhwala (to carry oneself) i.e. "to deport oneself with dignity" as in the expression: Hosi yi fundzeka loko yi tirhwala (A chief is respectable if he carries himself) i.e. "a chief is respectable if he deports himself with dignity".

^{go ikutlwa}
Ku titwa (to hear oneself) i.e. "to feel self-important" as in the expression: U rhuketala vanhu hikuva wa titwa (he offends people because he hears himself) i.e. "he offends people because he feels self-important".

Ku titiva (to know oneself) i.e. "to be conceited" as in the expression: Munhu wo titiva a nga xeweti vanhu (a person who knows himself does not greet people) i.e. "A conceited person does not greet people". etc.

IDIOMS INCORPORATING APPLIED VERB STEMS

5.18. In addition to entering into different collocations with adverbs and nouns, some applied verb stems have been noted which are used intransitively in certain contexts with idiomatic significations;

^{go ijesa}
Ku dyela (to eat for) i.e. "to live in comfort" as in the expression: Tihosi ta dyela (chiefs eat for) i.e. "chiefs live in comfort".

Go jela
Ku dyelela (to eat for) i.e. "to deceive"
as in the expression: U hi dyelela hi masiku (he eats for us every day) i.e. "he deceives us all the time".

Go tshwanela
Ku khomela (to catch for) i.e. "to forgive"
as in the expression: Loko u tisola u ta ku khomela (if you repent he will catch for you) i.e. "if you repent he will forgive you".

Ku hela (to be finished) i.e. "to be worn out" as in the expression: Ndzi herile (I am finished) i.e. "I am worn out".

Ku pfukela (to wake up for) i.e. "to attack" as in the expression: Va lo n'wi pfukela handle ka mhaka (they woke up for him without reason) i.e. "they attacked him for no reason". etc.

IDIOMS INCORPORATING RECIPROCAL VERB STEMS

5.19. Some reciprocal verb stems have also developed specialised idiomatic patterns in certain contexts. They can like other verb forms enter into idiomatic combinations with nouns and adverbs, but it has also been noted that they can be used intransitively with idiomatic significations resulting in idioms like the following:-

Go jana
Ku dyanana (to eat each other) i.e. "to bewitch each other or to swear at each other", as in the expression: Va heta hi ku dyanana (they get finished by eating each other) i.e. "they die because of bewitching each other".

Go utlwana

Ku twanana (to hear each other) i.e. "to live amicably together) as in: Vaakelani va fanele ku twanana (neighbours should hear each other) i.e. "neighbours should live on good terms with each other".

Ku sukelana (to leave each other) i.e. "to fight each other" as in the expression: Va lo holova va sukelana (they quarrelled and left each other) i.e. "they quarrelled and fought.

Ku tirhana (to work each other) i.e. "to fight each other" as in: Vafana va tirhane va karhala (the boys worked each other and got tired) i.e. "the boys fought each other to a standstill".

Go ikana

Ku sohana (to wring each other) i.e. "to swear at each other": Ndzi kume vavasati va sohana (I found the women wringing each other) i.e. "I found the women swearing at each other".

IDIOMS INCORPORATING CAUSATIVE VERB STEMS:

5.20. Some causative verb stems also enter into many idiomatic combinations and have also specialised idiomatic usages which have in some cases resulted in idioms through constant use:

Go jesa

Ku dyisa (to cause to eat) i.e. "to poison through food and drink" as in the expression: Va dyisa loyi va n'wi vengaka (they cause the one they hate to eat) i.e. "they poison the one they hate".

Ku pfukisa (to cause to wake up) i.e. "to accuse of witchcraft" as in the expression: Va ndzi pfukisa ndzi nga pfuki (they cause me to wake up, I don't wake up) i.e. "they accuse me of witchcraft whereas I am not a witch".

Go robaka
Ku etlerisa (to cause to sleep) i.e. "to deceive" as in the expression: Va n'wi etlerise va n'wi tekela mali (they caused him to sleep and stole his money) i.e. "they deceived him and robbed him of his money".

Ku hahisa (to cause to fly) i.e. "to bewitch" as in the expression: Wa vabya hikuva va n'wi hahisa (he is ill because they cause him to fly) i.e. "he is ill because they bewitch him".

Go nasa
Ku nwise (to cause to drink) i.e. "to poison through drink" as in the expression: N'wa-Ridonga a nga tlangi, wa nwise (N'wa-Ridonga does not play she causes to drink) i.e. "N'wa-Ridonga is notorious for poisoning people through drink.

IDIOMS INCORPORATING POSITIVE PREDICATE + NEGATIVE PREDICATE OR VICE-VERSA:

5.21. Certain idioms based on contrast have been noted in Tsonga. These idioms usually incorporate a positive predicate followed by a negative predicate or vice-versa:

Ndzi dyile, a ndzi dyangi (I have eaten, I have not eaten) i.e. "I could do with a little more."

ga boteka, ga goboteka
Swa antswa, a swi antswi (it is better, it is not better) i.e. "there is still room for improvement."

o humisa, ga a humisa
U fumile, a nga fumangi (he is rich, he is not rich) i.e. "he is not as rich as it is imagined."

In cases where the negative predicate precedes the positive predicate, the positive predicate which follows is usually different from the negative e.g.

ga a utswu o a tswu
A nga yivi, wo teka (he does not steal he takes) i.e. "he is a notorious thief".

ga a je, o a oteka
A nga dyi, wo hlola (he does not eat, he curses) i.e. "he is very greedy".

ga a siane, o a siane
A nga tsutsumi, wo ala (he does not run, he refuses) i.e. "he is very fleet of foot".
etc.

IDIOMS INCORPORATING NOUNS:

5.22. In Tsonga certain nouns are found which habitually go together in idiomatic patterns. When used idiomatically these phrasal patterns have meanings quite different from their literal ones. These patterns are also found in English e.g. bag and baggage, hue and cry, waifs and strays, odds and ends etc. The following are examples of this pattern in Tsonga:

Ximanga ni kondlo (cat and mouse) i.e.

"irreconcilable adversaries".

Nkuku ni mbhaha (cock and hen) i.e. "boy and girl".

Nhongana ni xilondza (fly and sore) i.e.

"people who cannot be separated from each other".

Mani na mani (who and who) i.e. "all and sundry".

Fole ni nhlava (tobacco and aloe) i.e.

"people who get on well together like the biblical David and Jonathan".

IDIOMS INCORPORATING NOUN + POSSESSIVE:

5.23. In Tsonga idioms are found which belong to this pattern. In addition to idioms this pattern is so prolific that many figurative expressions of this type are heard in daily conversation of the Tsonga. The following are examples of idioms which belong to this pattern.

Vutlhari bya mpfundla (the wisdom of the hare)

i.e. "great cunning" e.g. U nga n'wi

tshembi u ni vutlhari bya mpfundla (do

not trust him he has the wisdom of the

hare) i.e. "do not rely on his word, he is

very cunning".

Vutomi byo lombamba (borrowed health) i.e.

"poor health", e.g. U ni vutomi byo lombamba

(he has borrowed health) i.e. "he is very

sickly".

N'wana wa mbeva (the child of the mouse) i.e.

"a chip off the old block" e.g. Mafemana i n'wana wa mbeva (Mafemana is the child of the mouse) i.e. Mafemana is a chip off the old block".

Xikhongolotana xa nsindziso (a centipede of persistence) i.e. "a continuous source of

annoyance" e.g. A nga rhandziwi hi munhu hikuva i xikhongolotana xa nsindziso (he is not liked by people because he is a centipede of persistence) i.e. "he is not liked because he is a continuous source of annoyance to people".

Nsele wa noyi (the cruelty of a witch) i.e.

"excessive cruelty" e.g. A nga khathali u ni nsele wa noyi (he does not care at all, he has the cruelty of a witch) i.e. "he is exceedingly cruel".

Nsati wa tihomu (the wife of cattle) i.e.

"the legal wife", "a wife for whom lobola has been paid". e.g. Vanhu va fundza nsati wa tihomu (people respect the wife of cattle) i.e. "people respect the legal wife".

CONCLUSION

5.24. The above survey of Tsonga idiomatic patterns shows that Tsonga employs various syntactic units in the formation of its idioms. The main richness in Tsonga idioms is with the idiomatic combinations into which

many verb stems can enter. Some verbs have been noted which are more prolific than others in idiom formation:

Ku ba (to hit).

Ku dlaya (to kill).

Ku dya (to eat).

Ku etlela (to sleep).

Ku fa (to die).

Ku huma (to get out).

Ku khoma (to catch).

These verb stems enter into various patterns (cf Appendix Nos. 25-73; 155-175; 182-222; 234-247; 248-268; 402-432; 480-529; 971-985 respectively)

5.25. The examples cited in 5.24 above are of those verbs around which are clustered whole constellations of phrases of extraordinary variety and vividness. Tsonga idioms being more concrete than abstract, it is no wonder, to note that it is the verbs which express more definite bodily actions (cf. 5.24) above, which enter into idiomatic patterns more than is the case with the abstract verbs of action.

5.26. The pattern most favoured is that of predicate followed by an object or by different adverbial adjuncts. The former pattern is formed from a collocation of a verb acting as predicate, followed by a noun or a substantive phrase acting as object:

Ku peta byala (to soak beer) i.e. "to brew beer".

Ku peta dyambu (to soak the sun) i.e. "to work till late".

Go gana go ut wa

Ku ala ku twa (to refuse to hear) i.e. "to
turn down advice".

Ku ala ku vona (to refuse to see) i.e. "to
take up arms at the slightest provocation".

Ku dya swa mandla (to eat of the hands) i.e.
"to enjoy the fruits of one's labour".

5.27. The latter pattern is formed from a collocation of verb acting as predicate followed by a locative, associative, instrumental or agentive adjunct (cf. 5.6. - 5.11.).

5.28. Primarily, however, it was noted that the importance of the verb in Tsonga verbal idioms lies in the fact that in all verbal idioms in which it appears it is the key word in the idiom i.e. the idiom is based around the verb. The full meaning of the verb in the idiomatic unit is conveyed by the object or adjunct which follows closely after it.

5.29. The verb being the dynamo of language it was found that some verbs have developed specialised idiomatic significations thereby resulting in single verb patterns (cf. 5.17 - 5.21).

5.30. As can be seen from the actual analysis itself other patterns are also found, some of which are not very elaborate. Some of the patterns found in Tsonga are also found in English idiom which abounds in many verbal, adverbial and substantival phrases. However, English idiom has numerous collocations of verbs followed by

prepositions, or by prepositions used as adverbs e.g. 'put through', 'put up', 'go under', 'show up', etc. Prepositional usage which is an important aspect of English idiom is not found in Tsonga. In English and other languages prepositional usage contains as Professor Jespersen points out, much that is peculiar and arbitrary; the relations to be expressed by prepositions are often so vague and indefinite, but one might seem logically just as right as another, and it is only "that tyrannical, capricious, utterly incalculable thing idiomatic usage"¹⁾ which has laid down that this preposition must be used in this case and that in another.

5.31. In Tsonga just as in many languages as a whole idiom is characterised by the same "tyrannical, capricious, utterly incalculable thing, idiomatic usage".

1. Jespersen: Progress in Language p. 22 cited by Pearsall Smith in Words and Idioms p. 170.

THE CONTENT OF TSONGA IDIOMS

INTRODUCTION

6.1. Having examined the origins, incidence and syntactical patterns of our idioms, it may be interesting to look more closely into their subject matter, and at the aspects of life to which they give expression.

6.2. Tsonga idioms like the idioms of many languages are mainly of popular origin and for that reason they do not on the whole embody much by way of abstract thought, scientific observation, aesthetic appreciation or psychological appreciation of any subtle type.

6.3. The subject^matter of Tsonga idioms may be said to be human life in its simpler forms i.e. those aspects of life with which human-beings are confronted in their everyday existence. These have been summed up by Pearsall Smith as "prudent and foolish conduct, success and failure, and above all human relations - the vivid attitudes and feelings of people intensely interested in each other and their mutual dealings - approval, but far more largely disapproval, friendly but more often ^{unfriendly} hostile feelings, fallings out and makings up, rivalries and over-reachings, ^{punishment} chastisement and abuse."¹⁾

1. Pearsall Smith: Op. cit. p.258.

IDIOMS WHICH EXPRESS ^{state of conflict} STRIFES AND QUARRELS:

6.4. The Tsonga are not different from their fellow men in their relations with one another. They face difficulties and strifes, they quarrel, and this aspect is seen in the large body of idioms which deal with this aspect of life:

Ku banana hi rhanga ro hisa (to hit each other with a hot squash) i.e. "to quarrel bitterly".

Ku nuhana makehele (to smell each other's arm-pits) i.e. "to be at logger-heads".

Ku sukelana (to depart from each other) i.e. to engage in a combat".

Ku khoma nghavitla (to catch something heavy) i.e. "to be in great difficulties".

Ku khoma xa ncila wa bulubulu (to catch something with a big tail) i.e. "to be in great difficulties".

Ku cina ngoma (to dance a drum) i.e. "to suffer".

Ku byarha mpingu (to carry a heavy load) i.e. "to endure suffering or sorrow".

Ku vona maxangu (to see sorrows) i.e. "to experience great sorrow". etc.

IDIOMS WHICH EXPRESS ANGER AND ANNOYANCE

6.5. Anger and annoyance are also expressed by a large number of idioms:

Ku dya ndzilo (to eat fire) i.e. "to see red".

Ku dya viriviri (to eat pepper) i.e. "to see red".

Ku dya mirhi (to eat trees) i.e. "to be in a rage".

Ku bihelana (to be ugly for each other) i.e. "to exchange angry words".

Ku hlanta nhlamba (to vomit bad language) i.e. "to swear at".

Ku hoxana hi marito ^{Go fofana to hoxana} (to throw words at each other) i.e. "to quarrel with each other".

Ku hoxa hi mandza yo bola (to throw rotten eggs at) i.e. "to insult".

Ku pfurha ndzilo (to burn fire) i.e. "to see red".

Ku tlulana milenge (to jump each other's legs) i.e. "to be at cross-purposes". etc.

IDIOMS WHICH EXPRESS RIVALRY, HOSTILITY AND DISAPPROBATION:

6.6. There are also many idioms used to describe various ways of getting the better of others and triumphing over them:

Ku cela munhu (to dig a person) i.e. "to get a person into trouble".

Ku dyelela munhu (to eat for a person) i.e. "to deceive a person".

Ku chela hi viriviri (to pour with pepper) i.e. "to deceive".

- ku apesca mutho kaba*
Ku funengeta hi nkumba (to cover with a blanket) i.e. "to deceive, to mislead".
- Ku bela exilawini (to hit in the burrow) i.e. "to catch red-handed".
- Ku etlerisa mpfundla (to cause the hare to sleep) i.e. "to outwit a cunning person".
- Ku etlerisa xikukwana vurhongo (to cause a chicken to sleep) i.e. "to deceive a person".
- Ku hlantisa ngati (to cause to vomit blood) i.e. "to administer a good thrashing, to defeat".
- Ku humesa nswanyo (to bring out manure) i.e. "to thrash severely".
- Ku kama munhu (to wrestle a person) i.e. "to defeat a person".
- Ku kandziyela munhu (to step on a person) i.e. "to oppress a person".
- Ku senga munhu (to milk a person) i.e. "to take advantage of a person". etc.

