THE ROLE OF BIBLE TRANSLATION IN ENHANCING XITSONGA CULTURAL IDENTITY

by

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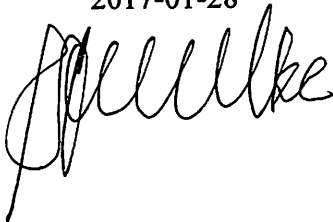DATE SUBMITTED: 2 FEBRUARY 2017

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DECLARATION

I, Mbhanyele Jameson Maluleke (student number 2008141174), declare that the thesis hereby submitted for the qualification Philosophiae Doctor in Bible Translation in the Faculty of Theology at the University of the Free State, Bloemfontein, South Africa, is my own independent work and that I have not previously submitted the same for qualification at/in another university/faculty.

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ABSTRACT

The Vatsonga are an ethnic group composed of a large number of clans found in South Africa, Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Swaziland. Xitsonga (the language of the Vatsonga) is spoken in all four of these countries. In South Africa alone, Xitsonga is a language spoken by over two million first language speakers and is one of the official languages of the country. This study investigates the ways in which Bible translation has enhanced Xitsonga cultural identity. The focus is on the 1929 and the 1989 editions of the Xitsonga Bible. The research question is: In what way(s) did the Xitsonga Bible translations recreate, rearrange and reshape Vatsonga cultural identity?

The theoretical and methodological frameworks for the research are Nord's functionalist approach to translation studies, Descriptive Translation Studies and Baker's Narrative Frame Theory. The theoretical background of the concept of identity and the relationship of language and translation to identity will lead to a detailed examination of the socio-cultural framework of the Xitsonga Bible translations. The social, cultural and linguistic features of Vatsonga cultural identity are described, especially their cultural identity prior to the arrival of the missionaries. The historical framework of the Xitsonga Bible translations are described from the earliest encounters with the Portuguese to the pivotal arrival of the Swiss missionaries in the latter part of the 19th century and their early efforts to translate the Bible into Xitsonga. Extensive archival materials are also examined for the insights that they can provide on the historical, ideological and theological background of the Xitsonga Bible translations.

Both the 1929 and the 1989 Xitsonga Bible translations receive a thorough examination and analysis using the analytical methods of Descriptive Translation Studies and Frame Theory. Frames examined include the organisational frame which includes the translation process, the translation teams, the prestige of the translation and social pressures accompanying the translation. The linguistic and translation frames, which include translation strategies, the use of loan words, the derivations of new words, and explicitation, will also be examined.

The major findings elucidate the ways in which the two Xitsonga Bible translations enhanced cultural identity. The first Xitsonga Bible translation (1929) played a role in empowering and legitimising colonialism and paved the way for submissive colonial faith within the Vatsonga society. The translation made extensive use of loan words from neighbouring African languages, especially Sesotho, as well as from the colonial languages spoken in South Africa (English and Afrikaans), but not from French (the language of the Swiss missionaries). In this way, the translation enhanced the vocabulary inventory of Xitsonga by expanding the range of items which can be described in the language. Some indigenous words referring to traditional religious practices and practitioners were avoided, thus promoting the colonial Christianity of the missionaries. Most importantly, the 1929 version united the diverse sub-units of the Vatsonga people around a single translation of the Bible. Thus, the 1929 translation assisted in the creation of identity through the unification of its readers around a single translation.

In contrast to the 1929 Xitsonga Bible translation, the 1989 Xitsonga Bible translation strengthened the cultural identity of Xitsonga by utilising not only indigenous cultural terms of Xitsonga, but also by utilising and coining natural Xitsonga equivalents, and by utilising Xitsonga first-language speakers as translators. The 1989 version also differs from the 1929 version in its Dynamic Equivalence approach through the direct influence of Eugene Nida. The standardisation and simplification of the orthographic system for writing Xitsonga and the harmonisation of dialectal variants served to strengthen and unify Xitsonga as a language, thus further strengthening cultural identity.

Keywords

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DEDICATION

Dedicated to wanhwana wa mina, Vuyani Millicent N'wa-Maluleke na hahani wa yena Masingita Sophia N'wa-McKenzie.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

BFBS   British and Foreign Bible Society

BT   Bible translation

DTS   Descriptive Translation Studies

EPCSA   Evangelical Presbyterian Church in South Africa (name of the Swiss Mission Church in South Africa since 1982)

NT   New Testament

OT   Old Testament

PEMS   Paris Evangelical Mission Society

SAJBD   South African Jewish Board of Deputies

SMCSA   Swiss Mission Church in South Africa

SL   Source Language

TL   Target Language

TPC   Tsonga Presbyterian Church

TS   Translation Studies

UFS   University of the Free State

ZAR   Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek (now the provinces of North-West, Gauteng, Limpopo and Mpumalanga of the Republic of South Africa)

ZCC   Zion Christian Church

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INTRODUCTION

1.1   Background

The Vatsonga are an ethnic group composed of a large number of clans found in several African states.[1] The reason for the dispersal is historical – it began when European powers created African nation states (see Dyrness 1990:38). After the demarcation of Africa, the Vatsonga in homesteads, farms, villages and communities found themselves in different nations – in South Africa, Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Swaziland. This cultural area (land/country) of the Vatsonga is known as Vutsonga. Xitsonga (the language of the Vatsonga) is spoken in all four of these countries. In South Africa alone, Xitsonga is a language spoken by over two million first language speakers which is 4.4% of the total population (Census 2001, Van der Merwe and Van der Merwe 2006:57). Approximately 60% of all Xitsonga speakers live in the traditional Vutsonga of the Limpopo Province (belonging to the former Gazankulu bantustan), while 25% reside in the Gauteng metropolitan areas (Van der Merwe and Van der Merwe 2006:57). The slight southerly shift confirms the influence of the big cities on migration processes in the region.

Xitsonga has two version of the Bible and it boasts of official status as a national language South Africa. Although Xitsonga belongs to the South Eastern Group of Africa's Bantu Language family, it is not directly related linguistically to the other nine official black African languages of South Africa (viz. isiZulu, isiXhosa, Sesotho [Southern Sotho], Setswana, Ndebele, Northern Sotho, Swati, Tshivenda). Three of these are Nguni languages (isiZulu, isiXhosa, Swati) and three are Sotho-Tswana languages (Northern Sotho, Sesotho and Setswana). Xitsonga, Ndebele and Tshivenda are not related to each other or to the other sub-groups.

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[1] The term *Vatsonga* refers to persons (plural) whose language is *Xitsonga*. The term *Mutsonga* is used for an individual person. *Vutsonga* refers to the cultural area (land/country) of the Vatsonga. The Xitsonga prefixes (*Va-* to refer to persons, *Mu-* to refer to an individual, *Xi-* to refer to a language or culture, and *Vu-* to refer to a cultural area) will be used in connection with other ethnic terms throughout the thesis.

Like any other modern society, the identity of the Vatsonga has been shaped by a number of different forces. This research project examines the Xitsonga Bible translation of 1929 (which is a revision of the original 1907 version) and the Xitsonga Bible translation of 1989 (consisting of the 1975 version of *Testamente Leyintshwa* ["New Testament"] and the 1989 version of the Old Testament) as two significant forces that influenced and shaped the cultural identity of the Vatsonga.

The arrival in the early ninetites of the "new dispensation" in South Africa (i.e., the abolishment of apartheid) also necessitates the study of the Vatsonga society as it struggled to retain its identity amidst a dynamic, ever-changing cultural context caused by globalisation. Theologians, historians, and other social scientists have thoroughly studied the Vatsonga, its culture and identity as described in part in section 1.4 below as well as in subsequent chapters. However, the foundational role of Xitsonga Bible translation for the shaping of the identity of the Vatsonga as a field of study has yet to witness a thorough investigation by Xitsonga first-language scholars. This research intends to make a contribution in this area.

1.2   Research Problem and Objectives

The research question is: In what ways have the Xitsonga Bible translations recreated, rearranged and reshaped Vatsonga cultural identity? From analysing the problem and studying the literature of the history of Bible translation, it seems that the best approach is historical. This study seeks to investigate the role played by Bible translations in transforming, reshaping and recreating Vatsonga cultural identity. There have been many texts translated in Xitsonga literature such as D.C. Marivate's *David Livingstone* (1941), Baloyi's *Ku hluvuka ku huma evuhlongeni* and *Julius Caesar* (1957) to mention only a few (see 7.3.5.2 for a more extensive description); however, this research project concerns the translations of the Bible since the Bible was the first text to be translated in Xitsonga (see section 4.3.4). The first books of the New Testament, the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles were published in 1892. Genesis and Exodus, the first books of the Old Testament, were published in 1896. These books were the precursors of the first complete version of the Bible published in 1907 which would later form the basis for the 1929 translation.

Humans are social creatures and historical actors who must be understood as having an identity. Like any other socio-cultural construct, Xitsonga Bible translations did not originate impulsively from a vacuum. Each translation has its own origin, its life story which gives a picture of how it came into being, developed and thrived to its contemporary usages. "Social

forms," according to Williamson et al. (1982:240), "do not appear spontaneously and automatically. Every element of a society – from an individual to the complex organization – has a biography, a life history. We cannot escape the judgment that these elements are a product of the past." Just as "social forms" have a biography, Xitsonga Bible translation has its own biography – a life history which this study is eager to explore. The significance of the history of Bible translation as a means to understand an event, phenomenon, a person's background, cannot be overemphasised. In this thesis, the Xitsonga Bible translation and its subsequent influence on Xitsonga identity are studied. Specifically, the study seeks to unravel the ways in which Bible translation has greatly impacted on the formation of the Vatsonga's identity as a linguistic-cultural group.

1.3   Hypothesis, Conceptualisation and Research Methodology

A descriptive translation studies approach is used to trace the identity of the Vatsonga. This research is informed by the research of Gentzler (2008), Naudé (2005, 2008), Harries (2007) and Baker (2006).

The nature of identity as a concept is elusive and complex and it is not easy to pin down. Gentzler (2008:141, 179) maintains that translation provides access to the understanding of identity. According to Gentzler, translation is a primary tool in the construction of identity. Translation and identity are an inseparable pair. In this case, the uniqueness of a community or an ethnic group such as the Xitsonga speech community can be understood through translation – a crucial instrument in identity formation. Gentzler argues that translation is one of the primary means by which identity is constructed; translation is capable of establishing those very cultures. Although he is concerned primarily with the United States, which was also once colonised, his research can be used to illuminate similar experiences encountered by the Vatsonga society in Southern Africa. For example, his work highlights the cultural role translation policies play in discriminatory processes and their consequences such as social marginalisation, loss of identity and psychological trauma.

Naudé (2005, 2008) demonstrates how the translation strategies that were utilised in the 1933 Afrikaans Bible translation (revised in 1953) supported the views of the architects of a separate development policy to invigorate the Afrikaners' racial group identity, to emphasise and justify racial and national diversity amongst South Africans, to glorify apartheid. In this way, Afrikaner beliefs and myths that, like the Israelites in the old Biblical times, the Afrikaner nation was also chosen by God were reinforced. Naudé demonstrated that it was the nature of

the social righteousness vocabulary utilised in the new 1983 Afrikaans Bible translation which changed the Afrikaners' mind-set and their perception of the racial problems in the country. Similarly, this research project will explore the hypothesis that the first Xitsonga Bible Translation (1929) played a role in empowering and legitimising colonialism and paving the way for submissive colonial faith within the Vatsonga society as shown by the many loan terms from dominant languages, namely English, Afrikaans and Sesotho (section 5.5.1). In contrast to the 1929 Xitsonga Bible translation the role of the 1989 Xitsonga Bible translation is to strengthen the cultural identity of Xitsonga itself by utilising not only indigenous cultural terms of Xitsonga (section 6.5.4), but also to indigenise the Bible translation by utilising and coining natural Xitsonga equivalents (section 6.5.5).

Harries's (2007) view on how ethnicity is constructed will also be utilised to reinforce the analysis of the development of the Xitsonga language and Vatsonga ethnic identity.

The Narrative Frame theory of Baker (2006) will be utilised to describe the socio-cultural frame, the historical frame and the organisational frame (the source text, translators and translation process). The description is based on historical and qualitative methods. These include archival research, especially the archives of the Swiss Mission at the University of Witwatersrand (Johannesburg), the archives of the Bible Society of South Africa (Bellville, Cape Town), the Giyani Archives (Giyani) and the Archives Library at UNISA (Pretoria). The materials collected include reports, minutes, memoranda, letters, documents, presentations, journals, letters, maps, photographs, legal texts, biblical versions and drafts of translations. Numerous interviews and correspondence were conduct with scholars (linguists, translators, historians and ethnographers) and members of the language communities to confirm the limited amount of literature available in this regard.

Defining narratives as public and personal stories that "we subscribe to and that guide our behaviour", Baker mode by which humans experience the world. Thus argues that the notion of narrative has attracted much attention in a variety of disciplines and has accordingly been defined in a variety of ways. She conceives narrative as the principal and inescapable, human knowledge is the result of numerous crosscutting story-lines in which social actors locate themselves. Baker's narrative theory assumes that no one stands outside all narratives and that narrative constitutes reality rather than merely representing it. That is, for Baker, narrative is not just a form for representing, but constitutes reality itself.