Tsonga vocabulary abounds in many such vivid idioms which show rivalry, dislike, hostility and disapprobation.

IDIOMS WHICH EXPRESS GOOD RELATIONS:

6.7. Strictly speaking, the better feelings of human nature are not portrayed so vividly in Tsonga idiomatic phrases, however, one does find a certain number of idioms which describe terms of disinterested friendship:

ku mtshani se se mo masha

Go tselana molelo

Ku okelana ndzilo (to fetch fire from each other) i.e. "to be on good terms with".

Ku twelana vusiwana (to hear poverty for each other) i.e. "to feel for each other".

Ku siyelana fole (to leave tobacco for each other) i.e. "to be on friendly terms".

Ku khomana hi mavoko (to catch each other with the hands) i.e. "to assist each other".

Go supisa - etc.
Ku komba ndlela (to show the way) i.e. "to guide".

Go luma - etc.
Ku luma ndleve (to bite the ear) i.e. "to warn surreptitiously".

IDIOMS WHICH EXPRESS LAZINESS:

6.8. Other human characteristics which are picked out for reprobation by means of idioms are laziness, theft, and boastfulness. Laziness and ineffectiveness have given rise to idioms:

Ku andlala milenge (to spread the legs) i.e. "to be indolent".

Ku tidyisa mahele (to cause oneself to eat cockroaches) i.e. "to bring poverty upon oneself".

Go nna ka dila
Ku tshama hi mavoko (to sit with the hands) i.e. "to be idle".

Ku dya nkarhi (to eat time) i.e. "to spend time aimlessly".

Ku va sirha ra vahanyi (to be a grave of the living) i.e. "to be good for nothing". etc.

IDIOMS WHICH EXPRESS BOASTFULNESS AND SELF DECEIT:

6.9. From boastfulness and self deceit have come idioms such as:

Ku milá ntshiva (to germinate a mane) i.e.

"to become impudent".

Ku titiva (to know oneself) i.e. "to have a very high opinion of oneself".

Ku tivona (to see oneself) i.e. "to over-estimate oneself".

Ku titwa (to hear oneself) i.e. "to feel self-important".

Ku tidya (to eat oneself) i.e. "to be proud".
etc.

IDIOMS WHICH EXPRESS POVERTY:

6.10. The Tsonga people have also seen good and bad days, fat and lean years, and as a result poverty and wealth figure extensively in the body of Tsonga idiom. From poverty has come many idiomatic expressions:

Ku dya tinhwala (to eat lice) i.e. "to live in dire poverty".

Ku dya marhimila (to eat mucus) i.e. "to live in dire poverty".

Ku dya swo oxa (to eat of the roasted) i.e. "to lead a hand to mouth existence".

Ku pfumala xa vumbirhi (to lack the second) i.e. "to possess nothing whatsoever".

Ku phemelana nhloko ya njiya (to share the head of a locust) i.e. "to share the little that you have."

Go dirhela boroko
Ku tirhela vurhongo (to work for sleep) i.e.
"to work for no pay at all".

IDIOMS WHICH EXPRESS WEALTH:

6.11. Wealth is also represented by an array of expressive idioms:

Go ja o namile
Ku boxa a nava (to pierce and spread legs)
i.e. "to live in comfort".

Ku boxa mbonga (to pierce honey) i.e. "to
come by some riches".

Ku dya swa tihosi (to eat of the chiefs)
i.e. "to lead a princely life".

Go huma le dirhala
Ku fuma ni min'wala (to be rich to the
nails) i.e. "to be exceedingly wealthy".

Ku tshama hi mali (to sit with money) i.e.
"to be exceedingly wealthy".

Ku hlamba hi mali (to wash with money) i.e.
"to be exceedingly wealthy".

Ku etlela hi mali (to sleep with money) i.e.
"to be exceedingly wealthy".

Ku hlaya madzana (to count hundreds) i.e. "to be
exceedingly wealthy".

Go nna mo mafurha
Ku dya mafurha (to eat fat) i.e. "to live
in splendour". etc.

IDIOMS WHICH EXPRESS RESPECT:

6.12. The Tsonga people have a code of conduct and do not delight in hurting the feelings of other people. They have thus idioms of respect used in circumstances where the direct word is considered to be harsh or disrespectful:

Ku halata mati (to pour out water) i.e.

"to urinate". *Go ntshe mosi*

Ku humela handle (to go outside) i.e. "to
pass motions".

Go kgona sa mabetsana

Ku xurhisa nhwana (to cause a young woman
to be satisfied) i.e. "to impregnate a
young woman". *Go roba le...*

Ku faya nsikiti (to break a bug) i.e. "to
belch". etc.

to pass away > (to die)

IDIOMS WHICH EXPRESS COURAGE AND DETERMINATION:

6.13. Courage, determination and resilience are highly rated amongst the Tsonga. Many idioms are thus found which give vent to these worthy human qualities. Life to the Tsonga has always been a struggle for self preservation and the idioms which gave vent to resilience urged the Tsonga to struggle on when faced with odds as nothing else could have done. When a person was engaged in a life or death struggle, courage and determination were infused into him in the idiom which he understood best. He was urged Ku fela kona (to die there) i.e. "to fight to the bitter end".

Ku khoma xirha (to hold the enemy) i.e. "to
grapple with death itself".

Go khomisa pale

Ku boha mbilu (to tie the heart) i.e. "to
act with resilience".

Ku vindza mbilu (to strangulate the heart)
i.e. "to act with courage and tenacity".

With the aid of these idioms difficulties were overcome, wars and battles were won and the ignominy of failure and defeat was shunned.

Go mba le tsibole > (to be brave)

Go baya tau botseke > (to be brave)

(to help the lion to deliver its cubs)

CONCLUSION

6.14. Tsonga idioms on the whole cover a wide range of the experiences of the people; but it may be right to suggest that the main content or subject matter of Tsonga idioms, as has been pointed out, is human beings and their relations with each other. Finally Tsonga idioms are never didactic; they don't embrace any moral lesson, fundamental truth or philosophy of life, but they concern themselves with the various facets of human action and behaviour to which they give expression in vivid, expressive and at times humorous language.

A P P E N D I X

TSONGA IDIOMS AND THEIR MEANINGS

AKA

1. Ku aka mhaka (to build a case) i.e. "to prepare a case".
2. Ku aka tiko (to build a country) i.e. "to develop a country".
3. Ku aka vuxaka (to build friendship) i.e. "to foster friendship".

ALA

4. Ku ala ku byeriwa (to refuse to be told) i.e. "to turn a deaf ear".
5. Ku ala ku vona (to refuse to see) i.e. "to take up arms at the slightest provocation".
6. Ku ala ku twa (to refuse to hear) i.e. "turn down advice"
7. Ku tiarisa (to cause oneself to refuse) i.e. "to stubbornly refuse to improve oneself".

AHLAMA

8. Ku ahlamela munhu (to open the mouth for a person) i.e. "to pick a quarrel with a person".
9. Ku ahlamisa nomu (to open the mouth) i.e. "to speak".
10. Ku ahlamisa tinhlaya (to open the cheeks) i.e. "to feel drowsy".

AMUKELA

11. Ku amukela hi mandla mambirhi (to receive with two hands) i.e. "to accord a warm welcome".
12. Ku amukela mpingu (to receive a burden) i.e. "to be reconciled to one's fate".
13. Ku amukela nandzu (to receive a case) i.e. "to plead guilty".
14. Ku amukela swikwembu (to receive the gods) "to entertain important people".
15. Ku amukela Yesu (to receive Jesus) i.e. "to be converted to the christian faith".

ANEKA

16. Ku aneka mhaka erivaleni (to dry a case in the open) i.e. "to speak frankly".

ANLALA

17. Ku andlala magoza (to spread the feet) i.e. "to run away".
18. Ku andlala mandla (to spread the hands) i.e. "to accept a gift with gratitude".
19. Ku andlala mhaka (to spread a case) i.e. "to explain a matter in detail".
20. Ku andlala milenge (to spread the legs) i.e. "to idle".
21. Ku andlalela byala (to spread for beer) i.e. "to take a meal preparatory to a drink".
22. Ku andlalela nsikiti sangu (to spread a mat for a bug) i.e. "to offer hospitality to an enemy".
23. Ku andlala ririmi (to spread the tongue) i.e. "to speak on end".

ANGULA

24. Ku angulana (to reply each other) i.e. "to be on friendly terms with each other".

BA

25. Ku ba hala ni hala (to hit there and there) i.e. "to beat about the bush".
26. Ku ba hansi (to hit down) i.e. "to fail".
27. Ku ba henhla (to hit up) i.e. "to score a high mark", "to make a good impression".
28. Ku ba hi misava (to be hit by the earth) i.e. "to suffer great misfortune".
29. Ku ba hi moya (to be hit by the air) i.e. "to take a walk", "to get fresh air".
30. Ku ba hi nenge (to hit by the leg) i.e. "to walk barefooted", "to go on foot".
31. Ku ba hi ripfalo (to be hit by the diaphragm) i.e. "to suffer qualms of conscience".
32. Ku ba hi xiphangu (to be hit by hail) i.e. "to be damaged by hail".
33. Ku ba hi xirhami (to be hit by cold) i.e. "to be frost-bitten".
34. Ku ba hi swikwembu (to be hit by the gods) i.e. "to be struck by misfortune".
35. Ku ba hi tinhlolo (to be hit by the divining bones) i.e. "to be smelt out as a witch".
36. Ku ba hi vuvabyi (to be hit by illness) i.e. "to fall ill".
37. Ku ba huwa (to hit noise) i.e. "to be rowdy".
38. Ku ba hungwe (to hit a big noise) i.e. "to call to arms".

39. Ku ba mandla (to hit the hands) i.e. "to express gratitude".
40. Ku ba maphepha (to hit cards) i.e. "to play cards".
41. Ku ba mathyota (to hit noise with the fingers) i.e. "to stamp maize rhythmically".
42. Ku ba matsanya (to hit astride) i.e. "to sit with feet astride".
43. Ku ba mfee (to hit away) i.e. "to scatter in all directions".
44. Ku ba mhaka (to hit a case) i.e. "to strike the truth".
45. Ku ba mhalamhala (to hit the sable antelope) i.e. "to call people together to the royal kraal".
46. Ku ba mombo (to hit the forehead) i.e. "to bring a point home forcefully".
47. Ku ba mukhosi (to hit a cry) i.e. "to call for assistance".
48. Ku ba nanga (to hit a trumpet) i.e. "to blow a trumpet".
49. Ku ba ndleve (to hit the ear) i.e. "to listen with rapt attention".
50. Ku ba ndlopfu hi xibakele (to hit an elephant with a fist) i.e. "to make no impression at all".
51. Ku ba ndzelekana (to hit a boundary) i.e. "to draw a boundary".
52. Ku ba ngoma (to hit a drum) i.e. "to open a circumcision school".

53. Ku ba ngwenya hi sava (to hit a crocodile with sand) i.e. "to carry coal to Newcastle".
54. Ku ba nomu (to hit the mouth) i.e. "to stop a person from speaking".
55. Ku ba noti (to hit a whistle) i.e. "to whistle".
56. Ku ba noyi (to hit a witch) i.e. "to point out a witch".
57. Ku ba nhloko (to hit the head) i.e. "to confuse".
58. Ku ba nkulungwana (to make a noise with the throat) i.e. "to express joy".
59. Ku ba ntsengo (to hit a sum of money) i.e. "to pay lobola".
60. Ku ba nyoka (to hit the snake) i.e. "to take a meal".
61. Ku ba xifuva (to hit the chest) i.e. "to forget".
62. Ku ba xihlungwana (to hit the roof) i.e. (i) "to roof a house" (ii) "to be very tall".
63. Ku ba xindziwandziwana (to hit somersault) i.e. "to evade the truth".
64. Ku ba Xinghezi (to hit English) i.e. "to speak good English".
65. Ku ba xitseve (to hit folded-legs) i.e. "to sit with folded-legs".
66. Ku banana hi rhambu ra mfenhe (to hit each other with the bone of a baboon) i.e. "to shower favours on one's blood relations only".
67. Ku banana hi rhanga ro hisa (to hit each other with a hot squash) i.e. "to quarrel seriously".
68. Ku bela non'wini (to hit in the mouth) i.e. "to eat".

69. Ku bela xilawini (to hit in the burrow) i.e. "to catch red-handed".
70. Ku bela timhingu (to hit pegs for) i.e. "to mark a site".
71. Ku bela yindlu (to hit for a house) i.e. "to roof a house".
72. Ku biwa tsolo hi homa (to be hit on the knee by a golfball) i.e. "to be found guilty beyond doubt".
73. Ku tiba xifuva (to hit oneself on the chest) i.e. "to blame oneself".

BANCA

74. Ku banga vufendze (to hide sloth) i.e. "to save face".
75. Ku banga vusopfa (to hide carelessness) i.e. "to save face".

BIHA

76. Ku biha mbilu (to be ugly of heart) i.e. "to be evil-minded".
77. Ku biha mmiri (to be ugly of body) i.e. (i) "to be pregnant", (ii) "to be unfortunate".
78. Ku biha ngati (to be ugly of blood) i.e. "to be continually dogged by misfortune".
79. Ku biha nyama (to be ugly of flesh) i.e. "to suffer from physical defects, especially skin diseases".
80. Ku bihela (to be ugly for) i.e. "to be angry with someone".

81. Ku bihelana (to be ugly for each other) i.e. "to be at loggerheads".
82. Ku bihisa (to cause to be ugly) i.e. "to slander".
83. Ku bihisana (to cause each other to be ugly) i.e. "to slander each other".

BIKULA

84. Ku bikula mihloti (to bring out cupfuls of tears) i.e. "to cry bitterly".
85. Ku xi bikula (to cry it out) i.e. "to start crying".

BOLA

86. Ku bola mianakanyo (to be rotten of thoughts) i.e. "to harbour evil thoughts".
87. Ku bola nomu (to be rotten of mouth) i.e. "to be addicted to vulgar language".
88. Ku bola ripfalo (to be rotten of diaphragm) i.e. "to have no conscience at all".

BOHA

89. Ku boha khamba (to tie a thief) i.e. "to imprison a thief".
90. Ku boha kungu (to tie a plan) i.e. "to make preliminary arrangements" or "to agree on a plan of action".
91. Ku boha mbeleko (to tie birth) i.e. "to sterilise".
92. Ku boha mhaka (to tie a case) i.e. "to finalise a case".

93. Ku boha minkumba (to tie blankets) i.e. "to go out in search of employment".
94. Ku boha mbilu (to tie the heart) i.e. "to act with great tenacity and resolution".
95. Ku boha nkolo (to tie the throat) i.e. "to hang to death".
96. Ku boha ririmi (to tie the tongue) i.e. "to remain silent".
97. Ku bohelela xuma enengeni wa mpfuvu (to tie wealth to the leg of a hippopotamus) i.e. "to give wealth to an irresponsible person".
98. Ku bohelela munhu (to tie a person to) i.e. "to force guilt upon a person".
99. Ku bohiwa hi timhaka (to be tied by matters) i.e. "to be incriminated by evidence".

BIYA

100. Ku biya muti (to fence a village) i.e. "to strengthen a village medically against witches".
101. Ku biyelela munhu (to fence for a person) i.e. "to protect a person".

BONGA

102. Ku bongelana (to roar at each other) i.e. "to quarrel with each other".

BOXA

103. Ku boxa a nava (to pierce and spread) i.e. "to live in great comfort".
104. Ku boxa dyondzo (to pierce education) i.e. "to be well-educated".

105. Ku boxa mbonga (to pierce honey) i.e. "to come by a great amount of wealth".
106. Ku boxa mahlo (to pierce the eyes) i.e. "to enlighten".
107. Ku boxa ndlela (to pierce a path) i.e. "to blaze the trail".
108. Ku boxa ndzeni (to pierce inside) i.e. "to suffer from diarrhoea".
109. Ku boxa nomu (to pierce the mouth) i.e. "to force to speak".
110. Ku boxa xihundla (to pierce a secret) i.e. "to reveal a secret".
111. Ku boxa xilondza (to pierce a wound) i.e. "to touch a sore point".
112. Ku boxa vukati (to pierce marriage) i.e. "to be comfortably married".

BUKUTA

113. Ku bukuta mali (to strike money) i.e. "to make a lot of money".
114. Ku bukuta mpahla (to strike goods) i.e. "to make a good purchase".

BUMABUMA

115. Ku bumabumela (to shout for) i.e. "to advertise, to praise".

BVINYA

116. Ku bvinya timhaka (to make matters blunt) i.e. "to complicate issues".

BYALA

118. Ku byala mfava (to sow chaff) i.e. "to encourage evil".

BYALA (Noun)

119. Byala bya nyamatana (beer of small water) i.e. "very weak, tasteless beer".
120. Byala bya xibaha (beer of the bitter bark) i.e. "very strong beer".
121. Byala bya xihaja (beer of the "xihaja" plant) "very strong beer".

BYARA

122. Ku byara mpingu (to bear a heavy load) i.e. "to endure great affliction".
123. Ku byara nandzu (to bear a case) i.e. "to accept full responsibility for a case".
124. Ku bvara swivi (to bear sins) i.e. "to accept one's sins with resignation".

BYELA

125. Ku byela munhu xo mita hi huku (to tell a person that which is swallowed by a hen) i.e. "to swear at a person, to insult a person".
126. Ku cela munhu (to dig a person) i.e. "to get a person into trouble, to cause a person to lose his job".
127. Ku cela timhaka (to dig out cases) i.e. "to investigate a matter thoroughly until the truth is found".

128. Ku celela timhaka hanshi (to dig cases down)
i.e. "to hide the truth".

CHA

129. Ku cha xihitana (to say a fable) i.e. "to tell a tale".
130. Ku chayela gija (to play the "gija" tune for)
i.e. "to cause someone to suffer or to act against his will".

CHEFULA

131. Ku chefula dyondzo (to get handfuls of education) i.e. "to receive a sound education".
132. Ku chefula xuma (to get handfuls of money) i.e. "to come by great wealth".

CHELA

133. Ku chela badi (to pour misfortune) i.e. "to thrust ill-luck on".
134. Ku chela hi mati yo hisa (to pour with hot water) i.e. "to do someone very great harm".
135. Ku chela hi viriviri (to pour with pepper) i.e. (i) "to blind". (ii) "to do someone harm".
136. Ku chela mati (to pour water) i.e. (i) "to revive" (ii) "to exaggerate".
137. Ku chela munyu (to pour salt) i.e. (i) "to excite". (ii) "to add flavour to".
138. Ku chela timhaka (to pour cases) i.e. "to introduce a case".
139. Ku chela vusiwana (to pour poverty on) i.e. "to impoverish".

140. Ku chelela mali (to pour money for) i.e. "to give away large sums of money".

CHIMBULA

141. Ku chimbula dyondzo (to dig out education) i.e. "to receive a sound education".
142. Ku chimbula mavele (to dig out maize) i.e. "to obtain a good harvest of maize".

CHULULA

143. Ku chulula mihloti (to pour out tears) i.e. "to weep bitterly".

CHUVEKA

144. Ku chuveka rihlampfu (to place a branch) i.e. (i) "to cease visiting a place", (ii) "to break off relations".

CINA

145. Ku cina gija (to dance the "gija" dance) i.e. "to experience great suffering".
146. Ku cina hi nenge wun'we (to dance with one foot) i.e. "to persevere alone without any assistance".
147. Ku cina ndhawu yin'we (to dance on the same spot) i.e. "to labour in vain".
148. Ku cina ngoma (to dance the drum) i.e. "to suffer".
149. Ku cina xinchanchacha (to dance the "xinchanchacha" dance) i.e. "to experience great physical pain".

150. Ku cinela mati (to dance for water) i.e. "to welcome a bride".
151. Ku cinela n'wana (to dance for a baby) i.e. "to rejoice over the birth of a baby".
152. Ku cinisa (to cause to dance) i.e. "to cause someone extreme worry".

COPELA

153. Ku copeta (to lower an eye-lid) i.e. "to make an error".

DEVULA

154. Ku devula hanci ya Jiwawa (to ride on Joao's horse) i.e. "to swing".

DLAYA

155. Ku dlaya hi mavele (to be killed by maize) i.e. "to over indulge in food or drink".
156. Ku dlaya hi mbilu (to be killed by the heart) i.e. "to suffer pangs of remorse".
157. Ku dlaya hi mbitsi (to be killed by pining) i.e. "to pine away".
158. Ku dlaya hi nhloko (to be killed by the head) i.e. "to suffer from head-ache".
159. Ku dlaya hi nhonga (to be killed by the stick) i.e. "to fall ill as a result of excessive thrashing".
160. Ku dlaya hi nkondzo (to be killed by the footprint) i.e. "to suffer from wander-lust".
161. Ku dlaya hi ntirho (to be killed by work) i.e. "to be overburdened with work".

162. Ku dlaya hi ririmi (to be killed by the tongue)
i.e. "to get into trouble because of excessive talking".
163. Ku dlaya hi ritiho (to be killed by the finger)
i.e. "to suffer from theiving propensities".
164. Ku dlaya hi xifafa (to be killed by short
temper) i.e. "to be very short-tempered".
165. Ku dlaya hi xinhlokwana (to be killed by the
small head) i.e. "to be very short-tempered".
166. Ku dlaya mali (to kill money) i.e. "to make
a fortune".
167. Ku dlaya mavele (to kill maize) i.e. "to get
a good harvest of maize".
168. Ku dlaya nhwala (to kill a louse) i.e. "to
belch".
169. Ku dlaya nsikiti (to kill a bug) i.e. "to
belch".
170. Ku dlaya nsokoti hi nhonga (to kill an ant
with a stick) i.e. "to obtain by force".
171. Ku dlaya u kokela (to kill and pull to) i.e.
"to live in great comfort and style".
172. Ku dlayela ku dya (to kill to eat) i.e. "to
make amends for one's errors".
173. Ku dlayela mbyana (to kill a dog for) i.e. "to
insult".
174. Ku dlayelela (to kill excessively) i.e. "to
put on the finishing touches".
175. Ku dlayisa (to cause to kill) i.e. "to get
someone into trouble or difficulties".

DLIDLIMBETA

176. Ku dlidlimbeta munhu (to push a person roughly)
i.e. "to use third degree methods".

DODOMBISA

177. Ku dodombisana ni ndlopfu (to wrestle with an
elephant) i.e. "to fight against great odds".

DUNGA

178. Ku dunga mimpfi (to stir wasps) i.e. "to poke
at a hornet's nest".
179. Ku dunga munhu (to stir a person) i.e. "to
provoke a person".
180. Ku dunga tinyoxi (to stir bees) i.e. "to pro-
voke dangerous people".

DUVULA

181. Ku duvulela (to shoot for) i.e. (i) "to ridi-
cule"; (ii) "to act with malice against
someone".

DYA

182. Ku dya bulu (to eat conversation) i.e. "to
engage in a conversation".
183. Ku dya hlovo (to eat the season) i.e. "to eat
the vegetables and fruit of the season".
184. Ku dya hi nandzu (to be eaten by a case) i.e.
"to be found guilty of an offence".
185. Ku dya hi tihanci (to be eaten by horses) i.e.
"to lose money through gambling on horses".
186. Ku dya hi valoyi (to be eaten by witches) i.e.
"to be bewitched".

187. Ku dya mali (to eat money) i.e. "to spend money".
188. Ku dya marhimila (to eat mucus) i.e. "to live in dire poverty".
189. Ku dya mbitsi (to eat remorse) i.e. "to suffer great remorse and unhappiness".
190. Ku dya mirhi (to eat trees) i.e. "to be in a fit of rage".
191. Ku dya misava (to eat soil) i.e. "to fall down".
192. Ku dya mintsembyana (to eat roots) i.e. "to take a prescription".
193. Ku dya munkakanana (to eat naked porridge) i.e. "to eat porridge without any relish".
194. Ku dya nandzu (to eat a debt) i.e. "to ask for a loan of money".
195. Ku dya ndlela (to eat the road) i.e. "to embark on a journey".
196. Ku dya ndzhaka (to eat a heritage) i.e. "to inherit a legacy".
197. Ku dya ndzilo (to eat fire) i.e. "to see red".
198. Ku dya nguva (to eat the season) i.e. "to eat of the fruit and vegetables of the season".
199. Ku dya nkarhi (to eat time) i.e. "to waste precious time".
200. Ku dya ntirho (to eat work) i.e. "to lose one's employment".
201. Ku dya xidviso (to eat something fed to you) i.e. "to be poisoned through food".
202. Ku dya xikweleti (to eat a debt) i.e. (i) "to buy on account", (ii) "to ask for a loan of money".

203. Ku dya xilungu (to eat European-fashion) i.e. "to lead a European type of life".
204. Ku dya xivindzi (to eat the liver) i.e. "to marry a blood relation, e.g. a maternal cousin".
205. Ku dya swa mandla (to eat of the hands) i.e. "to enjoy the fruits of one's labour".
206. Ku dya swa nyuku (to eat of the perspiration) i.e. "to enjoy the fruits of one's labour".
207. Ku dya swa tihosi (to eat of the chief's) i.e. "to lead a princely life".
208. Ku dya swo oxa (to eat of roasted) i.e. "to lead a hand-to-mouth existence".
209. Ku dya thyaka (to eat dirt) i.e. "to live in dire poverty".
210. Ku dya tiko (to eat the country) i.e. "to take to one's heels".
211. Ku dya tinhwala (to eat lice) i.e. "to live in dire need".
212. Ku dya u raha (to eat and kick) i.e. "to be well-off".
213. Ku dya viriviri (to eat pepper) i.e. (i) "to deny vehemently", (ii) "to see red".
214. Ku dya vukarhi (to eat sharpness) i.e. "to see red".
215. Ku dyelela (to eat for) i.e. "to deceive".
216. Ku dyisa xinguluve (to eat pig-like) i.e. "to eat greedily".
217. Ku dyiwa (to be eaten) i.e. "to be deceived".
218. Ku dyiwa hi makoti (to be eaten by vultures) i.e. "to die far away from home".

219. Ku dyiwa hi mati (to be eaten by water) i.e. "to be drowned".
220. Ku dyiwa hi muhlwa (to be eaten by white-ants) i.e. "to be destroyed by white-ants".
221. Ku tidya (to eat oneself) i.e. "to be vain".
222. Ku tidyisa mahele (to cause oneself to eat cockroaches) i.e. "to bring poverty to oneself".

DYOHA

223. Ku dyoha (to sin) i.e. (i) "to make a mistake" (ii) "to sing a wrong tune".
224. Ku dyohela munhu (to sin for a person) i.e. "to wrong a person".

DZAHA

225. Ku dzaha mimoya (to smoke winds) i.e. "to be seasoned by experience".
226. Ku dzahisa (to cause to smoke) i.e. (i) "to give snuff to", (ii) "to poison through snuff", (iii) "to give an anaesthetic".
227. Ku dzahisana fole (to cause each other to take snuff) i.e. "to be on the friendliest of terms".

DZIMA

228. Ku dzima yindlu (to pierce a house) i.e. "to erect a house".
229. Ku dzima xikomu (to pierce a hoe) i.e. "to start ploughing".

DZIVULA

230. Ku dzivula (to remove scales) i.e. "to come by some money".

DZUMA-DZUMA

231. Ku dzuma-dzuma (to grumble) i.e. (i) "to complain a lot", (ii) "to experience great suffering".

DZUVULA

232. Ku dzuvula (to remove the scales) i.e. "to come by some money".

ENDLA

233. Ku endla ni nhlikanhi (to do in daylight) i.e. "to act openly, to play one's cards in the open".

ETLELA

234. Ku etlela endleleni (to sleep on the road) i.e. "to be overtaken by night while on a journey".
235. Ku etlela hi xiviti (to sleep of temper) i.e. "to go to bed in a state of agitation".
236. Ku etlela hi tihlo rin'we (to sleep with one eye) i.e. "to be on the lookout all the time".
237. Ku etlela ni dyambu (to sleep with the sun) i.e. "to go to bed early".
238. Ku etlela ni ndlala (to sleep with hunger) i.e. "to go to bed hungry".
239. Ku etlela ni tihuku (to sleep with the hens) i.e. "to go to bed early".

240. Ku etlela ni tinguluve (to sleep with the pigs)
i.e. "to live in a hovel".
241. Ku etlela xithongwana (to sleep a small sleep)
i.e. "to faint, to become unconscious".
242. Ku etlela u tshamile (to sleep seated) i.e.
"to pass a very restless night".
243. Ku etlela u yimile (to sleep standing) i.e.
"to pass a very restless night".
244. Ku etlela vurhongo (to sleep sleep) i.e. "to
have a sound sleep".
245. Ku etlerisa mpfundla (to cause a hare to sleep)
i.e. "to deceive a cunning person".
246. Ku etlerisa xikukwana vurhongo (to cause a
chicken to sleep) i.e. "to deceive a person".
247. Ku etlerisa swikwembu (to cause the gods to
sleep) i.e. "to pacify important people by
offering them gifts".

FA

248. Ku fa bya mbyana (to die like a dog) i.e. "to
die poor".
249. Ku fa dzenga (to die dignity) i.e. "to be
stupid".
250. Ku fa kan'we (to die once) i.e. "to go all out".
251. Ku fa hi ku hleka (to die of laughter) i.e.
"to have a good laughter, to be overcome
with laughter".
252. Ku fa hi mafenya (to die of laughter) i.e.
"to be overcome with laughter".
253. Ku fa hi mbitsi (to die of pining) i.e. "to
pine away".