As stated in section 1.1 above, the study seeks to elucidate and examine the Xitsonga Bible Translations – the 1929 and 1989 versions respectively. Historically, translation studies has long been normative, that is, telling translators how to translate, to the point that discussions of translation that were not normative were generally not considered to be about translation at all. However, given new developments in translation studies, one should not evaluate a translation normatively but rather describe it (also see Naudé 2005). Thus, the representation consists of the linguistically inscribed preferences of the translator(s) concerning the choice and construction of discourses in Bible translation. Both the 1929 and 1989 versions of the Xitsonga Bible translations are analysed and explained with respect to the ways in which particular cultural, political and religious identities were formed. The context of the translation, its source text, the translation team, the translation process and the sociocultural impact of the translations are considered.

1.4   Significance of the Study

It is against this background that this study seeks to dwell on the history of Xitsonga Bible translations in order to discover more about the Vatsonga as a socio-cultural unit. The study will demonstrate how the Bible translations served to standardise and develop the Xitsonga language and the effect of language development on the identity of the Vatsonga. The study will also contrast the two Bible translations in Xitsonga in terms of their socio-cultural and linguistic frames and their differing contributions to Vatsonga culture, society, and ultimately, identity. It was through translation that a multi-faceted and diverse ethnic group such as the Vatsonga was able to attain its modern selfhood or identity.

Previous research by theologians, historians and other social scientists of Vatsonga, its culture and identity which are incorporated into and on which this study is built to provide a coherent viewpoint include the following:

1) Schneider (1990) offers an engaging account and instances on how to "sharpen wisdom forms and sentences" (proverbs) of the Old Testament. The linguist Bill (1984) presents various historical aspects of the Vatsonga's socio-cultural life. Theologian Maluleke (1994) writes an illuminating article in which he provides a brief account of the arrival of the Swiss Mission, their first interaction with the Vatsonga and their self-tailored *Hosi* (Chief) Joaoa Albasini. Maluleke also recounts the missionaries' evangelical activities which culminated in the establishment of Valdezia – a mission station that was later to become the nucleus of the Vatsonga's modern civilisation.

2) Maluleke's doctoral thesis, "A Morula Tree: The Commentary of Selected Tsonga Writers on Mission Christianity" (1995), provides important commentary on mission Christianity from the African perspective. By introducing African voices in the form of selected Xitsonga writers, Maluleke gives a fresh approach to the study of mission Christianity. Maluleke contends that a commentary by selected Xitsonga writers is as "valid and authoritative" as that of a researcher. In his view, total reliance on missionary records and documents produces a skewed and distorted historical account of both mission history and the Vatsonga's cultural identity. By skilfully contrasting a vibrant, dynamic Christian with a docile, submissive Christian, Maluleke succeeds in exposing the folly of what mission Christianity referred to as the virtues of humility and modesty. Significantly, Maluleke suggests that an individual can become a Christian while remaining an African.

3) The historian Harries (2007) provides a detailed account of the Swiss missionaries' contribution towards the creation of the Vatsonga's new identity. Harries argues that the Swiss missionaries achieved this by sowing new religion, ideas and practices amongst the local people, who in turn, incorporated these provisions into their socio-cultural life.

4) Educationist Masumbe (2002) surveys the Swiss missionaries' management of social transformation in South Africa (1873-1976). He focuses mainly on the management of schools, hospitals and churches as the primary institutions of social change in society.

5) In a recently published voluminous text, Halala & Mthebule (2014) trace and clarify the origins of the settlements in South Africa. Since the origin of the Vatsonga is deeply intertwined with the Swiss missionaries' exploits in South Africa, the two authors devote several chapters to the Swiss mission and their evangelical work.

6) The study is also informed by the essays in the seminal collection edited by Beerle-Moor & Voinov (2015) entitled *Language Vitality through Bible Translation*. This volume focuses on the revitalisation, preservation and development of local languages through Bible translation. The text encompasses a mosaic of case studies by scholars around the world who are ardently engaged in promoting the vitality of local languages. The book offers a wealth of activities performed by Bible translation projects backed by Bible translation organisations such the United Bible Societies, SIL International,

the Institute for Bible Translation in Russia, Pioneer Bible Translators, The Seed Company and the American Bible Society.

However, as stated in 1.1, the role of the Xitsonga Bible translations in laying the foundation for identity as a field of study has yet to witness a thorough investigation by Xitsonga first language scholars. It is against this background that this study seeks to dwell on the history of Xitsonga Bible translations to find out more about the development of the Vatsonga as a socio-cultural unit.

Lastly, the research project aims to broaden Bible translation as an academic field and to contribute to its growth and development. It will also provide important information about one of the official languages of South Africa and its role in forging ethnic identity. The study has important implications for other minority ethnic groups and their struggle to develop and maintain identity in a multi-cultural society.

1.5   Outline of the Study

The chapters proceed as follows.

Chapter 2 provides the theoretical and methodological framework for the study with particular attention to Descriptive Translation Studies, Frame Theory and the importance of culture for translation studies.

Chapter 3 provides a theoretical background to the concept of cultural identity and examines in detail the socio-cultural framework of the Xitsonga Bible translations with attention to the social, cultural and linguistic features of Vatsonga. Chapter 4 provides the historical framework of the Xitsonga Bible translations from the earliest encounters with the Portuguese to the pivotal arrival of the Swiss missionaries in the latter part of the 19th century.

Chapter 5 examines the 1929 Xitsonga Bible translation as a successor of the earliest translations of the Bible beginning in the 19th century, using the analytical methods of Descriptive Translation Studies and Frame Theory.

Chapter 6 examines the 1989 Xitsonga Bible translation as a completely new Dynamic Equivalence translation accomplished through the direct influence of Eugene Nida. The analysis in this chapter also makes use of Descriptive Translation Studies and Frame Theory.

Chapter 7 compares and contrasts the two main Xitsonga Bible translations in terms of their translation approach and strategies as well as their contribution to the formation of Xitsonga cultural identity.

Chapter 8 provides the conclusions to the study.

CHAPTER 2
THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1   Introduction

This chapter seeks to offer a review of the developments in contemporary translation studies (TS) in order to present the theoretical and methodological framework for the thesis. The review will not be comprehensive, but will be in the form of a historical survey which will primarily focus on major theoretical approaches to contextualise this study. Complete representations of the theoretical framework are available in inter alia Gentzler (2008), Munday (2012), Pym (2010), and Venuti (2012) and will not be repeated here. The same pertains to the historical framework which is represented inter alia in Delisle and Woodsworth (1995, 2012), McElduff and Sciarrino (2011), Noss (2007) and Robinson (1997). Some pioneers and exponents behind translation theories and relevant approaches will be taken into account.

Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS) and Frame Theory are given special prominence in this survey, partly because of the enormous influence and intensity they have exerted on the research field, but chiefly because they constitute the backbone of the arguments of this thesis. DTS is a target-oriented, empirical translation approach which is not judgmental and refuses to draw prescriptive or normative conclusions. In other words, rather than prescribe what a good translation should be like, DTS tries to simply describe what existing translations are like. These approaches have tremendous implications to the analysis, description and explanation of the nature of Xitsonga Bible translations.

This chapter is organised as follows. Section 2.2 surveys pre-linguistic approaches to translation; these approaches are relevant to the first Xitsonga Bible translation. Section 2.3 introduces linguistic approaches to translation, especially the ground-breaking work of Nida which is important to the second Xitsonga Bible translation. Section 2.4 describes functionalist approaches to translation and the notion of *skopos* (from the Greek word meaning "purpose" or "aim"), which shows how cultural factors such as intentionality and ideology are incorporated into the translation during the translation process. Section 2.5 handles various aspects of Descriptive Translation Studies, including a general description of polysystem theory, the cultural turn and its link to power and frame theory. These sections provide the

framework for the detailed analysis, description and explanation concerning how the two Xitsonga translations shaped culture in chapters 5 and 6. Section 2.6 provides the conclusions.

2.2   Pre-linguistic Approaches to Translation

The study of the field of translation developed into an academic discipline only in the latter part of the twentieth century. The era before this development in the history of translation is labelled by Newmark (1981:4) as "the pre-linguistic period of translation."

Munday (2012:13) points out that the activity of translation has long been established in recorded history. Although records about translation activity in the secular world were very scarce, in religious circles metatexts about translation activity were kept. Such a metatext is, for example, the Aristeas Writing (or Book of Aristeas) which is related to the early translation of the Pentateuch of the Hebrew Bible into Greek which was produced from the third century BCE onwards in Alexandria (see Naudé 2009a and 2009b). According to the Aristeas Writing, the Septuagint was produced as a result of a state commission under the ruler of Egypt, either Ptolemy I Soter (325-285 BCE) or his son, Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285-246 BCE), for the library at Alexandria on account of intellectual curiosity (Attias 2015: 12-17). In contrast to freer translation styles of other books of the Septuagint which were translated at later stages, the Greek Pentateuch exhibits a word-for-word translation. The Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible (the Septuagint) was adopted by the Greek-speaking sector of the early Church who made a diligent effort to communicate its message in many different languages to a multitude of cultures so that Christianity could spread beyond its birthplace in the Middle East (Sanneh 2008:33), for example into Latin, Syriac, Coptic, Armenian, Georgian, Gothic, Slavonic, together emphasising the centrality of translation in early Christianity. The need for enhanced comprehension of biblical content arose again in the late Middle Ages (about 1500) with the advent of the Protestant Reformation, which led *inter alia* to the German Luther Version, the King James Version or Authorised Version and the Dutch Authoritative version. The founding of the British and Foreign Bible Society in 1804 and the Summer Institute of Linguistics in the USA in 1934 introduced a new phase in Bible translation with the goal to translate the Bible into every language group (Batalden *et al* 2004). The explosive expansion of Christianity in Africa and Asia during the last two centuries has led to extensive activity of Bible translation. These endeavours were primarily conceptualised and executed by missionary societies or Bible societies (Etherington 2005).

When discussing the various ways of translating texts, Munday (2012:30) and Venuti (2012:13-16) show that historians of translation studies trace early Western thought about translation back to the first century BCE Roman rhetorician and politician Marcus Tullius Cicero (106-43 BCE) who translated Greek speeches of the fourth century BCE Attic orators Aeschines (390-330 BCE) and Demosthenes (384-322 BCE) into Latin to improve his oratory abilities. According to Munday (ibid.), Cicero's distinction between word-for-word translation and a translation which kept the same ideas and forms, including the figures of thought and style, in a language which conforms to contemporary usage constitutes what St Jerome (342-420 CE) ended up calling sense-for-sense translation. In other words, one must not only consider the words, but also the sense when translating the Bible into Latin (also see Bassnett-McGuire 1980:43). However, Venuti (2012:15) states that Jerome's examples from the Gospels include renderings of the Old Testament that do not merely express the 'sense' but rather fix it by imposing a Christian interpretation on the text. The same effect can be seen on the later Bible translations of the pre-linguistic era. One example is the Bible translation of Martin Luther. As demonstrated by Naudé (2012:343-344), Luther played a pivotal role in the Reformation while, linguistically, his use of a regional yet socially broad dialect went a long way toward reinforcing that form of the German language as standard (You must ask the mother at home, the children in the street. The ordinary man in the market and look at their mouths, how they speak, and translate that way; then they'll understand and see that you're speaking to them in German). Luther follows St Jerome in rejecting a word-for-word translation strategy since it would be unable to convey the same meaning as the source text and such a translation would sometimes be incomprehensible (Naudé 2012:343). Martin Luther was accused of altering the Holy Scriptures in his translations, especially in his addition of the word *allein* (alone/only) in the translation of Paul's words in Romans 3:28 (Naudé 2012:344). He defended himself in his famous *Sendbrief vom Dolmetschen* (Circular Letter on Translation) which dates from 1530, that is, between the publication of Luther's translation of the New Testament in 1522 and that of the Old Testament in 1534. Luther's circular letter included a wealth of other information concerning the task of translation to justify his translation. Naudé (2012:344) summarised Luther's justification in the circular as follows:

> He was translating from the original Greek text and not other translations (i.e. the Latin) into pure, clear German, where *allein* would be used for emphasis. He discussed the essential traits of the ideal translator, including the translator's qualifications, background knowledge, diligence, sensitivity, intelligence, a wide vocabulary, and

patience. He described the nit-picking criticism and ingratitude faced by translators. He described the personal, subjective nature of translations and the impossibility of literal translation. He emphasized the importance of translations sounding like originals with natural speech rhythms and the necessity of translating idioms and sensitivity to the various connotations of different words in different languages and cultures. He acknowledged the necessity of sometimes comprising style for meaning and advocated for the importance of meaning in context, that is, the correct interpretation.

New developments in the theory and practice of Bible translation by Eugene A. Nida and his colleagues of the American Bible Society and the United Bible Societies (see next section) focused on making accessible the plain meaning intended in the source texts by means of a scientific method (Nida and Taber 1974), which introduced the science of translation.

focused on making plain the meaning intended in the source text.."

2.3   Linguistic Approaches to Translation

Munday (2012:15) remarks that a "more systematic, linguistic-oriented, approach to the study of translation began to emerge in the 1950s and 1960s." Similarly, Naudé (2002:45) adds that "in the time span between the fifties and the seventies translation studies formed an integral part of applied and general linguistics which was seen as the sole source of translation studies."

It is in this period in the history of translation that linguistic scholars formulated and developed theories that were to change the face of translation studies. Prominent among these scholars was the American linguist Eugene Nida (1941-2011) who rose to prominence for the influence he exerted on and for contributions to translation studies. He is best known for the concept of dynamic equivalence, which was renamed functional equivalence in later years. His sapiential wealth was also shared in South Africa when he came on a regular basis beginning in 1973 to launch a series of Bible translation projects, which later saw the revision of Bible translations in almost every indigenous language.

Nida's theories on equivalence came to prominence twenty years after he had begun working in the 1940s. In the 1960s he published two technical volumes describing translation entitled *Towards a Science of Translating* (1964) and *The Theory and Practice of Translation* (1969).

Dynamic equivalence appeared for the first time in chapter eight of his text, *Toward a Science of Translating* (1964), under the heading "Two Basic Orientations in Translating" (Nida 1964:159-160):

> Since there are, properly speaking, no such things as identical equivalents one must in translating seek to find the closest possible equivalent. However, there are fundamentally two different types of equivalence: one which may be called formal and another which is primarily dynamic.

While dynamic equivalence can be used to translate any text, it was developed by Nida particularly as a theory for translating the Bible. For Nida, dynamic equivalence is an approach in which the message of the original text has been so transported into the receptor language that the response of the receptor is essentially like that of the original receptors. In other words, the translator should find the nearest natural equivalent in the target language in order to translate in such a way that the effect of the translation on the target reader is roughly the same as the effect of the source text once was on the source reader. Dynamic equivalence strives for the readability of the translation rather than the preservation of the original grammatical structure.

In a striking contrast to dynamic equivalence, formal equivalence focuses attention on the message itself, in both form and content. That is, it tends to preserve the lexical details and grammatical structure of the original language. Formal equivalence can be more suitable for translating poetic texts where a translator is concerned with word-for-word and sentence-for-sentence rendering of the text to be translated; the message in the receptor language should closely match the message in the source language. This translation approach is a typical "gloss translation" in that the translator strives to reproduce the literal and meaningful form and content of the original text. Other scholars that contributed to research in this area are Catford (1965) and House (1977/1981).

One of the weaknesses of the formal equivalence theory is that translation is perceived merely as a transfer of information from one language to another, that is, as an activity that affects just the two languages involved. It concerns itself with the reproduction of the message in the target language that is equivalent to that of the source text. However, Nida's pivotal role was in moving translation away from word-for-word equivalence as Munday explains (2012:68): "His introduction of the concepts of formal and dynamic equivalence was crucial in a receptor-based or a (reader-based) orientation to translation theory."

The salient feature of translation in the pre-linguistic and linguistic eras was that it displayed normative and prescriptive evaluations (see Naudé 2005 and Munday 2012). Translation practice was the pursuit of a chosen educated few. For this reason, it was not idly practiced. Another handicap was that translation did not have its own educational infrastructure. There were no specific schools to give classes, therefore each learner practiced it as a hobby or informally through prior linguistic training.

2.4   Functionalist Approaches to Translation

The functionalist approach to translation was developed in opposition to Nida's linguistic-based approach. The functionalist approach views the source text as determinative of the nature of the target text. According to Vermeer (1987:29), "linguistics alone is not effective because translation itself is not merely nor primarily a linguistic process." Translation scholars such as Reiss and Vermeer (1984, 1991), Vermeer (1978, 1989, 1996) and Nord (1997, 2005) developed functionalism as an approach to Translation Studies. Its birth was accelerated by the publication in German of Katharina Reiss and Hans Vermeer's *Foundation for a General Theory of Translation* and Justa Holz-Manttari's *Translatorial Action: Theory and Method*, both in 1984.

Articulating the functionalist approach to translation, Nord (2001:151) posits that it must be understood as a "purposeful activity" determined by the translation brief (cf. Nord 1997). This means that a translation process is not something that simply "happens." Instead, translation should be viewed as a communicative action in which a translator, an expert in intercultural communication, acts as a text producer in carrying out some communicative purpose, which is determined by the translation brief. The role of receivers of the communication is played by readers, who must be satisfied clients with respect to the translation.

Munday (2001:79) relates communicative purposes to *skopos* theory:

> Skopos theory focuses above all on the purpose of the translation, which determines the translation methods and strategies that are to be employed in order to produce a functionally adequate result. This result is the TT [=target text], which Vermeer calls the *translatum.* Therefore in skopos theory, knowing why an ST [=source text] is to be translated and what the function of the TT will be are crucial for the translator.

According to Naudé (2002:51),

> Hans Vermeer formulated his skopos theory in which function or aim (skopos) are key concepts. It is the intended function (skopos) of the target text which determines translation methods and strategies and not the function of the source text (Reiss & Vermeer 1984).

Vermeer argues that the source text is produced for a situation in the source culture which may not be the same in the target culture. Thus, one of the basic principles of a functionalist approach is that the function of a text in the target culture determines the method of translation.

In support of Vermeer's theory, Christiane Nord (2001:152) maintains that "a text is made meaningful by its receiver for its receiver. Different receivers (or even the same receiver at different times) find different meanings in the same linguistic material offered by the text. We might even say that a 'text' is as many texts as there are receivers of it." Nord (2005:32) further suggests:

> The skopos is not the only determining factor in translation, loyalty is necessary. Loyalty commits the translator bilaterally to the source text and target text situations: not to falsify the source text author's intentions and the target texts, regardless of the communicative intentions involved.

One of Nord's impassioned calls in functionalism is her call for an elaborate analysis of the translation brief and the source text before translation proper. She argues that the pre-translation analysis of the translation brief and source text helps in deciding "whether the translation project is feasible in the first place, which source text units are relevant to a functional translation, and which strategy will best produce a target text that meets the requirements of the brief" (1997:62).

According to Nord (1997:29), an advantage of a functionalist approach to Translation Studies is that it addresses the "eternal dilemmas of free as opposed to faithful translations." Similarly, Pym (2010:56) points out that "functionalist approaches liberate translation from theories that impose linguistic rules upon every decision."

The functionalist approach recognises that the translation process involves more than the source and target languages. The translation brief, which determines the skopos/intention of the translation, as well as the function of the translation in the target culture put the role of

cultural factors in the centre. The functionalist approach to translation represents a psychologically real process of the translation process in terms how translation is shaped by cultural factors of the source text as well as the target text to create an adequate translation. By utilising real examples of translations, these cultural factors within the translation process need to be described. In the following sections, a framework for description will be developed for this study.

2.5   Descriptive Translation Studies

2.5.1   Polysystem Theory

Naudé (2002:45) indicates that

> James Holmes (1988 [1972]:67-80) was the first to provide a framework for Translation Studies as a discipline and in doing so he divided it into two principal areas: on the one hand translation theory as well as the descriptive science of translation and on the other hand applied translation studies dealing with activities such as the training of translators and the provision of translation aids for translators as well as translation criticism and policy.

In the previous sections of this chapter the focus was on the first principal area, namely, translation theory. In this section and the others which follow, the focus will be on Descriptive Translation Studies. The role of postcolonial impact, resistance, gender, etc. will be described in this regard.

According to Pym (2010), the name "Descriptive Translation Studies" (with the capital letters) was never fully consecrated as such until Gideon Toury's book *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond* (1995; Spanish translation 2004). It has since become a flag of convenience for a loose flotilla of innovative scholars. Other names attributed to DTS are the Polysystem Approach, Manipulation School, the Tel Aviv Leuven Axis, the Descriptive, Empirical or Systematic School, or the Low Countries Group.

Toury's (1995) contributions to DTS are his proposals for the definition of the approach as descriptive-explanatory and interdisciplinary, the definition of the subject matter, and assumed translations as a result of a target-oriented approach. Toury emphasises the need to promote description studies claiming that "no empirical science can make a claim for completeness and (relative) autonomy unless it has a proper descriptive branch" (1995:1). With the objective of

empirical science in mind, Toury calls for "a systematic branch proceeding from clear assumptions and armed with a methodology and research techniques made as explicit as possible and justified within Translation Studies itself" (ibid. 1995:3).

As a result of Toury's advocacy, DTS aims at building an empirical descriptive discipline to fill one section of the Holmes map, namely, the idea that scientific methodology can be applicable to cultural products. When selecting texts to study, he draws attention to the fact that translations can be considered facets of the target culture only, as opposed to the source-culture context that is predominant in the equivalence paradigm (ibid. 1995:29).

Toury's other contributions include three types of norms. First, "initial norms" refers to the general choices made by translators. Second, "preliminary norms" concern "translation policy" and "directness of translation." Third, "operational norms" govern decisions about the textual make-up of the translated texts (ibid. 1995:56-58).

Despite the fact that DTS was started in the seventies, it still inspires research projects which seek to "delve into the translation as cultural and historical phenomena, to explore its context and its conditioning factors, to search for grounds that can explain why there is what there is" (Hermans 1995:5). DTS is now applied to literary translation, and part of this application is the theory of polysystems (Even-Zohar 1990) in which translated literature is seen as a sub-system of the receiving or target linguistic system.

The concepts of "manipulation" and "patronage" have also been developed in relation to literary translations. In the 1970s, a group of scholars including Raymond van den Broeck (Antwerp), Theo Hermans (Warwick and London), James Holmes (Amsterdam), Jose Lambert (Leuven), André Lefevere (Antwerp) and Gideon Toury (Tel Aviv) carried out new research on translation with a special focus on translated literature under the influence of Israeli scholar Even-Zohar's polysystem theory, as published in *Papers in Historical Poetics* (1979). The 1985 volume of essays entitled *The Manipulation of Literature* and edited by Theo Hermans heralded the new paradigm for the study of literary translation. It inspired the designation The Manipulation Group or School for a target-oriented approach, according to which "all translation implies a degree of manipulation of the source text for a certain purpose" (Hermans 1985:11), as a result either of intentional choice made by the translator or of target system constraints. The relationships between source and target texts can be described in terms of "translation shifts or manipulation."

According to this group of scholars, descriptive studies of translated literature must break the presupposition of the evaluative source-oriented "conventional approach to literary translation," based on the supremacy of the (naively romantic idea of the) "original" and the assumption of translation as a second hand and generally second-rate, error-prone and inadequate reproduction thereof.

2.5.2   The Cultural Turn and Its Link to Power

The Cultural Turn in Descriptive Translation Studies (see Snell-Hornby 1990) was pioneered by Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere (1990) as an alternative to linguistic-based theories associated with Nida. Munday (2012:192) notes:

> In the introduction to the collection of essays "Translation History and Culture" Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere dismissed the kind of linguistic theories of translation which they say have moved from word to text as unit, but not beyond (Bassnett and Lefevere 1990:4). Also dismissed are painstaking comparisons between originals and translations which do not consider the text in cultural environment.

Their rejection of language theories as the basis for translation allowed them to "focus on the interaction between translation and culture, on the way in which culture impacts and constrains translation and on the larger issues of context, history and conventions" (ibid:11). They examine the image of literature that is created by forms such as anthologies, commentaries, films, adaptations and translations, and the institutions that are involved in that process. Thus, the move from translation as text, to translation as culture and politics is what Mary Snell-Hornby (1990) in her paper in the same collection terms "the cultural turn." It is taken up by Bassnett and Lefevere "as a metaphor for this cultural move and serves to bind together the range of case studies in the collection" (Munday 2012:192). In the introduction of his book, Gentzler (2008:1) points to the fact that Bassnett and Lefevere suggest "that the translation studies scholar investigates what the 'exercise of power' means in terms of production of culture, of which the production of translations is a part (1990:5)."

Like all other approaches which broke away from Nida's theories, the cultural approach is oriented toward the target text and looks to DTS as its source of theories and methodologies. The cultural approach is best known for bringing the concept of "re-writing" and "manipulation" to TS. This is further explained by Bassnett and Lefevere in their general editors' preface of Venuti's work (1995:vii):

Translation is, of course, a rewriting of an original text. All rewritings, whatever their intention, reflect a certain ideology and a poetics and as such manipulate literature to function in a given society in a given way. Rewriting is manipulation, undertaken in the service of power, and in its positive aspect can help in the evolution of a literature and a society. Rewritings can introduce new concepts, new genres, new devices, and the history of translation is the history also of literary innovation, of the shaping power of one culture upon another. But rewriting can also repress innovation, distort and contain, and in an age of ever increasing manipulation of all kinds, the study of the manipulative processes of literature as exemplified by translation can help us toward a greater awareness of the world in which we live.

Munday (2012:193-194) explains that Lefevere focuses particularly on the examination of "very concrete factors" that systematically govern the reception, acceptance of or rejection of literary texts; that is, "issues such as power, ideology, institutions and manipulation" (Lefevere 1992:12). The people involved in such power positions are the ones Lefevere views as "rewriting literature and governing its consumption by the general public" (Munday 2012:193).