254. Ku fa hi ndlala (to die of hunger) i.e. "to suffer pangs of hunger".
255. Ku fa hi ntirho (to die of work) i.e. "to be overburdened with work".
256. Ku fa hi rifuwo (to die of wealth) i.e. "to be exceedingly wealthy".
257. Ku fa hi ripfalo (to die of the diaphragm) i.e. "to suffer from a guilty conscience".
258. Ku fa hi vurhongo (to die of sleep) i.e. "to be very sleepy".
259. Ku fa mahlo (to die eyes) i.e. (i) "to be illiterate", (ii) "to get blind".
260. Ku fa ni mafurha (to die with fat) i.e. "to die suddenly".
261. Ku fa ripfalo (to die conscience) i.e. "to have no feelings or conscience at all".
262. Ku fa tindleve (to die ears) i.e. (i) "to be disobedient", (ii) "to become deaf".
263. Ku fela jokweni (to die in the yoke) i.e. "to die in harness".
264. Ku fela tinyaweni (to die in the beans) i.e. "to be caught red-handed".
265. Ku fela kona (to die there) i.e. "to fight to the bitter end".
266. Ku fela kondlo (to die for a rat) i.e. "to labour in vain".
267. Ku fela mahala (to die for nothing) i.e. "to labour in vain".
268. Ku fela mbhongolo yo fa (to die for a dead donkey) i.e. "to labour in vain".

FIKA

269. Ku fika dyambu ri xile (to arrive after sunrise) i.e. "to arrive late".
270. Ku fika hi minkolo (to arrive with the throats) i.e. "to be dead drunk".
271. Ku fika hi vuntswaka (to arrive with trouble) i.e. "to get to a place with the intention of picking up a quarrel".
272. Ku fika ni lembe (to arrive with the year) i.e. "to be born at the beginning of the year".

FOLE

273. Ku va fole ni nhlava (to be tobacco and aloe) i.e. "to be on very friendly terms".

FUKAMELA

274. Ku fukamela mandza yo bola (to brood on rotten eggs) i.e. "to labour in vain".

FULA

275. Ku fula munhu (to hammer a person) i.e. "to mould a person's character".
276. Ku fula ribye (to hammer a stone) i.e. "to engage in a hopeless undertaking".

FUMA

277. Ku fuma hi misava (to be ruled by the earth) i.e. "to be controlled by material life".
278. Ku fuma ni min'wala (to be rich to the nails) i.e. "to be exceedingly wealthy".

FUNDZA

279. Ku fundza mhaka (to keep a case in the mouth)
i.e. "to keep an affair a close secret".
280. Ku fundza nomu (to keep the mouth in the
mouth) i.e. "to keep silent".
281. Ku fundza vuxungu (to keep poison in the mouth)
i.e. "to hide one's cruelty".

FUNUNGULA

282. Ku fununguleriwa buwa hi swikwembu (to have
the gods turn a sod on you) i.e. "to provoke
the wrath of the gods".

FUNYA

283. Ku funya buwa (to swallow a sod) i.e. "to die".

GANDZELA

284. Ku gandzela swikwembu (to give offerings to
the gods) i.e. (i) "to worship", (ii) "to
pacify people of importance".

GARINGETA

285. Ku garingeta (to relate a tale) i.e. "to tell
lies".

GAYELA

286. Ku gayela timhaka (to grind matters for) i.e.
"to sleep over a matter".

GEBEGEBE

287. Gebegebe ra minkhompfa (broad banana leaves)
i.e. "a Venda girl".

GIMETA

288. Ku gimeta byala (to put down beer) i.e. "to adjourn a drinking session".
289. Ku gimeta mhaka (to put down a case) i.e. "to adjourn a case".
290. Ku gimeta ntirho (to put down work) i.e. "to finish a task".

GUDLA

291. Ku gudla voya (to rub the hair) i.e. "to disturb".

GUMA

292. Ku guma fole (to put tobacco in the mouth) i.e. "to take snuff".
293. Ku guma misava (to put soil in the mouth) i.e. "to die".

GWAMBE NA DZAVANA

294. Gwambe na Dzavana (Gwambe and Dzavana) i.e. "the Tsonga speaking people".

HAHA

295. Ku haha (to fly) i.e. "to practise witch-craft".
296. Ku hahela henhla (to fly upwards) i.e. "to deny vehemently".

HALA

297. Ku hala misava (to scratch the soil) i.e. "to cultivate the soil".
298. Ku hala ribye (to scratch a stone) i.e. "to make no impression at all".

HALATA

299. Ku halata mati (to pour out water) i.e. "to pass water".
300. Ku halata ngati (to pour out blood) i.e. "to kill".

HAMBANA

301. Ku hambana ni munhu (to depart with a person) i.e. "to break-off relations with a person".

HANDZA

302. Ku handza (to scratch) i.e. "to work for a living".
303. Ku handza ndlala (to scratch hunger) i.e. "to work in order to be able to provide food for the family".
304. Ku handzela endzhaku (to scratch backwards) i.e. "to make no progress at all".

HANDZULA

305. Ku handzula mananga ya hlangana (to tear the deserts apart till they meet) i.e. "to go on a very long journey".
306. Ku handzula mbilu (to tear off the heart) i.e. "to hurt the feelings".
307. Ku handzuka ripfalo (to have the diaphragm torn off) i.e. "to sustain a shock".

HANGALASA

308. Ku hangalasa xuma (to scatter wealth) i.e. "to squander wealth".

HANYA

309. Ku hanya bya goya (to live like a wild cat)
i.e. "to lead an irresponsible type of life".
310. Ku hanya bya hlonga (to live like a slave) i.e.
"to work without pay".
311. Ku hanya bya kondlo ni ximanga (to lead the
life of a mouse and a cat) i.e. "to be
irreconcilable adversaries".
312. Ku hanya bya mbyana (to live like a dog) i.e.
"to live in dire poverty".
313. Ku hanya bya mfula ni ribye (to live like a
murula pip and a stone) i.e. "to be irre-
concilable adversaries".
314. Ku hanya bya mhunti (to live like a buck) i.e.
"to lead a secretive life".
315. Ku hanya bya timfenhe (to lead the lives of
baboons) i.e. "to live in squalor and dirt".

HAYEKA

316. Ku hayeka mhaka (to hang a case) i.e. "to post-
pone a case".
317. Ku tihayeka (to hang oneself) i.e. (i) "to
get oneself into great difficulties", (ii)
"to commit suicide".

HAXA

318. Ku haxa byala (to broadcast beer) i.e. "to be
intoxicated".
319. Ku haxa mahlo (to broadcast the eyes) i.e.
"to look in all directions".

320. Ku haxa mali (to broadcast money) i.e. "to squander money aimlessly or thoughtlessly".
321. Ku haxa mova (to spread air) i.e. "to spread an ideology".
322. Ku haxa rito (to broadcast the word) i.e. "to preach the gospel".

HELA

323. Ku hela matimba (to be finished of strength) i.e. (i) "to be discouraged". (ii) "to be on the point of death".
324. Ku hela mbilu (to be finished of heart) i.e. "to be impatient".
325. Ku hela mianakanyo (to be finished of thoughts) i.e. "to be in a state of great confusion".
326. Ku hela min'wala (to be finished of nails) i.e. (i) "to mellow down with experience", (ii) "to be old and helpless".
327. Ku hela ntamu (to be finished of strength) i.e. (i) "to be discouraged". (ii) "to be at death's door".
328. Ku helela (to be finished for) i.e. "to be very well-dressed".
329. Ku helela hansu (to be finished in the ground) i.e. "to die".
330. Ku helela mpfukukeni (to end in space) i.e. "to disappear".

HETA

331. Ku heta tiko hi nenge (to finish the country with the foot) i.e. "to travel great distances on foot".

332. Ku heta tiko hi xikomu (to finish the country with the hoe) i.e. "to cultivate large tracts of land".
333. Ku heta vanhu hi nomu (to finish people with the mouth) i.e. "to back-bite people".

HELEKETA

334. Ku heleketa ekuwiseni (to accompany to rest) i.e. "to bury".

HISA

335. Ku hisa muvabyi (to burn a patient) i.e. "to cause the condition of a patient to worsen".
336. Ku hisa ndzilo (to burn fire) i.e. "to cause great misunderstanding".
337. Ku hisa ngoma (to burn the drum) i.e. "to close down a circumcision school".
338. Ku hisa nhova (to burn the veld) i.e. "to spread dissension".
339. Ku hisa ntshava (to burn a mountain) i.e. "to have the head clean-shaven.
340. Ku hiseka mbilu (to have the heart inflammable) i.e. "to be zealous".

HLAKAHLA

341. Ku hlakahla milenge (to shake the legs) i.e. "to walk".
342. Ku hlakahla mmiri (to shake the body) i.e. "to take some exercise".
343. Ku hlakahla nhloko (to shake the head) i.e. "to express disapproval".

344. Ku hlakahla munhu (to shake a person) i.e. "to take a person to task".
345. Ku tihlakahla (to shake oneself) i.e. "to call oneself to attention".

HLAMBA

346. Ku hlamba hi byala (to wash with beer) i.e. "to have beer in abundance".
347. Ku hlamba hi mali (to wash with money) i.e. "to be very rich".
348. Ku hlamba ndzhaka (to wash the legacy) i.e. "to perform death rites".
349. Ku hlamba n'hweti (to wash the month) i.e. "to menstruate".
350. Ku hlamba timbilu (to wash the hearts) i.e. "to feel nauseous".

HLALA

351. Ku hlala (to give off the last breath) i.e. "to fight against heavy odds".

HLANGANA

352. Ku hlangana naswo (to meet with them) i.e. "to get into trouble".
353. Ku hlangana nhloko (to meet the head) i.e. "to become insane".
354. Ku hlangana ni khombo (to meet with danger) i.e. "to come to grief".
355. Ku hlangana ni tintangha ta wena (to meet with your comrades) i.e. "to come up against difficulties beyond one's powers".

356. Ku hlanganisa nhloko (to cause the head to meet) i.e. "to cause confusion".

HLANGULA

357. Ku hlangula mihloti (to wipe off the tears) i.e. "to comfort, to console".
358. Ku hlangula munhu (to wipe off a person) i.e. "to rob a person of all his belongings".
359. Ku hlangula vito (to wipe off a name) i.e. "to expel from membership".

HLANTA

360. Ku hlanta ngati (to vomit blood) i.e. "to get a good thrashing".
361. Ku hlanta nhlamba (to vomit bad language) i.e. "to swear like a sailor".
362. Ku hlanta nswanyo (to vomit manure) i.e. "to get a good wallop".
363. Ku hlanta xilungu (to vomit European) i.e. "to speak good English".
364. Ku hlanta swa le non'wini (to vomit what is in the mouth) i.e. "to speak one's mind".

HLANTSWA

365. Ku hlantswa mandla (to wash the hands) i.e. "to refuse to associate oneself with a decision".
366. Ku hlantswa matlhari (to wash the assegais) i.e. "to go out on a military expedition".
367. Ku hlantswa nkolo (to wash the throat) i.e. "to take a drink".

368. Ku hlantswa vito (to wash the name) i.e. "to pay damages for defamation of character".
369. Ku hlantsweka (to be washable) i.e. "to be re-fined".

HLAYA

370. Ku hlaya madzana (to count hundreds) i.e. "to be exceedingly wealthy".
371. Ku hlaya tinyeleti (to count stars) i.e. "to go to bed hungry".

HLEKA

372. Ku hlekana makovo (to laugh at each other's receding foreheads) i.e. "to laugh at each other's foibles".
373. Ku hlekelana (to laugh for each other) i.e. "to be on very friendly terms".

HLELA

374. Ku hlela timhaka (to winnow cases) i.e. "to investigate a matter with great thoroughness".

HLOHLETELA

375. Ku hlohletela munhu (to stuff in a person) i.e. "to incite a person".

HLOHLONYA

376. Ku hlohlonya hi mali (to be irritated by money) i.e. "to squander money frivorously".

377. Ku hlohlonya hi milenge (to be irritated by the feet) i.e. "to have a great desire for traveling about".
378. Ku hlohlonya hi ririmi (to be irritated by the tongue) i.e. "to have a great desire for talking all the time".
379. Ku hlohlonya hi tindleve (to be irritated by the ears) i.e. "to have people speaking about you behind your back".
380. Ku hlohlonya munhu (to irritate a person) i.e. "to annoy a person".

HLOMA

381. Ku hloma matlhari (to dress assegais) i.e. "to arm oneself".
382. Ku hloma nyimpi (to dress war) i.e. "to prepare for war".
383. Ku hloma vukati (to dress marriage) "to get married i.e. in the case of a woman".

HLOMETELA

384. Ku hlometela nhutlwana (to peep at a young giraffe) i.e. "to interfere in matters in which one is not concerned".

HLOMULA

385. Ku hlomula mbilu (to remove the heart) i.e. "to impress, to leave a lasting impression".
386. Ku hlomula mutwa (to remove a thorn) i.e. "to assist a person who is in great trouble".

HLULA

387. Ku hlula ndzingo (to defeat temptation) i.e.
"to resist temptation successfully".

HLUVULA

388. Ku hluvula tinguvu erivaleni (to undress in public) i.e. "to wash one's dirty linen in public".
389. Ku hluvula switlakati (to undress rags) i.e.
"to become prosperous".
390. Ku hluvulela tinguvu (to take off the clothes for) i.e. "to bring a curse upon".

HOLA

391. Ku hola nhloko (to be cool of head) i.e. "to be cool and level-headed".
392. Ku horisa mbilu (to cool the heart) i.e. "to stop worrying".
393. Ku horisa nhloko (to cool the head) i.e. "to take a rest".

HOXA

394. Ku hoxa hi mandza yo bola (to throw rotten eggs at) i.e. "to insult".
395. Ku hoxa mahlo (to throw eyes) i.e. "to look at".
396. Ku hoxa marito (to throw words) i.e. "to take part in a discussion".
397. Ku hoxa rhambu etimbyaneni (to throw a bone amongst the dogs) i.e. "to cause dissension amongst people".

398. Ku hoxana hi marito (to throw words at each other) i.e. "to quarrel bitterly".
399. Ku hoxela munhu (to throw at a person) i.e. "to wrong a person".

HUHUTA

400. Ku huhuta xilavi (to blow a mote) i.e. "to render assistance".
401. Ku huhuta tihlo ra ndlopfu (to blow the elephant's eye) i.e. "to render assistance to a big person".

HUMA

402. Ku huma endleleni (to get out of the way) i.e. "to go wrong".
403. Ku huma endlwini (to get out of the house) i.e. "to complete the period of confinement".
404. Ku huma hi le muhosi (to get out through the back) i.e. "to get away surreptitiously".
405. Ku huma hi matshanga (to go out in kraals) i.e. "to separate in groups according to blood relationships".
406. Ku huma hi muti (to go out with the village) i.e. "to depart with bag and baggage".
407. Ku huma hi nyangwa (to go out through the door) i.e. "to follow the accepted code of doing things".
408. Ku huma hi xigombo (to depart by the club) i.e. "to be ejected".