Lefevere (ibid:9) claims that "the same basic process of rewriting is at work in translation, historiography, anthologization, criticism and editing…. Translation is the most obviously recognizable type of rewriting, and … it is potentially the most influential because it is able to project the image of an author and/or those works beyond the boundaries of their culture of origin." Thus, translation functions within a literary system which is "controlled by two main factors: (1) professionals within the literary system, who partly determine the dominant poetics, and (2) patronage outside the literary system, which partly determine the ideology" (Munday 2012:194).

According to Gentzler (2008:10), "translation is most visible at the top (high international government and business echelons) and less visible at the bottom (poor, marginalised, ethnic minorities) and studies of translation generally focus on that visible corpus."

The development of the Cultural Turn as a translation approach has been taken up by Venuti (1995) who reveals how an ethnocentric target culture uses devices such as "fluency," "transparency" and "invisibility" to domesticate a foreign text, thereby consolidating and maintaining the dominance of the target culture. A chief proponent of a fair deal (read, foreignisation) in translation in the form of resistance or foreignising, Venuti (1995) has

developed two innovative translation strategies – domestication and foreignisation – which show how translation can be manipulated to achieve selfish ends.[1]

The two strategies may seem like binary opposition, but they are basic methods which function like a scale that measures the degree to which the translation of a text imitates the target culture. Venuti (1995:20) distinguishes "a domesticating method, an ethnocentric reduction of the foreign text to target-language cultural values, bringing the author back home, and a foreignising method, an ethnodeviant pressure on those values to register the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text, sending the roader abroad." He also addresses issues such as "fluency" as a translation strategy, as well as the notions of "transparency" and "ethics."

The notion of exploiting translation as an agent of manipulation has also been taken up by Gentzler (2008) who highlights the negative impact translation has in the construction of culture and identity if used discriminatively. In unpacking "the hidden multicultural history of the Americas," Gentzler (2008:10) demonstrates the crucial role translation has played in the construction of culture and identity. He emphasises the point that "translation pervades every aspect of United States culture, but also the strategically repressed translation plays a central role in the construction of culture and identity." The visibility of translation at the "top" implies that those in the corridors of power use translation to manipulate cultural identity for selfish ends. Gentzler is convinced that the manipulation of translation by the authorities in all states of the Americas is detrimental to the welfare of the general population, frustrates development, creates poverty and the feeling of worthlessness on the part of the minorities. He states further (ibid:9):

> One of the reasons why there is so much poverty and ghetorization in the culture of the United States is that the parts that do not fit – invariably of a different color, ethnicity, culture, and language – are often cast aside. Examples include Amerindians relegated to reservations, Chinese immigrants centralised in Chinatown, blacks impoverished in urban ghettoes, Latinos relegated to the barrios, and many ethnic minorities and non-English speakers, mostly men, incarcerated in a disproportionate fashion.

The cultural approach also includes postcolonial theory in Translation Studies, which is essentially a medium to explore the ravages of colonialism, and feminism, which is a form of

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[1] Foreignisation vs. domestication, a concept used by Lawrence Venuti and other translation scholars, should be credited to the German philosopher and theologian, Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834).

resistance to patriarchal heritage (see Snell-Hornby 2006). Bandia (2008, 2010) discusses writing as translation especially in the African context: postcolonial literature should be understood metaphorically as a form of translation. The language of colonisation is bent, twisted, or plied to capture and convey the worldview of an alien-dominated language and culture. Post-colonial literature thus requires interlingual translation. This links the cultural turn to power.

2.5.3 Frame Theory

In this section, the notion of frame theory, which serves as framework for this study and its linkage to power, will be discussed. Furthermore, its goals, significance and how it operates will also be outlined. The deliberations will gradually reveal framework theorists and advocates of the new discipline. However, exponents of narrative frames analysis such as Mona Baker (2007) will have preference. Post-colonial scholarship will also be investigated to reinforce the significance and pervasiveness in Baker's narrative frame analysis.

Revered by scholarship as the father of framing, Erving Goffman (1974) was a prominent linguist whose name is linked with the conception and subsequent introduction of frames as a field of study. Baker (2007) asserts that "the first, generally passive definition of frames is characteristic of the work of Erving Goffman, who argues that 'an individual's framing of activity establishes meaningfulness *for him*' (1974:345)." According to Berman (2014:1), "the concept of 'frame analysis' was originally conceived in the field of linguistics by Goffman (1974), who investigated meaning in grammatical constructions" (see also Wendland 2010).

In the ensuing years, Goffman's notion of frames grew to spread its wings to cover diverse fields in social sciences. Naudé (2002:46) draws attention to the fact that "especially from the eighties onwards, scholars of translation studies made use of frameworks and methodologies borrowed from other disciplines such as psychology, the theory of communication, literary theory, anthropology, philosophy and more recently cultural studies." In its later development, framework theory was seized by multitudes of scholars so that its identity came to be characterised by a myriad of colourful references such as "cognitive window," "cognitive schema," "mental eye" and "perception constructs." Needless to say, a detailed definition of frames is crucial here so as to curb any misconception and confusion that might chance in the mind of the readership. That is, readers may perceive the concept as a concrete entity, whereas the opposite is true. Wendland (2010) asserts:

The term frames might give the impression of something solid and immovable, but the frames of reference that I have in mind are quite different. Thus, for most people they are quite flexible, fluid, and contextually shaped; furthermore, they frequently merge and overlap with each other during the discussion of a more complex or abstract topic.

In his influential article, "A New Framework for Bible Translation," Wilt (2002:140-141) conceives of frameworks in the following manner:

Frameworks serve as points of reference to Bible societies, churches and translators interested in achieving the widest possible, effective and meaningful distribution of the Holy Scripture and helping people interact with the Word of God. Framework is interdisciplinary, and views translation as communication and its goal is to contribute to all people's appreciation of the Scriptures.

Quoting several scholars like Lakoff (2007), Katan (2004), Lippman (1921) and Minsky (1975), Wendland (2010) amassed various definitions of frames to boost the reader's understanding. For instance, he sees frames (of reference) as "human perception" (cf. Lakoff 2006). "Frames refer the static conceptual representation, or mental model." "Frames are cognitive clues that tell everyone how to understand what has occurred" (Lakoff 2001:24/47). Frames are a combination of prior knowledge, generalisations and expectations regarding the text (Katan 2004:169; see also Lippmann 1921). Calling them "scenarios frames," Minsky (1975) defines them as "mental structures representing stereotyped situations."

One of the outspoken advocates of frames theory, Mona Baker (2007) dismisses the first version of framing as "re-framing" and seeks rather to introduce "narrative frame analysis." Using the "context of the activist discourse" Baker (2007:151) argues that framing as developed from research on social movement is designed "to explore various ways in which translators and interpreters accentuate, undermine or modify contested aspects of the narrative(s) encoded in the source text or utterance."

She draws examples of what she labels as "re-framing" from two politically charged situations. One is the conflict in the Middle East, where translations between English and Arabic may re-frame the situation depending upon the political stance of the translator. A second is the 1977 situation in which Hong Kong became part of China, which is routinely described in English as *The Handover of Sovereignty* and in Chinese as *The Return to the Motherland* (Baker 2007:157).

Dissatisfied with "the way in which translators and interpreters reframe aspects of political conflicts and hence participate in the construction of social and political reality" Baker (2007:151) sets out to develop a frame theory that she refers to as narrative theory. "My choice of narrativity as a theoretical framework is motivated by a general dissatisfaction with existing theoretical notions that we tend to draw on in trying to explain the behaviour of translators and interpreters" (Baker 2007:151-152). According to Baker (2007), narratives are defined as the follows:

> Narratives are stories that we come to subscribe to – believe in or at least contemplate as potentially valid – and that therefore shape our behaviour towards other people and the events in which we are embedded. Narrative theory allows us to see social actors, including translators and interpreters, as real-life individuals rather than theoretical abstractions (Baker 2007:154-155).

Examples of re-framing abound in the African context. Post-colonial scholarship views labels such as "heathens," "pagans," "non-convents" and "uncircumcised" that were popular during the Protestant missionary era as instances of re-framing. An important example is the association of *swikwembu* (Xitsonga for "ancestor spirits") with "demons" and the use of the indigenous term to translate the concept of "demons" in Bibles translated mainly by missionaries into indigenous languages, which has always been problematic for the faithful and general readership. Matters climaxed when a post-colonial scholar, Dube (1999) examined this critical issue in her seminal paper "Consuming a Colonial Cultural Bomb: Translating *Badimo* into 'Demons' in the Setswana Bible." Berman (2014) points out that "Dube (1999) argues from a postcolonial perspective that the translation 'badimo' (ancestral spirits) for 'demons' in the Setswana Wookey Bible is a missionary reframing of the original narrative with a new agenda to violate Setswana culture." The meaning of *swikwembu* in Xitsonga culture and its use in the Xitsonga Bible translations will be examined in subsequent chapters.

2.6   Summary

In this chapter, an overview of developments in translation studies from the pre-theoretical era to the present time has been given as a theoretical and methodological framework for the choice of frame theory as the framework for the research that follows in subsequent chapters. The core of the study is the frame theoretical analysis of the 1929 Xitsonga Bible translation and the 1989 Xitsonga Bible translation in chapters 5 and 6, respectively. Of particular importance to the study are the notions of frames and framing – chapter 3 provides the socio-cultural frame

of the Xitsonga Bible translations while chapter 4 provides the historical frame. Chapters 5 and 6 include additional frames relating specifically to the two main Xitsonga Bible translations, namely the organisational frame and the translation frame. The role of power in the Xitsonga Bible translation is explored in chapters 5 and 6 with a detailed examination of the use of loanwords as opposed to indigenous terms and expressions.

CHAPTER 3

SOCIO-CULTURAL FRAME OF XITSONGA BIBLE TRANSLATION

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter the socio-cultural frame of the Xitsonga Bible translations is provided. Although it is difficult to separate the socio-cultural frame from the historical or translational frame of the following chapter, this chapter focuses on cultural and social aspects of Vatsonga culture, especially those dealing with cultural identity.

The chapter is organised as follows: In the first section the focus is a theoretical exposition on the role of language in the formation of cultural identity. The terms are defined, described and explained. In the second section the Vatsonga cultural identity is described in terms of class/lineage, names, oral literature, traditional religion and additional identity markers.

3.2 Culture, Language and Identity

3.2.1 What is culture?

Culture has been variously defined as indicated by the hundreds of definitions in circulation. David Katan (1999) defines the term as a system directed towards orienting experience with the basic presupposition that the organisation of experience does not amount to reality, but rather a simplification – even a distortion – which varies from system to system. Every system acts as a frame within which external reality is interpreted. The nature of the term *culture* is best understood in terms of the different approaches to its study (cf. Deist 2000, Katan 1999):

- The *evolutionist approach* emphasises the origins of human systems and the mechanisms that caused it.

- The *ethno-historical approach* stresses the system mutations perceptible in the history of a particular group.

- The *behaviourist approach* emphasises discrete behaviour, shared and observed (selected facts about what people do and refrain from doing). It tends towards ethnocentricity.

- *Structuralist studies* of culture regard perceptible human behaviour as nothing more than the local surface of culture itself. Individual cultures differ quite considerably, but these differences are negligible. They are caused by physical, social and historical factors on a deeper level, but they all share one mental structure.

- The *functionalist approach* involves shared rules that are subjacent to behaviour and cognisable through behaviour. This approach seeks to look at that which lies behind the behaviour and account for it. It accomplishes this through culture-bound evaluations within the context of one particular culture.

- The *configurationalist* approach emphasises the unifying role of meaning in cultural systems. All cultural behaviour is of a symbolic nature conveying meaning shared by the group and abstracted by individuals from the social system through participatory interaction.

- The *cognitive approach* deals with the shape of things that people have in mind; their models for perceiving, relating, and otherwise interpreting them.

- The *dynamic approach* deals with the interplay of internal models of the world and external reality.

3.2.2 What is language?

Like the term *culture*, the term *language* also has several different senses. At its most basic level, *language* refers to the concrete act of speaking, writing or signing in a given situation (Crystal 1991:193). This definition is related to the classical materialist conception of language (sounds and marks on solid surfaces) (Botha 1989a:2). Other metaphysical meanings utilised by linguists to define the term are as follows:

- *taxonomic-behaviorist* conceptions (stimuli and responses) (Botha 1989b:2, 12-14);
- *mentalist* entities (mental organ or module of the mind of an individual) (Botha 1991a:3, 10-14);
- *Platonist/Popperian* conceptions of language where language is viewed as an abstract or intelligible object (ideas, essences) which has a timeless, unchangeable objective structure (Botha 1991b:2, 3, 4, 14);
- the *social* character of language as a product of society, a social institution (Botha 1991c:2, 4-10).