409. Ku huma hi xindzhakundzhaku (to go out backwards)
i.e. "to be ejected".
410. Ku huma hi swiphandze (to go out through the
passes) i.e. "to obtain permission to depart".
411. Ku huma lomo (to go from yonder) i.e. "to come
from a far-away place".
412. Ku huma mbita (to come out pot) i.e. "to start
one's own establishment".
413. Ku huma misiha (to come out muscles) i.e. "to
be extremely emaciated".
414. Ku huma moya (to go out air) i.e. "to fall from
grace", .(ii) "to lose flavour".
415. Ku huma muti (to go out village) i.e. "to start
one's own establishment".
416. Ku huma ntsena (to go out only) i.e. "to go
out empty-handed".
417. Ku huma nyimpi (to go out war) i.e. "to go out
on a military expedition".
418. Ku huma ririmi (to go out tongue) i.e. "to get
to a stage of utter exhaustion".
419. Ku huma xirhami (to get out cold) i.e. "to be
luke-warm".
420. Ku huma tsima (to go out team) i.e. "to go out
as a team to take part in a communal task".
421. Ku huma u helele (to go out finished for) i.e.
"to be fully attired".
422. Ku huma u nga lelangi (to go out without bidding
farewell) i.e. "to be forced out unceremo-
niously".

423. Ku huma u nga voni (to go out without seeing)
i.e. "to be bundled out unceremoniously".
424. Ku humela handle (to go outside) i.e. "to visit
the toilet room".
425. Ku humelela (to appear) i.e. "to make good
progress".
426. Ku humesa mahlo (to bring out eyes) i.e. "to
look amazed".
427. Ku humesa nswanyo (to bring out manure) i.e.
"to thrash severely".
428. Ku humesa ririmi (to bring out the tongue) i.e.
"to show outward signs of fatigue".
429. Ku humesa rito (to bring out a word) i.e. "to
contribute in a discussion".
430. Ku humesa xintshunxa-tshevele (to bring out
that which unties the medicine bag) i.e. "to
pay out consultation fees".
431. Ku humesa vukati (to bring out marriage) i.e.
"to pay out lobola".
432. Ku yi huma (to go it out) i.e. "to go away
from home".

HUNDZA

433. Ku hundza humulo (to pass rest) i.e. "to be
mentally unbalanced".
434. Ku hundza emisaveni (to pass from the earth)
i.e. "to die".
435. Ku hundza muti ri xile (to pass a village after
sunrise) i.e. "to be half-witted".

HUNDZUKA

436. Ku hundzuka mavala (to turn colours) i.e. "to have no fixed point of view, to be unreliable".
437. Ku hundzuka nghohe (to change the face) i.e. "to get angry or annoyed".
438. Ku hundzuka xihari (to turn into a beast) i.e. "to become wild and uncontrollable".

HUNGUKA

439. Ku hunguka (to be foolish) i.e. "to become pregnant outside wedlock".
440. Ku hungukisa (to make foolish) i.e. "to seduce out of wedlock".

HUNGUTA

441. Ku hunguta homu (to minimize a heard of cattle) i.e. "to slaughter a heard of cattle".

KAFUTA

442. Ku kafuta dyondzo (to take out handfuls of learning) i.e. "to receive a sound education".
443. Ku kafuta xuma (to take out handfuls of money) i.e. "to earn or make plenty of money".

KALA

444. Ku kala-kala (to be scarce-scarce) i.e. "to cry in agony".
445. Ku kala nhloko (to lack a head) i.e. "to be stupid".

446. Ku kala vumunhu (to lack humanity) i.e. "to lack dignity and personality".

KAMA

447. Ku kama hi timhaka (to be wrestled by cases) i.e. "to be found guilty beyond doubt through evidence".
448. Ku kama munhu (to wrestle down a person) i.e. "to defeat a person".
449. Ku kamana ni timhaka (to wrestle with cases) i.e. "to be engaged in solving cases".

KANDZA

450. Ku kandza murhi (to stamp a tree) i.e. "to prepare medicine".
451. Ku kandza rendzo (to stamp a journey) i.e. "to prepare for a journey".
452. Ku kandza vukati (to stamp marriage) i.e. "to be happily and comfortably married".

KANDZIYA

453. Ku kandziya mali hi milenge (to step on money with the feet) i.e. "to be well-off financially".
454. Ku kandziya swikunwana (to step on the toes) i.e. "to tread on one's corns".
455. Ku kandziyela munhu (to step on a person) i.e. "to oppress a person".
456. Ku kandziyela timhaka hanshi (to step down on cases) i.e. "to suppress evidence".

KANYA

457. Ku kanya mbilu (to press the heart) i.e. "to gather courage".

KAYA

458. Ku kaya-kaya (to chop-chop) i.e. "to cry in agony, to experience great suffering".

KELELA

459. Ku kelela dyondzo (to draw education) i.e. "to receive a very sound education".

KHALE

460. Khale ka hina (long of ours) i.e. "during our time".
461. Khale ka khale (long of long ago) i.e. "long ago".
462. Khale ka kona (long of there) i.e. "long ago".
463. Khale ka malembe (long of years) i.e. "many years ago".
464. Khale na rini? (long and when?) i.e. "Never"!
465. Khale ka swona (long of them) i.e. "during those days".

KHALUTA

466. Ku khaluta (to pass) i.e. "to die".

KHANA

467. Ku khana-khana (to dance with joy) i.e. "to be on the verge of shedding tears".

468. Ku khanela mati (to dance for water) i.e. "to welcome a bride".
469. Ku khanela n'wana (to dance for a child) i.e. "to rejoice over the birth of a baby".
470. Ku khanisa timhunti (to cause the bucks to dance) i.e. "to shed tears".

KHANDZIYA

471. Ku khandziya ntshava (to climb a mountain) i.e. (i) "to tell lies". (ii) "to deny categorically".
472. Ku khandziya xitimela (to ride a train) i.e. "to go on a journey".

KHAHA

473. Ku khavaxela (to slice big chunks) i.e. "to cry bitterly".

KHEHLA

474. Ku khehla mbhodi (to make a man's head ring) i.e. (i) "to be long-lived", (ii) "to graduate".
475. Ku khehla xifoko (to make a woman's head ring) i.e. "to straighten a woman's hair".

KHEMBA

476. Ku khemba (to hit i.e. "to kill in cold blood".

KHOLWA

477. Ku kholwa exilungwini (to believe in town) i.e.
"to reside in an urban area for a long period
without visiting one's original home".

KHOMBO

478. Ku va munhu wa khombo (to be a person of danger)
i.e. "to be dogged by misfortune".
479. Ku va ni khombo (to have danger) i.e. "to be
possessed by misfortune".

KHOMA

480. Ku khoma hanci (to catch a horse) i.e. "to win
a bet at the race-course".
481. Ku khoma-khoma (to touch-touch) i.e. "to thrash".
482. Ku khoma hala ni hala (to catch this way and
that) i.e. "to have too many irons in the
fire".
483. Ku khoma hi babalaza (to be caught by a hang-
over) i.e. "to suffer from the after-effects
of heavy drinking".
484. Ku khoma hi le ndzeni (to be caught by the
inside) i.e. "to have abdominal pains".
485. Ku khoma hi mbilu (to catch by the heart) i.e.
"to keep in mind".
486. Ku khoma hi ndlala (to catch by hunger) i.e.
"to feel hungry".
487. Ku khoma hi ndleve (to catch by the ear) i.e.
(i) "to overhear a remark", (ii) to punish".

488. Ku khoma hi sululwana (to catch by dizziness)
i.e. (i) "to feel dizzy". (ii) "to be perplexed".
489. Ku khoma hi xirhami (to catch by cold) i.e.
(i) "to be scared to death". (ii) "to feel cold", "to shiver".
490. Ku khoma hi xithongwana (to catch by small
sleep) i.e. "to fall unconscious".
491. Ku khoma hi xivundza (to catch by solitude)
i.e. "to feel lonely".
492. Ku khoma hi swikwembu (to catch by the gods)
i.e. "to be possessed by evil spirits".
493. Ku khoma hi tihlo (to catch with they eye).
i.e. "to catch a glimpse of".
494. Ku khoma hi timhaka (to catch by cases) i.e.
"to be incriminated by evidence".
495. Ku khoma hi tingana (to catch by shyness) i.e.
"to be embarrassed".
496. Ku khoma hi tinhlolo (to catch by the divining
bones) i.e. "to be smelt out as a witch".
497. Ku khoma hi voko (to catch by the hand) i.e.
"to aid, to assist".
498. Ku khoma hi vusiwana (to catch by poverty) i.e.
"to become poor".
499. Ku khoma hi vuvabyi (to catch by illness) i.e.
"to fall ill".
500. Ku khoma khamba (to catch a thief) i.e. "to
arrest a thief".

501. Ku khoma ko hisa (to catch the hot place) i.e. "to face a very great task".
502. Ku khoma mali (to catch money) i.e. "to save money".
503. Ku khoma mbeleko (to catch birth) i.e. "to sterilise a woman".
504. Ku khoma mberha (to catch dew) i.e. "to fall down".
505. Ku khoma mbilu (to catch the heart) i.e. "to attract or to impress".
506. Ku khoma moya (to catch the air) i.e. "to make neither head nor tail".
507. Ku khoma munhu mavoko (to catch the hands of a person) i.e. "to impede a person's progress".
508. Ku khoma munhu nomu (to catch the mouth of a person) i.e. "to interrupt a person's speech".
509. Ku khoma ncila (to catch the tail) i.e. "to take the last position in a race or task".
510. Ku khoma ndlela (to catch the road) i.e. "to depart".
511. Ku khoma ndzhongo (to catch moisture) i.e. "to be properly soaked".
512. Ku khoma nghavitla (to catch something heavy) i.e. "to be in grave difficulties".
513. Ku khoma nhloko ya mhaka (to catch the head of a matter) i.e. "to follow the gist of a matter".
514. Ku khoma n'wana (to catch a baby) i.e. "to give birth to a baby".

515. Ku khoma nyakanyaka (to catch pandemonium) i.e. "to be face to face with confusion".
516. Ku khoma xa ncila wa bulubulu (to catch something with a big tail) i.e. "to be in deep waters".
517. Ku khoma xirha (to catch an enemy) i.e. "to be faced with a life or death issue".
518. Ku khoma swi tiya (to hold firm) i.e. "to brave difficulties in a courageous manner".
519. Ku khoma tinhlolo (to catch divining bones) i.e. "to practise the science of divination".
520. Ku khoma thyaka (to catch dirt) i.e. "to be in a compromising situation".
521. Ku khomela (to catch for) i.e. "to forgive".
522. Ku khomela ekule (to catch from far) i.e. "to shun".
523. Ku khomela exilawini (to catch in the burrow) i.e. "to catch red-handed".
524. Ku khomisana xo tika (to catch a heavy thing together) i.e. "to engage in a furious struggle or dispute".
525. Ku tikhoma (to catch oneself) i.e. (i) "to deport oneself with dignity", (ii) "to control one's feelings".
526. Ku tikhoma-khoma (to catch oneself all over) i.e. "to dress oneself properly".
527. Ku tikhoma nga munhu (to catch oneself like a person) "to behave as becomes a human-being".

528. Ku tikhoma xihlaya (to catch one's cheek) i.e. "to look sad".

529. Ku tikhoma xilungu (to catch oneself European fashion) i.e. "to behave like a European".

KHOTSA

530. Ku khotsa ncila (to bend the tail) i.e. "to retreat, to run away from an enemy".

531. Ku khotsa nhamu (to bend the neck) i.e. "to acknowledge defeat".

KHUMBA

532. Ku khumba munhu (to touch a person) i.e. (i) "to affect a person" (ii) "to mention the name of a person"

KOKA

533. Ku koka mhaka (to pull a case) i.e. "to lengthen a discussion".

534. Ku koka hi nhompfu (to pull by the nose) i.e. "to have absolute control over".

535. Ku kokelana mhaka (to pull a matter against each other) i.e. "to argue over a matter".

536. Ku kokela ndzhaku (to pull backwards) i.e. "to cause delay".

537. Ku koka tindleve (to pull the ears) i.e. "to punish".

KOMBA

538. Ku komba hi ritiho (to point with a finger) i.e. "to give orders".

539. Ku komba hi tshevele (to point with the medicine bag) i.e. "to bewitch".
540. Ku komba mhaka (to point a case) i.e. "to clarify a point".
541. Ku komba mihlolo (to point wonders) i.e. "to bring misfortune or ill-luck upon".
542. Ku komba ndlela (to show the path) i.e. "to guide".
543. Ku kombana hi tintiho (to point fingers at each other) i.e. "to accuse each other".
544. Ku kombisana (to show each other) i.e. "to fight each other to the bitter end".

KULA

545. Ku kulela munhu (to grow for a person) i.e. "to treat a person with disrespect".

KUMA

546. Ku kuma dodonono (to get a heavy thing) i.e. "to get into great difficulties".
547. Ku kuma rhambu (to get a bone) i.e. "to get something to keep one busy".
548. Ku kuma xo tirila (to get something to cry over) i.e. "to get something with which to console oneself".
549. Ku kuma tinhloko (to get heads) i.e. "to beget children".
550. Ku kumiwa (to be found) i.e. "to be cursed".

KUTSA

551. Ku kutsa rhambu (to clean a bone) i.e. "to finalise a matter".

KWIHI?

552. Kwihi na kwihi? (where and where) i.e. "everywhere".

KWINYA

553. Ku kwinya-kwinyana (to press close to each other) i.e. "to fight each other".

LAHLA

554. Ku lahla miharihari (to lose tricks) i.e. "to call oneself to attention".

LAMULA

555. Ku lamulela (to separate for) i.e. "to come to the rescue of".

LANDZA

556. Ku landza hi rihlakahla (to follow with the foam) i.e. "to follow a clue".
557. Ku landza hi nkondzo (to follow with the foot print) i.e. "to follow the trail".
558. Ku landza hi ntila (to follow the trail) i.e. "to follow a clue".
559. Ku landza nyoka enceleni (to follow a snake in the hole) i.e. "to provoke a dangerous person".
560. Ku landza swikwembu (to follow the gods) i.e. "to die".

LATA

561. Ku lata swikwembu (to make the gods sleep) i.e. "to pacify people you can least afford to offend".

LEHA

562. Ku lehisa mbilu (to lengthen the heart) i.e.
"to exercise patience".

LOMBA

563. Ku lomba mahlo (to lend eyes) i.e. "to assist
in search for something".
564. Ku lomba mavoko (to lend hands) i.e. "to
assist in a task".
565. Ku lomba tindleve (to lend ears) i.e. "to
listen for a while".

LONGA

566. Ku longa matlhari (to take assegais with one)
i.e. "to prepare for a fight".
567. Ku longa timbuva (to take provisions with
one) i.e. "to prepare oneself for a journey".

LORHA

568. Ku lorha (to dream) i.e. "to speak nonsense".

LOTA

569. Ku lota matlhari (to sharpen assegais) i.e.
"to prepare for war".
570. Ku lota meno (to sharpen the teeth) i.e. "to
prepare for a feast".

LOVA

571. Ku lova mavoko (to lose hands) i.e. "to labour
in vain".

572. Ku lova xuma (to lose wealth) i.e. "to forfeit one's lobola".
573. Ku lova tihomu (to lose cattle) i.e. "to forfeit one's lobola"

LUKA

574. Ku luka kungu (to weave a plan) i.e. "to decide on a plan of action".
575. Ku luka mhaka (to weave a case) i.e. "to concoct a story".