Language is not a neutral medium for the formation of meanings and knowledge about an independent object world "existing" outside of language; rather language is constitutive of those very meanings and knowledge. That is, language gives meaning to material objects and social practices that are brought into view by language and made intelligible to its users in terms which language delimits. These processes of meaning production are signifying practices (Barker 2003:7-8).

A very close relationship exists between culture and language. Language is itself part of culture and reflects its social structures and attitudes. There are two viewpoints on this matter, viz. the universalistic and the relativistic. According to the universalistic viewpoint, a direct relationship exists between the structure of reality (culture) and the human mind, on the one hand, and the structure of language, on the other. The human mind is universal. Consequently, every language is founded on the same conceptual system in which different languages are merely different expressions of the same concepts. According to the relativist viewpoint, different languages are not seen as different forms of expression for the same reality, but are rather indications of different realities. Thus, differences between languages are not superficial but utterly profound and radical. Each language is firmly rooted in a different conceptual system. (The so-called Sapir-Whorf hypothesis combines linguistic *determinism* [language determines thought] with linguistic *relativity* [there is no limit to the structural diversity of languages]).

Language plays a role in its wider social and cultural context by forging and sustaining cultural practices and social structures, that is, language entertains metonymic relationships with society and culture (Talgeri & Verma 1988). Therefore, language ought not to be considered separate from culture, but as part and parcel of culture. Language is a cultural product, and at the same time, language may be considered part of the manifestation of culture-specific behaviour. The linguistic system permeates all other systems within the culture. Speaking is a culturally constructed act reflecting politeness, personality, gender, social standing, socialisation, etc. (Duranti 1997:336; Foley 1997:247-358). The way people act, the things they say, the things they make and the way they interpret their everyday experiences are closely linked to their particular worldview. It is also the reference to this worldview which enables people to explain and understand phenomena and events in reality (Deist 2000:92) (see also 3.2.4 below).

3.2.3   What is identity?

What then is identity? According to the Reader's Digest Oxford Complete Word Finder (1993), identity is "the quality or condition of *being a specified person or thing, individuality, personality*." Prah (1997:4) argues:

> In the abstract, identity is a classificatory term. It is the summarised definition or conceptualization of a selected unit or set of units in contrast to others on the basis of definable or agreed criteria. When used in the context of human groups its meaning narrows down considerably especially where such usage refers to historic-cultural units.

The terms "classifying, units and sets" in Prah's definition imply that identity is associated with a group of things, in this case, with people whose aim it is to distinguish themselves from others. It is an appropriate definition in an African context where a "unit or a group" of people represents the collective or communal nature of an African individual as revealed by the age old dictum: *living for others* – one is a being because of others.

Scholars from different academic fields continue to confront identity by digging deep into various research fields to shed light on it. Yet, the concept of identity remains a puzzle, a mystery that is a constant challenge. Its ambiguous qualities or rather its complexity make identity one of the most slippery concepts in scholarship. The allusive nature of identity has been well described in the following lines by Martin (1999:188):

> The semantic ambivalence of the word 'identity' emerges clearly: it connotes sameness and permanence, difference and change. 'Identity' as well as the discourses and the narratives which refer to it, cannot be understood as reflecting an ontological, immutable reality, or essence.

The secret of identity's haziness lies not only in its semantic properties, but also in its ability to mutate, thus connoting different things to different people.

Venuti (1998:97) defines identity in terms of its features, showing the socio-cultural aspects of the subject in question: "Identity is never irrevocably fixed, but rather relational, the nodal point of multiplicity of practices and instructions whose sheer heterogeneity creates the possibility for change." Identity concerns both self-identity and social identity. It is about the

personal and the social. It is about individuals and their relationships with others. Identity is not fixed, but involves becoming.

3.2.4 What is cultural identity?

Cultural identity refers to the characteristics, feelings and beliefs that distinguish people from others. Individuals and groups bearing a felt responsibility for and wanting a hand in the making of the self as something more than a passive or unconscious acceptance of a historically or socially prescribed identity. In its most basic form, identity refers to a sense of belonging, which includes a shared sense of companionship, beliefs, interests and basic principles of living. Everyone wants to have, or make, or be considered as possessing cultural significance (Barker 2003:xix). It has been argued that identity is wholly cultural in character and does not exist outside of its representation in cultural discourses (Barker 2003:245). When a person identifies with a culture, he/she often embraces traditions that have been passed down through the years. The cultural identity links a person to his/her heritage to assist in identifying with others who have the same traditions and basic belief systems. The main features of cultural identity appear to be a concept that is on the whole, a social construct, which can promote unity and patriotism and which is capable of fuelling violence and conflict. In other words, cultural identity may be used to promote peaceful existence or insurrection depending on the moods and motives of a group. Through a common cultural identity it is possible that an up and coming country such as the democratic South Africa would be able to foster national pride, reconciliation and nation building in a place of destruction. However, it should also be borne in mind that cultural identity is the seed for violence as Martin (2001:193) explicitly illustrates: "The world we live in is a place where violence and conflicts are fuelled by identity narratives based on aggressive and exclusive conceptions of culture and identity." A society is never at peace with itself. Groups lead a confrontational existence where they constantly try to subdue one another. Identity is used by all groups in a particular society to consolidate their power and their will to exist.

It is quite odd that identity and its markers are all around us – we see, hear, smell and even feel them – yet we do not easily recognise them. Former President Nelson Mandela's bust in a traditional garb, complete with a matching festoon of beads around his neck and staff, never ceases to remind us of the presence and significance of identity. The visual rendering drives home to us the message that Mandela may indeed be a world icon whose name has come to be associated with modern democracy, but he remains an African to the core.

In touching lyrics, a rebel and poet, Breytenbach (1992) invokes pride and patriotism amongst all who identify themselves as Africans:

> To be an African is not a choice, it is a condition... To be an African is not through lack of being integrated in Europe...neither is it from regret of crimes perpetrated by "my people"... No, it is simply the only opening I have for making use of all my senses and capabilities... The [African] earth was the first to speak. I have been pronounced once and for all.

Former President Thabo Mbeki's (1996) bold recitation of his being a proud African in a moving poem, and his clarion call for African Renaissance (1998) is yet another instance of identity in the making. Similarly, Giliomee's (2003) work, entitled *The Afrikaners- a biography of a people*, speaks volumes about identity.

The Zion Christian Church – popularly known simply as the ZCC is a typical example which explicitly articulates ethnic identity as the Reverend Emmanual Motolla (1999) explains:

> The Zion Christian Church was born after the Anglo-Boer War, just before Union in 1910. The founder of the church, Bishop Angus Barnabas Lekganyane had by then become acutely aware of the attempt by missionaries to erode African value systems and cultural beliefs. He realised that unless Christianity was interpreted in a context suitable to the African lifestyle, cultural and political development, Africans would, in due course find themselves as a nation alienated from its roots, rich history and religious foundation.

3.2.5   What is the relation between cultural identity and language?

Language is important as a means of ethnic or cultural identity, namely, identities are constituted or made (rather than found) by representations, notably language (Barker 2003:11) (see also section 3.2.1 on the relation between culture and language). The knowledge, beliefs, and practices of a particular society are reflected in its language. When people speak, they are not merely uttering sounds with structure and meaning. They intend something, and that intention is entrenched in their whole material (the things people do: for example, feed and shelter themselves, procreate, dress, mourn, rejoice, work their land, fight, etc.), habitual (how they do things or get them done: for instance, through distributing labour and responsibilities, marrying, trading, making war, solving disputes, and so on) and mental (about their reasons for doing these things in the way they do: for example, why they prefer a particular kind of social

or economic organisation, bring sacrifices, marry the way they do, organise inheritance in a particular manner, and so forth). Language is an integral part of culture. People socialise in the culture of a speaker. In ideal circumstances they understand her or his speech spontaneously, automatically and instantaneously. For outsiders to understand that same speech, they have to acquire as much as possible of the intimate knowledge presupposed by the speaker. What is required is of course linguistic proficiency, but also, and importantly, knowledge of the relevant culture of which the language forms an integral part. In real communication people not only follow the rules of language but also adhere to certain pragmatic principles. This means detecting presuppositions and implications behind the actual words used. Understanding a text means comprehending more than the logical structure and the purely designative or defining meanings of the lexical and grammatical structures. Communication requires lexical, grammatical and cultural competence.

Linguistic and cultural items often resemble one another and cannot be easily differentiated. People from different cultures have divergent mental images of apparently simple items like house or taxi as well as complex terms at the centre of human life like family, marriage or funeral, etc. All people know words, but they may have different images in their minds, and different ideas of their meaning. For each one the connotations may be different. Take the word marriage, for example. It would seem that a cultural framework is necessary in order to interpret the meaning of a term like marriage satisfactorily. Language is intertwined with culture, and yet they are often apart. The inclusion of cultural information in dictionaries is avoided on the grounds that it is extraneous or, more pragmatically, that the space can be more fruitfully devoted to lexical information. It is impossible to include everything, but a fuller cultural picture may be provided in many instances. The same goes for names. Names also convey cultural information and have particular connotations. They play an important part in the understanding of an expression but are seldom found in dictionaries. Knowledge of the cultural connotations of a word, the names of famous people and what they stand for, major events in a people's history, its institutions, and even the names of shops or brand names are major factors in understanding a written text or simply participating in a casual conversation.

3.2.6 How is cultural identity created in dominant and dominated cultures?

Power is regarded as pervading every level of social relationships; it generates and enables any form of social action, relationship or order. The process of making, maintaining and reproducing ascendant meanings and practices has been called hegemony, which implies a

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situation where an historical bloc of powered groups exercises social authority and leadership over subordinate groups through the winning of consent (Barker 2003:9-10). Momentous trends in this regard are the concepts of globalisation, tribalisation and cultural identities. On the one hand, there is globalisation, which is the worldwide tendency toward standardisation, with the expectation of a commercially homogeneous global network linked by technology, ecology, communications and commerce. On the other hand, there is the concept of linguistic retribalisation, where people belonging to particular language and culture groups are experiencing a sometimes very violent rediscovery of their own cultural heritages (Snell-Hornby 2000). This is particularly true in some Eastern European countries, and to a certain extent this also happens in the post-apartheid South Africa (see Naudé 2000). Placed between these two poles is the concept of cultural identity, indicating a community's awareness of and pride in its own unmistakable features and its sense of belonging. The implication is that the community can live in harmony with, and can communicate with, other communities around the world.

One way of 'opening up' a foreign culture is by way of interlingual translation. In fact, translation is regarded as the reproduction of culture in that the act of translating literary texts in particular involves transferring aspects of the culture belonging to one group to that of another. Over the centuries translation has played an important role of enrichment, so much so that it may be said that the inception of modern national literatures, and that of minority languages in particular, is often traceable back to translations of originals from prestigious literary systems. Complex and dynamic interaction between translated texts and the receiving culture's own literary production takes place. In instances where the minority literature is still young it is open to foreign influences and translated literature can make an active and considerable contribution to the development of its language and culture (cf. Delisle & Woodsworth 1995:7-24; 45-54; 159-190). The implication for translation is that cultural words and concepts are utilised in the target text (i.e. the technique of foreignisation) to allow the clear demarcation of each cultural group. The terms *resistancy* and *resistance* are used by Venuti (1995) to refer to the strategy of translating a literary text in such a way that it retains something of its foreignness. This is called a resistive approach to translation (Wallmach 2000). Resistive translation challenges the assumption that the only valid way of translation is to produce a translation which reads fluently and idiomatically and which is so transparent in reflecting the source text author's intention in the target language that the translation could be mistaken for an original text. Derrida (2001) also questions what he calls relevant translation.

He calls attention not only to its ethnocentric violence but also its simultaneous mystification of that violence through language that is seemingly transparent because it is univocal and idiomatic. This happens because the signifiers constituting the foreign text are replaced with another signifying chain, trying to fix a signified that can be no more than an interpretation according to the intelligibilities and interests of the receiving language and culture. Venuti's objection is reflected in the following question: *If translation fails to communicate the source text but disfigures it with the concepts and interests of the translating culture, what hope is there for a translated text to reach the ethical and political goal of building a community with foreign cultures, and a shared understanding with and of them?* (Venuti 2000:341). Venuti also joins Derrida's view that if there is no single origin, no transcendent meaning, and therefore no stable source text, one can no longer talk of translation as the transfer of meaning or as passive reproduction (Davis 2001). The autonomy of the translated text is redefined as the target-language residue which the translator releases in the hope of bridging the linguistic and cultural boundaries among readerships.

Naudé (2005a, 2005b, 2005c; 2007) demonstrates that the active hand of the translator in intercultural communication is evident in situations involving asymmetrical power relationships. In translating from a hegemonic target culture like English into a dominated target culture such as Sesotho, a translator from the dominated target culture must apply strategies to overcome cultural exclusion. With respect to the hegemonic culture, these strategies may include subversion, adaptation or localisation of the hegemonic source culture; with respect to the dominated target culture, these strategies might include rehabilitation or enrichment (see Mlonyeni & Naudé 2004; Naudé 2005d, 2007). Conversely, to translate from a dominated source culture (for example. Sesotho) into a hegemonic target culture (English), the dominated source culture must be maintained or globalised and the hegemonic target culture must be resisted (see Naudé 2005d, 2007). Furthermore, in recent translation scholarship there is an increasing emphasis on the collective control and shaping of cultural knowledge (see section 2.6). Conolly demonstrates that the western disciplinary perspective reduces and distorts the oral tradition of indigenous African knowledge to such an extent that it loses its original and authentic value (Conolly 2008). The exclusion of this oral evidence presents a skewed understanding of knowledge (see also Miller-Naudé and Naudé 2011).