LUMA

576. Ku luma hi le ndzeni (to be bitten by the inside) i.e. "to suffer from stomach-ache".
577. Ku luma lembe (to bite the year) i.e. (i) "to eat the first fruit of the season", (ii) "to celebrate the New Year".
578. Ku luma ndleve (to bite the year) i.e. "to warn surreptitiously".
579. Ku luma nguva (to bite the season) i.e. "to taste of the fruit and vegetables of the season".
580. Ku luma meno (to bite the teeth) i.e. "to act with courage and determination".
581. Ku luma xirhendze (to bite the heel) i.e. "to betray".
582. Ku luma swakudya (to bite food) i.e. "to taste food for the first time after a very long period of starvation".
583. Ku tiluma-luma (to bite oneself continuously) i.e. (i) "to speak with great uncertainty", (ii) "to stammer".

584. Ku tiluma ririmi (to bite one's tongue) i.e.
(i) "to tell lies". (ii) "to speak with
uncertainty".
585. Ku tiluma tintiho (to bite one's fingers) i.e.
"to eat delicious food".

LUMEKA

586. Ku lumeka ndzilo (to kindle fire) i.e. "to
create serious trouble".
587. Ku lumeka nhova (to burn the veld) i.e. "to
create trouble which may result in far-
reaching consequences".
588. Ku lumeka vindle (to burn the house) i.e. "to
create domestic trouble or discord".

LUNGA

589. Ku lunga timhaka (to salt cases) i.e. "to
exaggerate".

LUNGHA

590. Ku lunghisa munhu (to repair a person) i.e.
"to serve a person right, to pay him back
in his own coin".

LWA

591. Ku lwa hi mirhi (to fight with medicines) i.e.
"to bewitch each other".
592. Ku lwa ni ndlala (to fight against hunger)
i.e. "to resist hunger".
593. Ku lwa ni noyi (to fight against a witch) i.e.
"to fight against a very cruel adversary".

594. Ku lwa ni ripfalo (to fight against the diaphragm) i.e. "to struggle with one's conscience".
595. Ku lwa ni swikwembu (to fight against the gods) i.e. "to struggle against fate".
596. Ku lwa ni timbilu (to fight against the hearts) i.e. "to be undecided".
597. Ku lwa ni vusiku (to fight in the night) i.e. "to bewitch each other".
598. Ku lwa ya Majarimana ni ya Manghezi (to fight the war of the Germans and the English) i.e. "to be engaged in a titanic struggle".
599. Ku lwa ya Masiyagogori (to fight the war of Masiyagogori) i.e. "to fight a life and death struggle".
600. Ku va xilwa-na-dzana (to be one who fights a hundred) i.e. "a courageous and fearless man".

MAJAJA

601. Majaha ya ka Mititi (the youngmen of Mititi) i.e. "guinea-fowls".

MAHLO

602. Ku va ni mahlo (to have eyes) i.e. (i) "to suffer from an eye disease", (ii) "to have a keen eye", (iii) "to be exceedingly fond of the opposite sex".

MAMA

603. Ku mama dyondzo (to suckle education) i.e. "to receive a sound education from one's parents".

604. Ku mama vuloyi (to suckle witch-craft) i.e.
"to learn witch-craft from one's mother".

605. Ku mama vumunhu (to suckle humaneness) i.e.
"to inherit good human qualities from one's
parents".

MANI

606. Mani na mani (who and who) i.e. "all and sun-
dry".

MENO

607. Ku va ni meno (to have teeth) i.e. (i) "to
suffer from bad teeth", (ii) "to have fine
strong teeth".

MBULWA

608. Ku va mbulwa wokhandziyeka (to be a yellow-
apple tree which can be climbed) i.e. "to
be a very docile person".

MBYANA

609. Ku va mbyana (to be a dog) i.e. "to be a per-
son of poor morals".

MFULA

610. Ku va mfula ni ribye (to be murula-pip and
stone) i.e. "irreconcilable adversaries".

MHISI

611. Ku va ni matimba ya mhisi (to have the strength
of a hyena) i.e. "to possess great propen-
sities for evil".

MILA

612. Ku mila byanyi (to germinate grass) i.e. (i) "to lie fallow", (ii) "to lie idle".
613. Ku mila milenge (to germinate legs) i.e. "to disappear".
614. Ku mila ntshiva (to germinate a mane) i.e. "to become impudent".
615. Ku mila timhondzo (to germinate horns) i.e. "to become aggressive".
616. Ku mila timitsu (to germinate roots) i.e. "to settle down permanently".
617. Ku mila timpiku (to germinate wings) i.e. "to disappear into thin air".

MIYETA

618. Ku miyeta nvoka (to silence the snake) i.e. "to still hunger".

MONA

619. Ku va ni mona wa novi (to have the cruelty of a witch) i.e. "to be evil-minded".

MPHENSA-MPHENSA

620. Ku va mphensa-mphensa (to be scattered about) i.e. "to be higgledy-piggledy".

MUKA

621. Ku muka ni lembe (to go home with the year) i.e. "to die at the end of the year".
622. Ku muka ni siku (to go home with the day) i.e. "to die at eventide".

623. Ku mukisa nhloko (to take the head home) i.e.
"to carry a corpse home".
624. Ku mukisa sirha (to take a grave home) i.e.
"to go home to die".

MUTSHIVERI

625. Ku va mutshiveri (to be one who kindles) i.e.
"to be the housewife".

NANTSWA

626. Ku nantswa tilo (to lick the sky) i.e. "to deny
vehemently".
627. Ku nantswa tintiho (to lick the fingers) i.e.
"to eat with great relish".
628. Ku nantswa vulombe (to lick honey) i.e. "to
eat something delicious".
629. Ku nantswa vurhongo (to lick sleep) i.e. "to
have a sound sleep after many days of sleep-
lessness".

NAVA

630. Ku nava milenge (to spread the legs) i.e.
"to stay idle".
631. Ku nela hi mberha (to be fallen on by dew) i.e.
"to experience a stroke of fortune".

NENGE

632. Ku va ni nenge (to have a leg) i.e. (i) "to
suffer from a sore leg", (ii) "to suffer
from wander-lust".

NDHASU-NDHASU

633. Ku va ni ndhasu-ndhasu (to have excessive movement) i.e. "to be topsy-turvy".

NDHUMA

634. Ku va ni ndhuma (to have noise) i.e. "to be notorious".

NDLANDLAMUKA

635. Ku ndlandlamuka (to swell) i.e. (i) "to become exceedingly rich over-night", (ii) "to develop excessive weight".

NDLEVE

636. Ku va ni ndleve (to have an ear) i.e. (i) "to suffer from ear-ache", (ii) "to have a good ear for music".

NDLOPFU

637. Ku va ndlopfu (to be an elephant) i.e. "to be head and shoulders above one's fellow-men".

NGATI

638. Ku va ni ngati (to have blood) i.e. "to suffer from pneumonia".

639. Ku va ni ngati yo biha (to have bad blood) i.e. "to be ill-fated".

NGHALA

640. Ku va nghala (to be a lion) i.e. "to be a strong and courageous man".

NGHENA

641. Ku nghena emarhambyini (to enter in the bones)
i.e. "to sustain a serious infection".
642. Ku nghena embilwini (to enter in the heart)
i.e. "to make a profound impression".
643. Ku nghena emunyameni (to enter into darkness)
i.e. "to get lost spiritually".
644. Ku nghena endleleni (to get into the path)
i.e. "to see the way clearly".
645. Ku nghena endzhopeni (to get into the mud)
i.e. "to be involved in scandal".
646. Ku nghena endzilweni (to get into the fire)
i.e. "to get into serious trouble".
647. Ku nghena enhlokweni (to get into the head)
i.e. "to feel very important after some achievement".
648. Ku nghena enon'wini (to get into the mouth)
i.e. "to interrupt a person's speech".
649. Ku nghena exikhwameni (to get into the pocket)
i.e. "to treat with contempt".
650. Ku nghena hansi (to enter down) i.e. (i) "to investigate thoroughly, (ii) "to disappear".
651. Ku nghena hanshi mahlo (to enter down with the eyes) i.e. "to examine closely".
652. Ku nghena hi nala (to be entered by the devil)
i.e. "to be afflicted by evil thoughts".
653. Ku nghena hi nhloko (to enter with the head)
i.e. "to go into a matter body and soul".
654. Ku nghena hi xirhami (to get in with cold)
i.e. "to experience fear".

655. Ku nghena hi xivungwana (to be entered by a worm) i.e. "to get mentally upset".
656. Ku nghenela timhaka (to enter into matters) i.e. "to interfere in matters in which one is not concerned".
657. Ku nghenela wanuna endlwini (to enter into a man's house) i.e. "to seduce somebody's wife".
658. Ku nghenisa rito (to put in a word) i.e. "to contribute to a discussion".
659. Ku nghenisa voko (to put in a hand) i.e. "to assist".

NGOMA

660. Hi ngoma ya timbyana (in the circumcision of the dogs) i.e. "at no time whatsoever".

NGWENYA

661. Ku va ngwenya (to be a crocodile) i.e. "to be a champion".
662. Ku va ni ngwenya emutini (to have a crocodile in the village) i.e. "to offer hospitality to a dangerous person".

NHAMU

663. Ku va ni nhamu (to have a neck) i.e. (i) "to be physically strong", (ii) "to be insolent".

NKUHLU

664. Ku va nkuhlu wa xitshitshi (to be a dark mufeira tree) i.e. "a nest of witches".

NKUKU

665. Ku va nkuku ni mbhaha (to be a cock and a hen) i.e. (i) "a boy and girl", (ii) "people who cannot be left together without something untoward happening".

NKULUNGWANA

666. Nkulungwana hi dzonga (Rejoicing song by the south) i.e. "congratulations".

NKUMA

667. Nkuma wa mondzo (ashes of the kiaat tree) i.e. "a pregnant woman".

NKWAHLE

668. Ku va nkwahle (to be an iguana) i.e. "to be foolish and sluggish".

NINGINISA

669. Ku ninginisa misava (to shake the earth) i.e. "to terrorise the world".
670. Ku ninginisa vanhu (to shake people) i.e. "to set people thinking".

NISA

671. Ku nisa mpfula ku nga ri na mapapa (to cause rain to fall when there are no clouds) i.e. "to do something extraordinary".
672. Ku nisa ndzilo (to cause fire to rain) i.e. "to burst out in anger".

NONA

673. Ku nona ni tintiho (to be fat with the fingers)
i.e. "to be very fat".
674. Ku nona ro fa (to be fat for death) i.e. "to
be exceedingly fat".
675. Ku nonela hi mpfundla (to be fattened for a
hare) i.e. "to fail to take advantage of
some good fortune".

NONOHA

676. Ku nonihisa mbilu (to cause the heart to harden)
i.e. "to refuse to relent".
677. Ku nonohisa timhaka (to cause matters to
harden) i.e. "to complicate matters".

NSATI

678. Nsati wa tihomu (A wife of cattle) i.e. "a
wife for whom lobola has been paid, a legal
wife".

NSELE

679. Nsele wa novi (A witch's cruelty) i.e.
"unthinkable cruelty".

NTLHONTLHA

680. Ku ntlhontlha mimpfi (to provoke wasps) i.e.
"to provoke dangerous people".
681. Ku ntlhontlha tinyoxi (to provoke bees) i.e.
"to provoke dangerous people".

NTSHIVA

682. Ku va ni ntshiva (to have a mane) i.e. "to be aggressive".

NTSWA

683. Ku ntswa hi byala (to be full of beer) i.e. "to be exceedingly intoxicated".

NUHA

684. Ku nuha mali (to smell money) i.e. "to come by some money".
685. Ku nuha mumu (to smell heat) i.e. "to suffer from excessive heat."
686. Ku nuha tilo (to smell heaven) i.e. "to get to heaven".
687. Ku nuha vukosi (to smell royalty) i.e. "to inherit chieftainship".
688. Ku nuhana makehele (to smell each others arm-pits) i.e. "to be at logger-heads".

NUSA

689. Ku nusa xuma (to take handfuls of wealth) i.e. "to make a lot of money".

NWA

690. Ku nwa dyondzo (to drink education) i.e. "to receive a sound education".
691. Ku nwa mati-magodya (to drink forced water) i.e. "to get drowned".
692. Ku nwa mhondzo (to drink poison) i.e. "to look for a witch".

693. Ku nwela matini (to drink in the water) i.e. to get drowned".
694. Ku nwise (to cause to drink) i.e. "to poison through drink".
695. Ku nwise mati (to cause each other to drink water) i.e. "to assist each other".
696. Ku tinwisa (to cause oneself to drink) i.e. (i) "to commit suicide by drinking poison", (ii) "to get drunk on purpose".

N'WANA

697. N'wana wa mbeva (the child of a rat) i.e. "a chip off the old block".

N'WOKA

698. Ku n'woka (to melt) i.e. (i) "to become prosperous", (ii) "to put on excessive weight".

N'UNUN'UTA

799. Ku n'nun'uta (to whisper) i.e. "to complain".

NYOKA

700. Ku va nyoka (to be a snake) i.e. "to be unreliable".
701. Ku va nyoka-hansi (to be an underground snake) i.e. "to be a hypocrite".
702. Ku va ni nyoka (to have a snake) i.e. "to suffer from abdominal ailment".

OKA

703. Ku okelana ndzilo (to take fire from each other)
i.e. "to be on good terms with each other".

OLOLA

704. Ku olola milenge (to stretch the legs) i.e.
"to take a short walk".
705. Ku olola n'wana (to stretch a child) i.e. "to
give a child a thrashing".
706. Ku olola timhaka (to stretch matters) i.e.
"to straighten up matters".

OLELA

707. Ku olela mati (to gather water) i.e. "to
labour in vain".
708. Ku olela xuma (to gather money) i.e. "to be
in the money".

OMA

719. Ku oma mavoko (to have dry arms) i.e. "to
have paralysis of the arms".
710. Ku oma milomu (to have dry mouths) i.e. "to
be hungry".
711. Ku oma minkolo (to have dry throats) i.e. "to
be thirsty".
712. Ku oma nhloko (to have a dry head) i.e. "to
be stubborn".

ONHA

713. Ku onha moya wa munhu (to spoil a person's
spirit) i.e. "to hurt a person's feelings".

714. Ku onha munhu (to spoil a person) i.e. "to spoon-feed a person".
715. Ku onha nhwana (to spoil a virgin) i.e. "to seduce a virgin".
716. Ku onha vukati (to spoil a marriage) i.e. "to divorce".
717. Ku onheka moya (to be spoiled in spirit) i.e. (i) "to be spiritually perturbed", (ii) "to run mad".
718. Ku onheka ngohe (to be facially spoiled) i.e. (i) "to be disgusted". (ii) "to be angry".
719. Ku onheka nhloko (to be spoiled in the head) i.e. "to become mentally deranged".
720. Ku tionha (to spoil oneself) i.e. "to conduct oneself shamefully".

ORHA

721. Ku orha masana (to bask in the sunshine) i.e. "to be in the lime-light".
722. Ku orhelana ndzilo (to sit by each other's fireside) i.e. "to be on good terms with each other".

PALA

723. Ku pala hi mana wa xona (to beat it with its mother) i.e. "to defeat conclusively".

PANA

724. Ku pana a ri vona (to inspan and see it) i.e. "to run away".

PANDZA

725. Ku pandza hi nhloko (to separate with the head) i.e. "to suffer from head-ache".
726. Ku pandza mananga ya hlangana (to separate the deserts and let them meet) i.e. "to cover a very great distance on foot".
727. Ku pandzeka nhloko (to have the head separated) i.e. "to crack one's head seeking for a solution".
728. Ku pandzisa nhloko (to cause the head to separate) i.e. "to cause worry".

PELA

729. Ku pela hi nhloko (to cross with the head) i.e. "to go in wholesale".
730. Ku pela naro (to set with it) i.e. "to die at sunset".
731. Ku pela ni dyambu (to set with the sun) i.e. "to die at the close of day".
732. Ku pelela hi dyambu (to be set for by the sun) i.e. "to be deserted by one's good luck".

PETA

733. Ku peta byala (to soak beer) i.e. "to brew beer".
734. Ku peta dyambu (to soak the sun) i.e. "to work till late".
735. Ku peta munhu (to soak a person) i.e. "to get a person into trouble".
736. Ku peta nyamatana (to soak the child of water) i.e. "to brew weak and tasteless beer".

737. Ku peta xibaha (to soak a bitter bark) i.e.
"to brew very strong beer".
738. Ku peta xihaja (to soak the "xihaja" plant)
i.e. "to brew very strong beer".

PFALA

739. Ku pfala huvo (to close the court) i.e. "to
pay court expenses".
740. Ku pfala mahlo (to close the eyes) i.e. "to
connive at".
741. Ku pfala nomu (to close the mouth) i.e. "to
bribe".
742. Ku pfala tindleye (to close the ears) i.e.
"to ignore advice".

PFATLANYA

743. Ku pfatlanya (to re-open a wound) i.e. "to
add insult to injury".

PFILUNGANYA

744. Ku pfilunganya timhaka (to mix matters) i.e.
"to confuse issues".

PFIMBA

745. Ku pfimba chelele (to swell the crop) i.e.
"to burst with anger".

PFULA

746. Ku pfula huvo (to open the court) i.e. "to
pay court expenses".
747. Ku pfula nhloko (to open the head) i.e. "to
enlighten".

748. Ku pfula vindlu (to open the house) i.e. (i) "to inaugurate a house", (ii) "to marry the husband of a late sister".
749. Ku pfuleka mahlo (to have one's eyes opened) i.e. "to be enlightened".
750. Ku pfulela byala (to open for beer) i.e. "to give out beer freely".
751. Ku pfulela mahlanga (to open for mealie stalks) i.e. "to allow stock to graze in the mealie fields after the reaping is over".

PFUMALA

752. Ku pfumala dzano (to lack dignity) i.e. "to be an imbecile".
753. Ku pfumala xa vumbirhi (to lack the second) i.e. "to lead a life of poverty".
754. Ku pfumala tindleve (to lack ears) i.e. "to be recalcitrant".

PFUNA

755. Ku pfuna mavele (to help maize) i.e. "to obtain a good harvest of maize".
756. Ku tipfuna (to help oneself) i.e. "to eat".

PFURHA

757. Ku pfurha ndzilo (to burn fire) i.e. "to see red".
758. Ku pfurha vukarhi (to burn anger) i.e. "to see red".

PFUXA

759. Ku pfuxa dzolonga (to awaken noise) i.e. "to start a quarrel".
760. Ku pfuxa ritshuri (to awaken dust) i.e. "to bring about a state of chaos".
761. Ku pfuxa swikwembu (to awaken the gods) i.e. "to disturb the peace".
762. Ku pfuxa swixangu (to awaken troubles) i.e. "to disturb the peace".

PFUVA

763. Ku pfuva timhaka (to knead matters) i.e. "to complicate issues".
764. Ku pfuva tinhloko (to knead heads) i.e. "to confuse issues".

PHAHLA

765. Ku phahla swikwembu (to make an offering to the gods) i.e. "to pacify an important person especially by giving him some valuable present".
766. Ku phahla timhamba (to offer medicines) i.e. "to pacify important people".
767. Ku phahlelana mariyeta (to offer each forgiveness) i.e. "to bury the hatchet".

PHAMELA

768. Ku phamela ngoma (to give food to the drum) i.e. "to feed boys at the circumcision lodge".
769. Ku phamela tihavi (to give food to the oxen) i.e. "to feed the men ploughing the fields".

PHASA

770. Ku phasa-phasa (to trap-trap) i.e. "to mend".

PHATLUKA

771. Ku phatluka makatla (to break off the shoulders)
i.e. "to undertake strenuous work".

PHEMA

772. Ku phemelana nhloko va njiya (to share the
head of a locust) i.e. "to share the little
that you possess".
773. Ku phendla midzuva (to page the "midzuva"
tree) i.e. "to take to heels".

PHOFULA

774. Ku phofula swihiri (to dig out taboos) i.e.
"to divulge great secrets".
775. Ku phofula swihundla (to dig out secrets) i.e.
"to divulge secrets".

PHULA

776. Ku phula byi hola (to remove it from the fire
to cool) i.e. "to give up an attempt".

PHUPHA

777. Ku phupha khuvi (to bring out foam) i.e. "to
be very tired".
778. Ku phupha marhi (to bring out saliva) i.e. "to
wish for food".
779. Ku phupha rihlakahla (to bring out foam) i.e.
"to be very tired".

PHURUMULA

780. Ku phurumula timpapa (to spread the wings) i.e. "to take to wing".

PHUTSA

781. Ku phutsa mavoko (to fold the arms) i.e. "to cease working".

PHYAPHYARHA

782. Ku phyapharha (to boil) i.e. "to talk endlessly".

PONA

783. Ku pona ri ahlamile (to be safe while it is open) i.e. "to escape death miraculously".
784. Ku tiponisa (to make oneself safe) i.e. "to get oneself out of serious trouble".

PUTA

785. Ku puta munhu (to regret a person) i.e. "to feel sorry for a person".
786. Ku tiputa (to regret oneself) i.e. "to pity oneself".

RHALA

787. Ku rhala-rhala (to draw-draw) i.e. "to glance at".

RHANDZA

788. Ku rhandza jomela (to love the drinking bowl) i.e. "to be addicted to alcohol".

789. Ku rhandza matlhari (to love the assegais)
i.e. "to be fond of brawls".

RHELELA

790. Ku rhelerisa mbilu (to cause the heart to descend) i.e. "to obtain peace of mind".
791. Ku rhelerisa swakudya (to cause food to descend) i.e. "to take a beverage after a meal".

RHETA

792. Ku rheta (to slip) i.e. "to make an error".

RHUMA

793. Ku rhuma ndlopfu (to send an elephant) i.e. "to send an elderly or important person".

PHUNGA

794. Ku rhunga nomu (to sew the mouth) i.e. "to remain silent".

RHURHA

795. Ku rhurha hi yindlu (to emigrate with the house) i.e. "to remove bag and baggage".
796. Ku rhurhela (to emigrate for) i.e. "to offer accommodation and hospitality".

RHURHUMELA

797. Ku rhurhumela (to shiver) i.e. "to be terribly scared".

RHWALA

798. Ku rhwala khwara (to carry trouble) i.e. "to be overburdened with worry".
899. Ku rhwala hi khwiri (to carry with the stomach) i.e. "to eat".
800. Ku rhwala matlhari (to carry assegais) i.e. "to start a fight".
801. Ku rhwala mavoko (to carry the arms) i.e. "to weep".
802. Ku rhwala nandzu hi makatla (to carry a case with the shoulders) i.e. "to accept guilt without shirking".
803. Ku rhwala ndzhwalo (to carry a load) i.e. "to be pregnant".
804. Ku rhwala ndzingo (to carry temptation) i.e. "to be faced with a delicate situation".
805. Ku rhwexa timhaka (to load with cases) i.e. "to make an allegation against".
806. Ku rhwexa tingana (to load with shame) i.e. "to bring shame upon".

RIDELA

807. Ku ridela munhu (to cement a person) i.e. "to thrash a person".

RILA

808. Ku rila munhu (to cry a person) i.e. "to mourn the death of a person".
809. Ku rila nkosi (to mourn the funeral) i.e. "to mourn the death of a person".
810. Ku rila nkosi wa mbhanyi (to cry for the alive) i.e. "to mourn the death of a person who has been reported dead by error".

811. Ku tirila (to mourn oneself) i.e. "to enjoy the fruit of one's efforts".

RIMA

812. Ku rimela ndzhaku (to plough backwards) i.e. "to make no progress at all".

813. Ku rimela timpfuvu (to plough for the hippos) i.e. "to work for the benefit of other people".

RIMITO

814. Ku va ni rimito (to have a capacity for swallowing) i.e. "to be very greedy".

RINDZA

815. Ku rindza n'weti (to watch the moon) i.e. "to wait in vain".

RINI

816. Rini na rini (when and when) i.e. "all the time".

SALA

817. Ku sala ndzhaku (to remain behind) i.e. "to make no progress at all".

818. Ku sala u swi vona (to remain and see them) i.e. "to remain suffering".

819. Ku salela ndzhaku (to remain behind) i.e. "to make very slow progress".

SASA

820. Ku sasela vanungu (to do good for the porcupines) i.e. "to work for the benefit of other people".

SELETELA

821. Ku seletela xihlovo (to cover a well) i.e. "to offend a benefactor".
822. Ku senga homu hi rimatsi (to milk a cow with the left) i.e. "to make a wrong approach".
823. Ku senga munhu (to milk a person) i.e. "to take advantage of a person".

SIYA

824. Ku siya hi mfutsu (to be left by the tortoise) i.e. "to be exceedingly slow".
825. Ku siya misava (to leave the earth) i.e. "to die".
826. Ku siya vusiku ndlwini (to leave the night in the house) i.e. "to wake up in the early morning".
827. Ku siya vutlhari endzhaku (to leave wisdom behind) i.e. "to act foolishly".

XALAMUKA

828. Ku xalamuka (to wake up) i.e. "to begin to see light".

XAVA

829. Ku xava mbhongolo yo fa (to buy a dead donkey) i.e. "to make a bad purchase".

830. Ku xava munhu (to buy a person) i.e. "to bribe a person".
831. Ku xavelela (to buy for) i.e. "to seek for favours".
832. Ku tixavisa (to sell oneself) i.e. "to compromise oneself".

XEVA

833. Ku xeve hi munhu (to make relish of a person) i.e. "to speak behind a person's back".
834. Ku xeve hi ndlala (to relish with hunger) i.e. "to eat food without relish".

XIFAKI

835. Xifaki xa gerere (a cob with scattered grain) i.e. "a person who has lost his teeth".
836. Xifaki xa mumu (a cob of the heat) i.e. "a very short person".

XIFUVA

837. Ku va ni xifuva (to have a chest) i.e. "to have a good memory", (ii) "to suffer from tuberculosis".

XIHARI

838. Ku va xihari (to be a beast) i.e. "to be badly behaved".

XIHI

839. Xihi na xihi (which and which) i.e. "everything".

XIHLOKA

840. Ku va xihloka (to be a hatchet) i.e. "to be fearless".

XIKHONGOLOTANA

841. Xikhongolotana xa nsindziso (a small centipede of persistence) i.e. "a source of annoyance".

XIMANGA

842. Ximanga ni kondlo (a cat and a mouse) i.e. "irreconcilable enemies".
843. Ku va ximanga-tlatlana (to be a wild cat) i.e. "to be a wild person".

XIPENE

844. Ku va xipene (to be a steenbuck) i.e. "to be fleet-footed".

XIRHUNDZU

845. Ku va wa xirhundzu (to be of the basket) i.e. "to belong to the female sex".

XITLHANGU

846. Ku va xitlhangu xa tluka (to be a shield of leaf) i.e. "to be no shield at all".
847. Ku va wa xitlhangu (to be of the shield) i.e. "to belong to the male sex".

XITSAYITSAYI

848. Mahlo ya xitsayitsayi (eyes of the glow-worm) i.e. "very sharp eyes".

XIVINDZI

849. Ku va ni xivindzi (to have a liver) i.e. "to be very courageous".

SWIKWEMBU

850. Ku va ni swikwembu (to have the gods) i.e. "to be possessed by evil spirits".

TA

851. Ku ta hi le muhosi (to come from the back-yard) i.e. "to approach surreptitiously".
852. Ku ta hi ndyangu (to come with the family) i.e. "to bring bag and baggage".
853. Ku ta hi nyama (to come in flesh) i.e. "to come in person".
854. Ku ta hi xihuhuri (to come with the whirlwind) i.e. "to arrive without warning".
855. Ku ta nato (to come with them) i.e. "to bring trouble".

TALA (Noun)

856. Ku va tala (to be an ash-heap) i.e. "to be wealthy".

TALA (Verb)

857. Ku tala mbilu (to be full in the heart) i.e. "to be exceedingly annoyed".
858. Ku tala vuxungu (to be full of poison) i.e. "to be full of hatred".

THWASA

859. Ku thwasa vun'anga (to appear medical practice) i.e. "to graduate as a doctor".
860. Ku thwasavuloyi (to appear witch-craft) i.e. "to graduate as a witch".

TIHLO

861. Ku va ni tihlo (to have an eye) i.e. (i) "to suffer from a sore eye". (ii) "to have an eye for beauty".

TIKA

862. Ku tika (to be heavy) i.e. "to be pregnant".
863. Ku tikela hi ndyangu (to be overweighed by a family) i.e. "to be overwhelmed by family responsibilities".
864. Ku tikela hi ntirho (to be overweighed by work) i.e. "to be overwhelmed with work".
865. Ku tikela vanhu (to be heavy for people) i.e. "to overwhelm people".
866. Ku tikisa timhaka (to make matters heavy) i.e. "to complicate issues.

TIMA

867. Ku tima ndzilo (to put off fire) i.e. "to make peace".
868. Ku timekela hi ndzilo (to have the fire put off for) i.e. "to lose one's wife through death".
869. Ku timela ndzilo (to put fire off for) i.e. "to try to bring about peace".

TINDLU

870. Tindlu ta Varhwa (the houses of the Bushmen)
i.e. "the nostrils".

TIRHA

871. Ku tirha vusiku ni nhlikanhi (to work day and
night) i.e. "to be busy all the time".
872. Ku tirhela enon'wini (to work in the mouth)
i.e. "to eke out a poor existence".
873. Ku tirhela mahala (to work for nothing) i.e.
"to work for very little pay".
874. Ku tirhela mbhongholo yo bola (to work for a
rotten donkey) i.e. "to work in vain".
857. Ku tirhela vurhongo (to work for sleep) i.e.
"to work for no pay at all".

TITIMELA

876. Ku titimela (to be cold) i.e. "to die".

TIVA

877. Ku tivela ndzeni (to know inside) i.e. "to
keep a secret".
878. Ku titiva (to know oneself) i.e. "to have a
very high opinion of oneself".

TIYA

879. Ku tiya mbilu (to be strong hearted) i.e. "to
be brave".
880. Ku tiya nomu (to have a strong mouth) i.e. "to
be good at talking and nothing more".
881. Ku tiyela munhu (to be strong for a person)
i.e. "to despise a person".