3.3 Vatsonga Cultural Identity

Historians like Zeleza (2006) and Harries (2007) make a bold claim that African identity is a social construct. This is true also for Vatsonga. Moving from the premise that African identity is neither primordial nor is it pristine, Zeleza (2006:1) argues that

> African identities, like African languages, are inventions, mutually constitutive existential and epistemic constructions. Invention implies a history, a social process; it denaturalizes cultural artefacts and practices, stripping them of primordial authenticity and essentialism.

Harries (1989:82) goes so far as to claim specifically that beyond the pre-capitalist era an ethnic group known as the Vatsonga did not exist: "The roots of Tsonga ethnicity are not to be found in the primordial values associated with the pre-capitalist political systems and forms of production that early anthropologists categorized and classified by 'tribe.'" Harries (1989:83) is convinced that the Vatsonga ethnicity is, rather, very much a human construct, a social product:

> A Tsonga identity has thus emerged as the product of a variety of forces. These include the European obsession with social classifications; a government policy that attempted to divide Africans along ethnic lines; and, as well, an awareness expressed by many Africans of the numerous benefits that accrued from the mobilization of people along ethnic lines.

These scholars' approach to identity overlooks the fact that Africans in general were in existence long before the modern era – Africa is the cradle of humanity (see Deacon and Deacon 1999). By the time the Swiss missionaries arrived in Vutsonga, they relied heavily on traditional Xitsonga identity markers (such as culture, language, religion, folklore and *vuhosi* "kingship") to tinker with Vatsonga identity but not to create it. Protestant mission has ignored the traditional version of identity in favour of their own based on positivism. Missionaries had actually created their own version of identity using the one started by the local people as a model.

Depending on how one perceives identity, it is inconceivable to think that a group of people such as the Vatsonga would possess identity markers but not have a cultural identity. As mentioned earlier, what is called identity by some people might mean something else for another. One of the main reason why Vatsonga of pre-colonial times were said not to constitute

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an ethnic group or a nation was simply slavery. Arab and Portuguese slave-catchers competed with each other in herding as many poor souls as they could seize from Vatsonga society. In addition, there is the issue of internecine wars, natural disasters and diseases which prevented Africans from building stable communities. Sometimes they had to flee from both the natural and man-made disasters when they could not face them. Despite having to endure the ravages of the pernicious and vile practice called slavery, unremitting wars and ecological disasters and debilitating diseases like plagues, malaria, sleeping sickness, yellow fever, starvation etc., despite their contest against the forces of nature, Vatsonga still managed to uphold their traditions and customs which continued to give them a sense of nationhood.

The Vatsonga had an identity before the advent of both colonialism and the Swiss Protestant missionaries. The identity in question is completely different from the one understood by Eurocentric scholars in that lifestyles of people in Europe and Africa were not the same, and this also applies to their perceptions. What is called identity in Vutsonga might not be seen as such by western scholars. Part of the reason why it is difficult to understand the Vatsonga identity is that the missionaries had different ways of seeing things. Coming from Europe as they did, they understood things from a Eurocentric point of view.

Logic forbids that a group of people could live unconsciously of itself as a socio-cultural unit that is distinct from other groups as Harries (2007:165) claims in the following lines:

> A large tribe has not, as such, any proper and general name. But the tribe being divided into a certain number of clans, each one of these smaller communities goes by its proper names; where it is incumbent on the foreigner, either black or white, to apply a generic name to all people and clans which belong to the same tribe. The propriety then, of such a generic name, lies in its being related to the special character of the tribe, and its being taken from the tribe's own language. This is the case with the name Ma-Gwamba.

Whether people live in groups of clans or are just loosely bounded speaking different speech forms, they can still possess an ethnic identity. In an island like the United Kingdom, there are several speech forms, such as Cockney, Yorkshire English and a host of others, and the speakers of all these different dialects are known as English. Why then are the speakers of dialects such as Xitshwa, Xirhonga, Xiluleke and etc., not seen as constituting an ethnic unity referred herein as the Vatsonga? To argue that the Vatsonga did not have an identity because people co-existed in the form of clans and spoke different dialects is an erroneous and misleading way of looking at the issue of identity. It is true that the Vatsonga is a nation

comprised of a corpus of clans, but they do boast a national identity, as argued by Halala & Mthebule (2014:4):

> Despite the fact the Xitsonga-speaking people belong to different communities or *vuhosi*, they belong to one unique group that has common features both linguistically and culturally. They are also one in terms of Afroethics.

In the Xitsonga world, as in other African communities, identity is not explicitly defined, but conceptualised and it is displayed through action. Identity in Xitsonga has to do with *ku hlawulekisa/vuhlawulekisi* "to classify, distinguish, isolate, pinpoint, or single out…" The absence of a detailed definition of identity in Xitsonga does not necessarily imply that the Vatsonga are not conscious of their identity. It only points to the Vatsonga manner of conception of their life world. The fact that identity dwells in the subconscious of the nation is primarily due to the Vatsonga society's prolonged oppression; however, the nation has many of the concepts: *vumina* ("selfhood", relating to an individual) and *vuhina* (literally, "ourselves hood", relating to the community). These two terms express the indigenous Xitsonga concepts of identity. Again, *vuhina* appears in the dictionary as a lexical term implying identity markers "our ways, our customs" (Cuenod 1966) rather than identity per se. There is indeed a lexical term such as *hlawula* (Mathumba 2005) which is more about to select, to distinguish or to identify, than identity itself. The semantic qualities of *vumina*, *vuhina* and *hlawula* attest to the nature of identity in Xitsonga.

Nobody denies that identity is a social construct. However, this study disputes the claim that Vatsonga identity is fairly recent. The Vatsonga's main branches inhabited the coastal region of East Africa with the generic name of the "Tonga" as far back as 1200 (see Junod 1977, Halala & Mtebule 2014). Slavery and later colonialism shattered the tribe's unity and forced people to live in small communities in the form of clans. Slavery destroyed the people's socio-cultural development and their mental aptitude. They had inhabited the coastal plains and the interior (south-eastern and north-eastern Africa) even before the Portuguese pioneers sailed around the Cape enroute to India. Halala & Mthebule boldly declare that "the Tonga are the original forebears of the current Xitsonga language and culture" (Halala & Mthebule 20014:14).

Within a given society, socio-cultural attributes such as a language, religion, conventions, traditions and customs unify and distinguish an ethnic group from other ethnic groups. These socio-cultural attributes serve as identity markers which also instil a sense of belonging to each

member of a group. The notion of multiplicity of identities has been brilliantly crafted by Pavlenko and Blackledge (2003:19), in their argument that "identities are constructed at the interstices of multiple axes, such as age, race, class, ethnicity, gender, generation, sexual orientation, geopolitical locale, institution of social affiliation and social status, whereby each aspect of identity redefines and modifies all others." For these reasons, this study explores the question of Vatsonga cultural identity by considering the following topics in subsequent sections: clans/lineage and clan leaders, names for the Vatsonga, Vatsonga oral literature, traditional religion and minor identity markers. Language, one of the most prominent identity marker in society (Garuba 2001:7), will be considered in connection with the writing of the language (in 4.3.3 below).

3.3.1 Vatsonga Clans/Lineage

The Vatsonga express their awareness of and pride of themselves as a nation by referring to themselves in their clans names, much like the Scottish people. Of course, minor differences between the Scottish and Vatsonga systems of clans may exist, but both groups belong to societies made up of clans ruled by chiefs. In addition to their clan names, the Vatsonga make use of praise songs to identify themselves from one another. For instance, the Vatsonga readily find expression of their identity in their genealogy lines and praise songs in the same manner Jesus does, as revealed in Matthew 1:1-17 where the names of Jesus's forbearers have been recited according to their seniority. As far as the Vatsonga are concerned, Harries (1989:90) points out that

> membership of the clan was expressed through the use of a common patronymic, or *shibongo*, through which an individual identified himself as a member of his clan leader's house. Outsiders who professed fealty to the clan leader or chief defined themselves as being from the land of their host clan while the latter's unifying ideology of agnatic descent provided for their gradual incorporation through the adoption of the clan patronymic.

Traditionally, the life of a Mutsonga and his family revolves around *vuhosi* ("kingdom"). Every clan has a leader who is regarded as a king by his clan's people. A *hosi* is considered as a father to the whole clan in that he is a link to the clans' ancestors. He is the commander of the army and also acts as a judge in the royal court. He tells his people when to start tilling the soil and when to stop. The identity of a member of the clan is closely associated with the *hosi* and the clan's kingdom.

However, the multiplicity of clans comprising the Vatsonga suggests that the consolidation of these clans into one ethnic group was not inevitable, but rather the result of particular historical and cultural forces. As discussed in the following chapter, the difficult questions of where clan and dialect lines should be drawn was also a central part of the Swiss missionaries' evangelical enterprise in the 1880s. This section details the various clans of modern Vatsonga society.

Vatsonga society is comprised of the Varonga (Eastern clans), Vadzonga (Southern clans), Van'walungu (Northern clans), Vandzawu, Vacopi, Valenge, Vaxika, Vabila, Vahlanganu and Vahlengwe (Mathumba 1993; see also Junod 1927). There are no clans labelled as western. Ideally, the Hlanganu group should have been named Vavupela-dyambu ("those of the sunset", i.e. West) in that it is situated on the western side of the Lebombo mountains in the Low veld, Mpumalanga in South Africa. It includes the N'wamba, Mabila, Mnisi and Mbayi clans (Bruwer 1963:23-24, Ferreira 2002:13-16, Van Warmelo 1962:55-57).

For the sake of clarity, below follow the major clans – the Hlengwe, the Dzonga group, the N'walungu group and the Bila group – and their most common sub-clans. The map in Illustration 1 below shows the location of the major clans as identified by the Swiss missionaries.

The name Hlengwe implies wealth and is related to the verb *ku hlenga* ("to accumulate"). The cognate name is *xihlenge* ("honey comb") which accumulates and retains honey like a sponge. Therefore, the name Hlengwe connotes a process of wealth accumulation. The main clans of the Hlengwe are Cauke, Xigombe, Hlengwe Mbezana and Mavube.

In Xitsonga, the name Varhonga basically means "people of the east" or "those who live on the eastern part of the country". In Mozambique, Varhonga are found on the east of the country, around Delgoa Bay. The main clans are Nyaka (*Inhaca* in Portuguese), Tembe, Maputsu (Maputo), Mpfumu, Matsolo (Matolla) na Mazwayi (Magaia), Mabota and Hon'wana.

The Dzonga group is composed of clans on the south of Rimbelule (Olifants River), and they include the Khosa (in Cossine country), Rikhotso, Ntimani, Mavundza, Maxava, Maswanganye, Ntshungu, Nkwinika and Makamo.

The clans of the N'walungu group are on the northen part of the country as N'walungu means "north" in Xitsonga. The N'walungu group includes Kalanga (Baloyi) Maluleke (Van'wanati) Khambane, Makwakwa, Ndindane, Mondlane (Mawundlana), Xivambu-Makhubele and Manganyi.
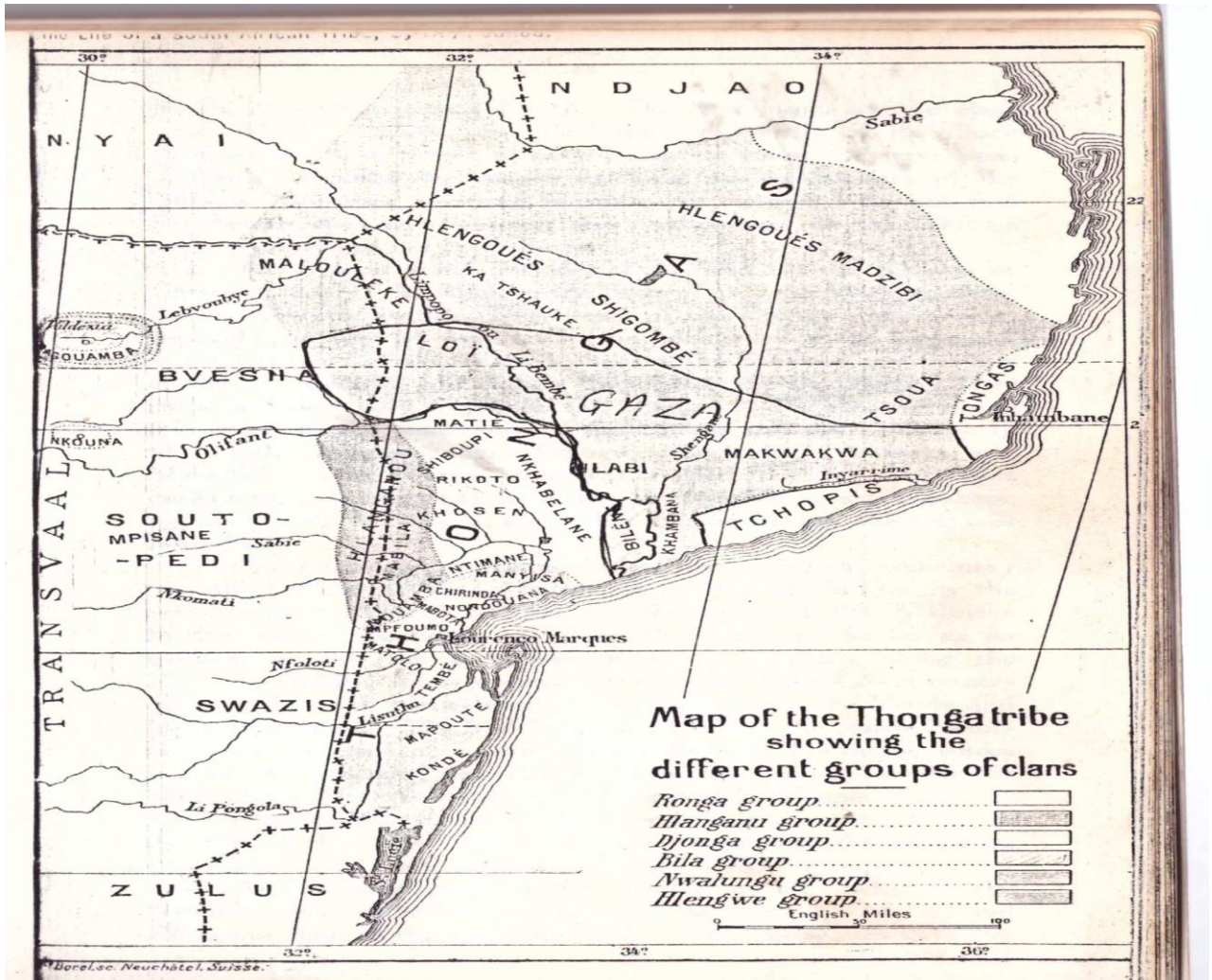
Illustration 1. Map of the Thonga Tribe Showing the Different Groups of Clans (from Junod 1927)

The Bila group is found mainly on both sides of the Lower Limpopo valley. Their rich plain is popularly called eBilenii by Xitsonga speakers.

These major clans are made up of sub-clans such as the Van'wanati, Manganyi etc. All these mini-groups are collectively known as the Vatsonga nation. The Vatsonga are thus a prototypical example of a loose but culturally and linguistically linked society.

3.3.2   Names for the Vatsonga

Closely related to the Vatsonga clans is the question of the name used to refer to the Vatsonga. The Vatsonga are referred to by a variety of names that are confusing even to mother tongue speakers. They have been called Tsonga, Thonga, Tonga, Rhonga, Dzonga, Shangaans, Gwamba, Koapa, Knobneusen, etc. Many of the generic names given to this ethnic group are derogatory terms and are used as devices of exclusion. To clarify this web of different names, the study will give a brief outline of the names Gwamba, Knobneusen or Knopneuse, Machangana, Thonga and Tonga.

3.3.2.1   Gwamba

In giving the picture of the origin of the name *gwamba, magwamba and xigwamba* as designation of Vatsonga and their language, Halala & Mtebule (2014), and Junod (1927) contend that in former times, there had been a chief called Gwamba in Nyembani province in Mozambique, whose clan was called Magwamba. Ntsanwisi (1920-1992) a former chief minister of Gazankulu bantustan, used to refer to Vatsonga as the granddaughters and grandsons of Gwambe and Dzavane alluding to the fact that the two names belong to Vatsonga's ancestors. However, the name seems to originate from a peculiar, traditional custom called *ku tlhavela tinhlanga* ("tattooing "). The tattoes were performed on the noses. cheeks and breasts in the case of women with lines of pea-sized knobs produced by pulling up the skin cut by razor with a little iron hook and by applying to the wound ochre, ash and a certain medicine. The resulting bluish knobs (keloids) on their noses, called in *Chopi tsindova or magwava,* earned them the name *MaGoa-pha, meaning 'Scarred MaGoa' (where MaGoa* refers to their mixed, Indo-Tsonga origin), pronounced *MaGwampa or MaGwamba*. The names *Magwamba*, and *Xigwamba* were used as terms of exclusion by the local people (i.e. Bapedi and Bavenda) in the erstwhile northern Transvaal to refer to Vatsonga refugees and immigrants who came from various parts of Mozambique. At Valdezia, the Tsonga people were referred to as 'Magwamba' by the Venda people, the Venda also called the Tsonga language 'Tshigwamba', while the Pedi in the South called them 'Makoepa' and their language 'Sekoapa'. The Swiss missionaries adopted this racial slur and also called the Tsonga people 'Magwamba' and their language 'Xigwamba'.

Harries (2007:156) explains in detail the origins of the term:

> When Berhoud and Creux arrived in Speloken they came to realise that the immigrants in the Spelonken could not be slotted into the existing framework of linguistics studies. The community in which they found themselves was made up of a pot pouri of refugees drawn from the length and breadth of coastal south-east Africa. These people shared no common language and lived in scattered villages independent of one another. They had few independent chiefs and no concept of themselves as a community. Nevertheless, the indigenous people of the area defined them these newly arrived immigrants as a group. By applying to them a number of generic names, the local people attempted to exclude as foreigners those immigrants who had refused to form their ranks. Sotho-speakers called them "Makoapa", the Boers referred to them as "knobnoses" while others others named the immigrants "MaGwamba" after an eighteen-century chief who had lived on the east coast near Inhambane.

In their aquaintance with the refugees/immigrants in Spelonken, the Swiss missionaries seized this name from the locals and made it appear as if there was a clan called Gwamba whose dialect was called Xigwamba. According to Maluleke (1995:32):

> … there was simply no unified, single Gwamba language. Henri Berthoud, brother to Paul, a man who was to do a lot more in the writing down of the *Gwamba* language, recognised the diversity of 'languages' and 'dialects' included under the generic name Gwamba.

As both quotations emphasise, there was no language called Gwamba as the population in Spelonken foothills was comprised of refugees and immigrants from different parts of Mozambique, speaking different dialects of what later became Xitsonga. After an ethnographic and scientific study of the 'Xigwamba language and culture' by the Swiss missionaries, Reverend Henri Alexandra Junod and Reverend Ernest Creux, they correctly named the language 'Xitsonga' and the speakers Vatsonga or just Tsonga. Junod and Creux are credited by Tsonga intellectuals and Academic as the first people to create a sense of 'nationalism' amongst the Tsonga in South Africa. The Swiss Mission Church further build Tsonga pride when they changed the name of the church to Tsonga Presbyterian Church in 1960. Today there is neither a clan called Magwamba among the Vatsonga nor a dialect Xigwamba in Xitsonga.

When the Swiss missionaries moved on to establish a new mission station in the Bankuna chiefdom, they applied the same method. They selected a parlance spoken around the Vankuna and Khoseni chiefdoms, which is part of the (Dzonga) Xidzonga dialect and carved it into Xitsonga and referred to its speakers as the Vatsonga.

As to why the Vatsonga are not called Vadzonga, or why Xitsonga is not called Xidzonga, historians like Harries (2007) point to sound shifts as the reason for the variety of names to designate the same ethnic group. These sound shifts were probably caused, at least in part, by mispronunciations of people who were not mother tongue speakers. In a multilingual society such as South Africa, mispronounced words, phrases and name places had intruded and settled in speech communities. The examples below shows words, phrases and name places which underwent sound shifts, thus producing alternative names.

Table 1. Sound shifts of Rhonga, Dzonga and Gwamba

Word	Original Language	Soundshift	Influencing Language / People
Rhonga	Xirhonga dialect	Thonga[1]	IsiZulu
Djonga/Dzonga	Dzonga dialect	Tsonga	Swiss
Magwamba	Xigwamba	Makoapa	Sepedi

It is interesting to note that in the case of Djonga/Dzonga shifting to Tsonga, the Swiss missionaries might have been the ones who introduced the sound shift. They had a peculiar way of speaking Xitsonga, which was subsequently dubbed Xineri by the local people. The term *Xineri* derives from *muneri,* the Xitsonga word for "missionary" which is derived from the Afrikaans *meneer* "mister".

According to Harries (1989), the Swiss missionaries were actively involved in classifying and re-classifying clans:

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[1] In IsiZulu the word *thonga* also means "slave."

In 1891 Berthoud reclassified Makwakwa as Nwanati, which he then linked to the Maluleke dialect in the Transvaal. He also reclassified Hlengwe as Tswa, as this term was more acceptable to the people north of the Limpopo. He also carved out a new dialect (Hlavi) just north of the confluence of the Limpopo and Shangani Rivers.

Berthoud's reclassification of clans proves the fact that the Swiss missionaries named and re-named clans and dialects and shifted the boundaries between them as they wished to suit their purposes.

3.3.2.2   Knobneusen or Knopneuse

In the Spelonken area, the Afrikaners called them *knobneusen* (knob noses) (Dutch) or *knopneuse* (Afrikaans) for their habit of decorating their faces with *makanja* (tattoos of dots on the face) (Maree 1962:38) (see Section 3.3.2.1). According to Junod (1927: 178-180) they used to disfigure themselves by making big black pimples on the forehead, the nose, and the cheeks. Even the men were tattoed, but they showed only one line of the pimples down the middle of the face, from the forhead to the chin. Women had in addition, two horizontal lines on the forehead and three on each cheek. It was the custom of the primitive population and it is still observed by the Ba-Chopi. Amongst the Ba-Ronga it is not certain that the big black pimples ever existed. In former times men used to make two lines of small pimples on both sides of the body, extending from the nipple, and from the shoulder downwards. Now the custom is dying out; it is only practiced by women, undoubtedly in connection with nobility or with marriage."

3.3.2.3   Machangana ("Shangaans")

Since the mid 19th century to this day, the Vatsonga have been erroneously referred to as *Machangana* ("Shangaans"), a mixture of Nguni (a language group which includes Swazi, Zulu and Xhosa). This Nguni name was derived from King Shaka's renegade general, Soshangane (also known as Manunkosi) Nxumalo (Bill & Masunga 1983:4; Junod 1927; and Wilson & Thompson 1969). On trouncing the Vatsonga during the height of the *Defecane/Mefecane* ("the crushing") upheaval in present-day Mozambique in the mid 1800s, Soshangane never returned to Shaka in Zululand. Instead he settled in Mozambique and established his Gaza empire which he named after his grandfather, Gaza. Soshangane insisted that Nguni customs be adopted and that the Tsonga learn the Zulu language. Soshangane's dominance succeeded in creating a

niche for the Shangaans as a sub-group and the Shangaan language was spoken alongside Xitsonga.

The designation Shangaans or AmaShangane has since been used pejoratively to label this Nguni group as the *AmaShiyangane* ("the renegades who ran away living their children behind"). That is, Soshangane and his followers fled their homeland into Vutsonga and never returned to his superior, thus forcing his accomplices to leave their homes, wives and children behind.

In their bid to consolidate their evangelical enterprise in Southern Africa, the Swiss missionaries sought to propagate the idea that the Vatsonga and Machangana are on an equal footing whereas Vatsonga is the name of the whole nation, and not a name of the Nguni sub-clan, the Machangana.

Junod's (1927:14) hypothesis that "there is no national unity amongst the Thongas. They are hardly conscious that they form a definite nation, and therefore they possess no common name for it," cannot be relied upon. On the contrary, the Vatsonga do have common characteristic features which bind them together into a unity called Vutsonga (see Halala and Mthebule 2014:4 and section 3.3.1 above).

Junod deliberately pushed the idea that there is no national unity because he was obsessed with the fallacious notion that Soshangane and his marauding Nguni warriors united the Vatsonga into a nation. He ignored the fact that the Ba-Nguni's despotic government over Vutsonga during 1830 to 1890 was too short a period of time, that Soshangane and his invaders lacked the necessary skills to merge a huge multi-ethnic nation such as Vatsonga, except to rule by fear and a sword.

Junod (1977:52) also claims that, *loko Vatsonga va ku Machangana-Tsonga va tsundzuka hosi leyi nga sungula yi hlanganisa hinkwavo lava vulavulaka Xitsonga hi yena Sochangana-Manukosi* ("when Vatsonga say Machangana-Tsonga they remember the first leader who united all who speak Xitsonga, he is Sochangana-Manukosi"). Halala and Mthebule (2014:13) draw attention to the fact that "ethnologists and experts in Xitsonga folklore and culture like A.A. Jacques and H.P. Junod who continued on the line of their predecessors are at pains at popularising and justifying the designation of Vatsonga-Machangana in the publication of *Swivongo swa Machangana, Morija.* (1958), and *Vutlhari bya Vatsonga (Machangana) Morija*

(1956)". Machangana have long been accommodated as neo-Nguni clan in Vutsonga and not as a sole representation of the whole ethnic group herein referred to as Vatsomga.