882. Ku tiyisa nhlana (to strengthen the backbone)
i.e. "to encourage".
883. Ku titiyisa (to strengthen oneself) i.e. (i)
"to medicate oneself against witches", (ii)
"to arm oneself physically or spiritually
against one's enemies".

TLANGA

884. Ku tlanga hi mali (to play with money) i.e.
"to be extravagant in the use of money".
885. Ku tlanga hi munhu (to play with a person) i.e.
"to make a fool of a person".
886. Ku tlanga hi ndzilo (to play with fire) i.e.
"to engage in a dangerous undertaking".
887. Ku tlanga xirhuka lavakulu (to play "offend the
big ones") i.e. "to engage in an exceedingly
dangerous undertaking".

TLHAVA

888. Ku tlhava hi marito (to pierce with words) i.e.
"to hurt".
889. Ku tlhava hi nqati (to pierce with blood) i.e.
"to suffer from pneumonia".
890. Ku tlhava homu (to pierce a herd of cattle)
i.e. "to slaughter a herd of cattle".
891. Ku tlhava mbilu (to pierce the heart) i.e. "to
hurt the feelings".
892. Ku tlhava munyama (to pierce darkness) i.e.
"to discover the truth".
893. Ku tlhava xirhundzu (to pierce a basket) i.e.
"to weave a basket".

894. Ku tlhaveka (to be capable of being pierced) i.e.
"to take ill".

895. Ku tlhavela hi dyambu (to be pierced for by
the sun) i.e. "to strike some fortune".

TLHELA

896. Ku tlhela hi xindzhaku (to turn backwards) i.e.
"to retract a statement".

897. Ku tlhelela ndzhaku (to return backwards) i.e.
"to degenerate".

TLHOMA

898. Ku tlhoma mahlo (to peg eyes) i.e. "to be
wayward".

899. Ku tlhoma yindlu (to peg a house) i.e. "to lay
the foundation of a house".

TLHOTLHORHA

900. Ku tlhotlhorha munhu (to hatch a person) i.e.
"to strike a person with a stone".

901. Ku tlhotlhorha vana (to hatch children) i.e.
"to have many children".

TLHUVUTSA

902. Ku tlhuvutsa mhaka (to tan a case) i.e. "to
investigate a case thoroughly".

TLULA

903. Ku tlula ka mhala (the jump of an impala) i.e.
"an inborn trait".

904. Ku tlula nawu (to jump the law) i.e. "to trans-
gress a law".

905. Ku tlula ni nhonga (to jump with the stick) i.e. "to get a good beating".
906. Ku tlulana milenge (to jump each other's legs) i.e. "to be at cross purposes".
907. Ku tlulela henhla (to jump skywards) i.e. "to deny vehemently".

TOLO

908. Tolo na rini? (yesterday and when?) i.e. "never"!
909. Tolo ni tolweni (yesterday and day before yesterday) i.e. "in days gone by".

TORHA

910. Ku va ni torha (to have thirst) i.e. "to have great longing for".

TOTA

911. Ku tota khwara (to smear trouble) i.e. "to make an allegation against".
912. Ku tota thyaka (to smear dirt) i.e. "to defame".

TOVA

913. Ku tova-tova (to pinch-pinch) i.e. "to make a mess".

TSAKAMISA

914. Ku tsakamisa nkolo (to wet the throat) i.e. "to quench thirst".

TSEMA

915. Ku tsema mavoko (to cut hands) i.e. "to cause delay".

916. Ku tsema mhaka (to cut a case) i.e. "to give a verdict".
917. Ku tsema milenge (to cut the legs) i.e. "to cripple".
918. Ku tsema mubya (to cut the cradle) i.e. "to behave unbecomingly".
919. Ku tsema nkolo (to cut the throat) i.e. "to kill by hanging".
920. Ku tsema vun'anga (to cut medical practice) i.e. "to graduate in medicine"
921. Ku tsemeka nhlana (to have the backbone cut) i.e. "to be terribly scared".
922. Ku titsema nkolo (to cut one's throat) i.e. "to place oneself in serious trouble".

TSHAMA

923. Ku tshama hi mali (to sit with money) i.e. "to be very wealthy".
924. Ku tshama hi mavoko (to sit with the arms) i.e. "to lead an idle life".
925. Ku tshama hi mhaka (to sit with a case) i.e. "to keep an affair secret".
926. Ku tshama hi ku tovana (to sit by pinching each other) i.e. "to be at logger-heads".
927. Ku tshama munhu henhla (to sit a person on top) i.e. "to suppress a person".
928. Ku tshamela (to sit for) i.e. "to wait for".

TSHOVA

929. Ku tshova mavoko (to break the arms) i.e. "to delay progress".

930. Ku tshova matsolo (to break the knees) i.e.
"to cripple".
931. Ku tshova nhamu (to break the neck) i.e. "to
defeat".
932. Ku tshova nhwana nenge (to break the leg of
a girl) i.e. "to impregnate a girl".
933. Ku tshovela mavele (to break mealies for) i.e.
"to harvest mealies".

TSHWA

934. Ku tshwa hi mumu (to burn with heat) i.e. "to
work very hard".
935. Ku tshwa hi ndlela (to burn with the road) i.e.
"to walk a long distance".
936. Ku tshwa mmiri (to be burnt of body) i.e. "to
turn dark owing to illness".
937. Ku tshwa non'wini (to be burnt in the mouth)
i.e. "to tell tales".

TSHWUMUKA

938. Ku tshwumuka (to get bruised) i.e. "to come by
some fortune".

TSHWUTELA

939. Ku tshwutela hi nyoka emahlweni (to be spat at
in the eyes by a snake) i.e. "to be outwitted
by an adversary".
940. Ku tshwutela marhi (to spit saliva) i.e. "to
treat with contempt".
941. Ku tshwutela munhu (to spit at a person with
saliva) i.e. "to treat a person with con-
tempt".

942. Ku tshwutela ngati (to spit saliva) i.e. "to be seriously injured".
943. Ku tshwutela nkanu (to spit chick) i.e. "to be defeated".

TSWALA

944. Ku tswala hi ndlela (to be given birth to by the road) i.e. "to arrive".
945. Ku titswala (to give birth to oneself) i.e. "to bear a child exactly like oneself".

TWA.

946. Ku twa byala (to hear drink) i.e. "to be under the influence of intoxicating drink".
947. Ku twa mahlo (to hear eyes) i.e. "to suffer from sore eyes".
948. Ku twa ndlala (to hear hunger) i.e. "to feel hungry".
949. Ku twa ndzeni (to hear inside) i.e. "to suffer from diarrhoea".
950. Ku twa nyoka (to hear the snake) i.e. "to feel hungry".
951. Ku twalela (to hear for) i.e. "to be satisfied".
952. Ku twalela munhu (to hear for a person) i.e. "to learn of a person's whereabouts".
953. Ku twela vusiwana (to hear for poverty) i.e. "to pity".
954. Ku titwa (to hear oneself) i.e. "to feel physically fit".
955. Ku titwisa (to cause oneself to hear) i.e. "to place oneself at a point of advantage".

VANDZEKELA

956. Ku vandzekela byala (to warm up beer) i.e. "to brew beer".

VEKA

957. Ku veka matlhari hanshi (to put assegais down) i.e. "to cease fighting".
958. Ku veka mhaka erivaleni (to put a matter in the plain) i.e. "to speak frankly".
959. Ku veka munhu erivaleni (to put a person in the plain) i.e. "to be open with a person".
960. Ku veka nhloko ehansi (to put the head down) i.e. (i) "to go to bed", (ii) "to die".
961. Ku veka vumbhoni (to put evidence) i.e. "to give evidence".
962. Ku tiveka hanshi (to put oneself down) i.e. "to be humble".
963. Ku tiveka henhla (to put oneself up) i.e. "to ride the high horse".
964. Ku tiveka tlhelo (to place oneself aside) i.e. "to take no part".

VELE

965. Vele ra mumu (the maize of the heat) i.e. "a very short person".

VILA

966. Ku vila ngati (to boil blood) i.e. "to see red".
967. Ku vila nhloko (to boil the head) i.e. "to be in a state of confusion".

VINDZA

968. Ku vindza hi timhaka (to be strangulated by matters) i.e. "to fail to justify one's actions".
969. Ku vindza mbilu (to strangle the heart) i.e. "to maintain patience".

VINJA

970. Ku vinja tinconga (to play draughts) i.e. "to act with great skill".

VONA

971. Ku vona mahlomulo (to see sorrows) i.e. "to experience great sorrow".
972. Ku vona maxangu (to see difficulties) i.e. "to experience great difficulties".
973. Ku vona ndlela (to see the way) i.e. "to see light".
974. Ku vona nhonga (to see the stick) i.e. "to be adept at fighting with sticks".
975. Ku vona ntiyiso (to see the truth) i.e. "to be truthful".
976. Ku vona xa ncila wa bulubulu (to see that of the big tail) i.e. "to experience great difficulties".
977. Ku vona tingoma (to see drums) i.e. "to discover hidden secrets".
978. Ku vona tinhlolo (to see the divining bones) i.e. "to be good at witch-hunting".

979. Ku vona tnyeleti (to see the stars) i.e. (i) "to be hit on the eyes", (ii) "to go to bed hungry".
980. Ku vona vurhongo (to see sleep) i.e. "to have a sound sleep".
981. Ku vonela (to see for) i.e. "to see someone's genital organs".
982. Ku vonela munhu ebodleleni (to see a person in the bottle) i.e. "to despise a person".
983. Ku tivona nandzu (to see oneself fault) i.e. "to find fault with oneself".
984. Ku tivonela (to see for oneself) i.e. "to defend oneself".
985. Ku tivonisa (to cause oneself to see) i.e. "to place oneself at a point of vantage".

VUKULA

986. Ku vukula hi mbyana (to be barked at by a dog) i.e. "to be offended by an insignificant person".
987. Ku vukula tshuka (to bark at an anthheap) i.e. (i) "to labour in vain", (ii) "to advise a worthless person".

VULAVULA

988. Ku vulavula hi mahlo (to speak with the eyes) i.e. "to communicate by means of gestures".
989. Ku vulavula hi mbilu (to speak with the heart) i.e. "to ponder silently over a matter".

990. Ku vulavula hi milomu mimbirhi (to speak with two mouths) i.e. "to dissimulate".
991. Ku vulavula marhobyatana (to speak soft porridge) i.e. "to speak nonsense".
992. Ku vulavula matshopetana (to speak soft porridge) i.e. "to speak nonsense".
993. Ku vulavula miharihari (to speak naughtiness) i.e. "to speak nonsense".
994. Ku vulavula munhu (to speak a person) i.e. "to chastise a person".
995. Ku vulavula ndzanyule (to speak mischief) i.e. "to speak rudely".
996. Ku vulavula ni ribye (to speak with a stone) i.e. "to speak with an obstinate person".
997. Ku vulavulela (to speak for) i.e. (i) "to defend", (ii) "to speak in place of".
998. Ku vulavulela hansi (to speak for down) i.e. "to speak softly".
999. Ku vulavulela henhla (to speak for up) i.e. "to shout".
1000. Ku vulavulela tindleveni (to speak in the ears) i.e. "to speak in the presence of".

VUPHUKUPHUKU

1001. Vuphukuphuku bya huku (the stupidity of a fowl) i.e. down-right stupidity".

VURHONGO

1002. Vurhongo bya rifu (deathlike sleep) i.e. "a very deep sleep".

VUSIKU

1003. Vusiku ni nhlikanhi (day and night) i.e. "all the time".

VUTLHARI

1004. Vutlhari bya mpfundla (the wisdom of a hare) i.e. "great cunning".
1005. Vutlhari bya le nhompfini (the wisdom in the nose) i.e. "superficial cleverness".

VUTOMI

1006. Vutomi byo lombu (borrowed life) i.e. "poor in health".

WA

1007. Ku wa (to fall) i.e. "to fall from grace".
1008. Ku wa hubyeni (to fall in court) i.e. "to be declared guilty in court".
1009. Ku wa emungomeni (to fall at the witch-doctor) i.e. "to be declared a witch".
1010. Ku wa hanshi hi matsolo (to fall down with the knees) i.e. "to beg for mercy".
1011. Ku wa hi khwiri (to fall with the stomach) i.e. "to fail dismally".
1012. Ku wa hi mombo (to fall with the forehead) i.e. "to be disgraced".
1013. Ku wa hi ndlala (to fall with hunger) i.e. "to starve".
1014. Ku wa hi rimhondzo (to fall with the horns) i.e. "in great abundance".

1015. Ku wa hi rivambu rin'we (to fall with one rib)
i.e. "to give up without a struggle".
1016. Ku wa mbilu (to fall the heart) i.e. "to cool
down".
1017. Ku wa u pfuka (to fall and rise) i.e. "to per-
severe".
1018. Ku wela mitweni (to fall into thorns) i.e.
"to get into trouble".
1019. Ku wela kheleni (to fall into a hole) i.e. "to
fall into a trap".
1020. Ku wela enon'wini wa nghala (to fall into the
mouth of the lion) i.e. "to fall into the
hands of an enemy".
1021. Ku wela etimbiteni (to fall into the pots) i.e.
"to be addicted to intoxicating drink".
1022. Ku wela hi hele eswakudiyeni (to have the cock-
roach fall in one's food) i.e. "to be pro-
voked".
1023. Ku wela hi rifuwo (to be fallen on by riches)
i.e. "to become rich".
1024. Ku wela hi tilo (to be fallen on by heaven)
i.e. "to come to grief".
1025. Ku wela munhu (to fall on a person) i.e. "to
take a person by surprise".
1026. Ku wela ndlela (to fall on the way) i.e. "to
start on a journey".
1027. Ku wela-wela (to fall-fall)i.e. "to lead a
frivolous life".

WONGA

1028. Ku wonga njiya (to trail a locust) i.e. "to spy on a person".

YA

1029. Ku ya ehansi ni le henhla (to go up and down) i.e. "to leave no stone unturned".
1030. Ku ya hala ni hala (to go this way and that) i.e. "to leave no stone unturned".
1031. Ku ya ku yile (to go and be gone) i.e. "for ever and ever".
1032. Ku ya naro (to go with it) i.e. "to go mad".
1033. Ku ya ni vurhongo (to go with sleep) i.e. "to fall fast asleep".

YIMA

1034. Ku yima hi milenge (to stand with the legs) i.e. "to be in a hurry".
1035. Ku yima hi nhloko (to stand with the head) i.e. "to be topsy-turvy".
1036. Ku yima tindleve (to stand ears) i.e. "to be amazed".
1037. Ku yima-yima (to stand-stand) i.e. (i) "to cure". (ii) "to thrash".
1038. Ku yimela (to stand for) i.e. (i) "to defend", (ii) "to replace".
1039. Ku yimisa ntshiva (to cause the mane to stand) i.e. "to show aggression".
1040. Ku yimisa ncila (to cause the tail to stand) i.e. "to run away".

1041. Ku tiyima-yima (to stand-stand oneself) i.e.
"to get oneself ready".

YIMBA

1042. Ku yimba ngoma (to sing the drum) i.e. "to ex-
perience difficulties".
1043. Ku yimbelela risimu ra chela (to sing the song
of a frog) i.e. "to harp on the same string".

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