3.3.2.4   Thonga

The word *thonga* ("slave") comes from IsiZulu. According to Junod (1927:14):

> The name Thonga (pronounced t + aspirated h, not the English "th") was applied to them by the Zulu of the Ngoni invaders, who enslaved most of their clans between 1815 and 1830. The origin of this Zulu name is probably the name Rhonga, which means Orient, *burhonga* ("dawn") and by which the clans round Lorenço Marquis used to called themselves.

In days gone by, the Zulu people used to refer to the area encompassing the Northern part of KwaZulu-Natal including a large part of Mozambique as *ezweni lase Buthonga* ("the land of slaves") (also see Nyembezi 1959:143.) This country covers Vurhonga and the Tonga enclave which is part of Nyembane province in Mozambique. As for the reason why the word is not pronounced "Tonga" rather than "Thonga", is basically a sociolinguistic issue. Speakers of a language have a natural way to pronounce words as they do. However, it is interesting to note that part of northern KwaZulu-Natal is rightly called Tongaland these days. The word *ithonga* has even penetrated Xitsonga as a borrowed word to mean a slave.

Tonga is the all-embracing name as well as the cradle of Vatsonga society. Halala & Mthebule (2014:14) boldly declare that "the Tongas are the original forebearers of the current Xitsonga language and culture." Tshivenda has stuck to the original pronunciation of the name, a fact which proves that the etymology of the word Tsonga is Tonga.

3.3.2.5   Tonga

In his hypothesis of the Vatsonga generic name, Junod (1927:16) was careful not to mention the name Tonga because he wanted to reinforce the fact that the "Ba-Tonga" are quite different from the "Ba-Thonga" in terms of language and ethnographic features, and that Tonga has no "aspirate after the *T*, and it is enough to distinguish it from the Ba-Thonga." He ignores the fact that Vacopi and Vanyembane form the core of Vatsonga society. Vacopi ("shooters") are called as such because they floored hundreds of Soshangane's invaders during the war, using bows and arrows. The name Vacopi originates from *ku copa* ("to shoot with a bow and arrow") as opposed to *ku balesela* ("to shoot with a gun"). The Vacopi are a subclan of the Kalanga, and

they are sometimes referred to as Valenge (personal interview with Pastor G. Chauke from Mozambique. December 09, 2012). The Khambanes also fall under this clan. On the other hand, the Vanyembane, whose name is also used to refer to one of the Mozambican provinces, are the Tonga group.

Tonga is the generic, all-embracing name as well as the cradle of Vatsonga society. Halala & Mthebule (2014:14) boldly declare that "the Tongas are the original forebears of the current Xitsonga language and culture."

Up to this day, when the Vavhenda refer to Vatsonga as *Mutonga* (singular) and *Vatonga* (plural), they are using the old name of the Vatsonga's forefathers which they used when they first met them – before the Swiss missionaries arrived.

Halala and Mthebule (2014:13) point that

> … the early missionaries' ambivalent attitude towards the national identity and unity of their charges could best be understood against the background of the history of their homeland, Switzerland – an artificial creation of different of different ethnic communities of central Europe, i.e. French, German, Italian and Romanians welded together into Swiss nation. They imagined creating a group similar in their colonial theocratic outpost amongst the Vatsonga communities in Southern Africa.

Apparently influenced by his father, Junod (1977:52) wrote fifty years later that, *Vatsonga va tsundzuka leswaku nsinya wa vona wu ni timuntsu to enta evuxeni, I vanhu va le vuxeni; kwalaho I va Vatonga va Amatongaland, i Varhonga vaka Mpfumu, naswona vani xiboho xa ririmi ni Vatonga va Nyembana khale swinene* ("literally, Vatsonga remember that their tree has deep roots in the east, they are the people of the east, for that they are Vatonga of Amatongaland, they are the Varhonga of Mpfumu, and they have an obligation of language with the Vatonga of Nyembane ("Inhambane") long time ago").

According to Junod (1977:49), during the ministry of the Jesuit priest Father André Fernandes in Tonga, he baptised 450 converts amongst whom were "Mocarangas" and "Botongas", hence showing that different clans of the Vatsonga lived together in harmony for many centuries.

The Tonga or Gitonga as a root of the present Xitsonga is emphasised by some words which are not found in Xishona ("Shona"), Xisuthu ("Sesotho"), Tshivhenda, Nguni and other Bantu languages except in Xitsonga, Xitonga ("Gitonga") and Xicopi ("Copi").

The table below shows words which are found only in Xitsonga (and/or its dialects) (see Junod 1977:50).

Table 2. Words Found only in Xitsonga and Its Dialects

Xitsonga	Gitonga (Tonga)	Xicopi (Copi)	English
ku hanya	*ku hanya*	*ku hany*	"to live"
Wa hanya xana?	*Wachihanya kani?*	*Wachihanya kani?*	literally, "are you alive?"
dyambu	*Lidambo*	*lidambu*	"the sun"

According to the history of ancient Africa, when the first waves of Bantu migration gradually moved South from the Great Lakes in central Africa around the time of Christ, a bulk of this group called the Tonga settled in South-East Africa. The Vatonga ("Tonga") are found mainly in Nyembani ("Inhambane") province southeast of Mozambique. This group is also known as Vanyembayni and their language as Xinyemnani.

As to why people in the whole of Vutsonga are not referred to simply as Va-Tonga, the Ethnologue entry on Tonga (Simons and Fennig 2017) explains:

> The various peoples called Tonga were originally part of the same group, but as they have migrated over the centuries their languages changed, the various groups lost contact and their culture changed. As they lost contact and moved to different locations, they have come to speak different forms of language and no longer consider themselves the same entity.

Some Tonga groups speak forms of language which, even though they still call it Tonga, the speech is actually now a dialect of other languages, such as Ndau in Mozambique and Tumbuka (Zambia and Tanzania).

3.3.3 Vatsonga Oral Literature

Folklore, tales and riddles acted as ancient media in that they existed before writing was known. They provided entertainment, information, traditional wisdom, manners, morals, customs, common sense as well as warnings. "Folklore" was, according to Harries (2007:52) "plastic

matter unconsciously undergoing constant and extensive modifications in the hands of the story-tellers." In addition, Finnegan (1970:2), points out that oral literature is by definition dependent on a performer who formulates it in words on a specific occasion – there is no other way in which it can be realised as a literary product. Finnegan goes on to reveal that, "the significance of performance in oral literature goes beyond a mere matter of definition: the nature of the performance itself can make an important contribution to the impact of the particular literary form being exhibited. Ingenious and delicate allusions enriched tales in ways that were almost invisible to European writers. African folklore was a subject in which 'imagination overflows', wrote Junod of this early magical realism; it completely submerges all reason… from this perspective certain tales are stupefying." Vatsonga folklore has been preserved in a treasure trove by authors such as Marivate (1973) and various missionaries who compiled them in book form. In this section, two kinds of oral literature which contribute in significant ways to Vatsonga expressions of identity are considered – praise songs and traditional annals lists.

3.3.3.1   Praise Songs

Praise songs consist of various sentences blended together in a song which invokes the pride, dignity and self-worth of a clan's members. The recitation may be lively or dull depending on the singer's creativeness. The Vatsonga proudly proclaim their identity to the whole world through the performance of the following traditional praise song:

> *Hi vana va Mutsonga wa ku chava ku tsongola xa munhu.*
>> ("We are a Mutsonga's offspring who dislike to eat a stranger's food.")

> *Hi vatukulu va Gwambe na Dzavane.*
>> ("We are the grandchildren of Gwambe and Dzavane.")

> *Hi va ka mitirho ya vulavula.*
>> ("We are of the deeds speak.)

> *Hi va ka nkuwa wo khandziyeka.*
>> ("We are of the fig tree that is easy to be ascended.")

> *Nkanyi wa le ndzelekaneni wa masimu*
>> "A Morula tree on the border of different fields – supplying all people with the Morula plums.")

Hi va ka mafula hi xivuri va tshika nyundzu

"We are the ones who clobber with a punch rather than with a hammer blow."

The Malulekean praise song is slightly different, but it serves the same purpose:

Hi va ka:

("We are of")

Vatukulu va Gwambe na Dzavane.

("We are grandchildren of Gwambe and Dzavane.")

Van'wanati i Vatsonga va xiviri.

("The Van'wanati are the true Vatsonga.")

Hi vadyi va bangu, hina!

("We are eaters of the crocodile's brain.")

Mafula hi xivuri va tshika nyundzu.

("We are the ones who clobber with a punch rather than with a hammer blow.")

Hi va ka mitirho ya vulavula

("We are of the deeds speak.")

Vana va Mutsonga wa ku chava ku tsongola xa munhu.

("We are of Mutsonga's offspring we hat to eat a stranger's food.")

Nkuwa wo khandziyeka.

("We are of the fig tree that is easy to climb.")

Nkanyi wa lendzilekani- hala ni hala ku tshana makanyi.

("We are of the Morula tree between two fields – Morula plums fall on both sides")

Vanhu va rholela, va rhumbula vukanyi, va nwa va jakatseka va tlhela va jamuka.

("People come to pick up *marula*, make *marula* wine, drink and become soaked.")

Xandla famba xandla vuya.

("We are of hand goes out and hand comes in.")

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Hi vaka tuva leri rilaka ekule evugimamusi- ri rila onge ri fele hi tiko.

    ("We are of the dove that sings forlornly in the horizon.")

Tolo ka siku vakokwa wa hina a va ri tihosi ta Vatsonga.

    ("Yesterday our grandfathers were the kings and queens of Vatsonga.")

Hi vana va tihosi – hi tihosi hikuva hi vana va swimitandzalama

    ("We too are kings and queens because we are the grandchildren of precious stone swallowers – we have got blue blood!")

 Hi hina Maluleke wa nkala ni mavala ya yona.

    ("We are Maluleke of the leopard[2] with its spots.)

N'wanati – hi huma etikweni ra milambu mimbirhi.

    ("We come from the land of two rivers.")

Ehase ka nambu wa Mude, erigiyagiyeni ra nambu wa N'wanetsi.

    ("On the other side of Mude river, along the riverbank of N'wanetsi river.")

Hi huma eBileni-Masiya kaya ka tinhlampfi, eka Ximbutsu ka Makhalawani…

    ("We come from Bileni-Masiya country – in the land of fish, in Ximbutsu of Makhalawani…")

In the past, every child growing in a *village w*as expected to know his/her genealogy and be able to recite his/her praise song. Surnames are regarded as a badge of identity – a person without a surname is not part of Vatsonga society. The praise song pronounces itself as an identifier – a badge of a person's clan, and everybody is expected to recite it on being requested in order to verify one's identity. It is African's version of the identity book so beloved by the governmental bureaucracy in this country. Setiloane (1986:1) tells that "indeed African primal communities (the Vatsonga included by virtue of the fact that they too are Africans) were illiterate. But illiteracy does not necessarily spell dullness or ignorance, or even an ability to carry on with the arts…" The Swiss missionaries were well aware that the Vatsonga were conscious of their own identity. However, they chose to ignore it partly because it was considered primordial and pristine, and also because they did not see it in conflict with Christianity.

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[2] The *nkala* (leopard) is a Malulekean totem (personal communication, EPP Mhinga, November 18, 2012).

3.3.3.2   Traditional Annals List

The orality of the Vatsonga literature also made it possible for the people to devise some means to keep their historical records. The traditional annals list identified years on the basis of a significant event that occurred in history. The traditional annals list is as follows:

Ndlala ya Machona ("Machona Famine ") 1896-1897 (Masumbe 2002:102)

Mphephu na Mabunu ("A strife between Chief Mphephu and the Afrikaners") 1903

Machoni ("Drought/Famine and rinderpest") 1908-1910

Bandrikop (*Bandelierkop*) 1912 This is the name of the Afrikaners' outpost near Makhado (Louis Trichardt). It was known to the Vatsonga of Spelonken because it shared a border with Vatsonga's erstwhile town of Knobneusen Location, and that is where Drie Maands mielies ("three months maize") also known as *Bandirikopo* were first introduced to the Vatsonga.

N'wa-Xorhwani ("locusts") 1913

Drie-Dag ("three day") 1914, also known as *Duweta* to Vatsonga, that is, Afrikaans for *dood* ("dead/death"), this was a kind of illness which the sufferer lasts only for *drie dae* ("three days") before he dies.

Jarimani ("Germany") 1914 First World War

Nyimpi ya Mu-komtela (Afrikaans *Kom-kom oorlog* "come, come wars") 1914 This refers to the First World War, so named after the Afrikaans word *kom* ("come") used to recruit of Vatsonga men to join the war.

Chanchalaza ("Influenza") 1918

Tintoma ("Abundance of Jackals' Berries") 1918-1919

Xigon'wana ("devastation by locusts") 1926

Xijajani ("locusts") 1927

Magerere ("locusts") 1933

Muchapi 1936-1939 ("Good harvest – food in abundance".)

Jakobosi ("Circumcision school") 1939

Mukhwakhwa 1945-1947 ("Drought/Famine")

Mukhwakhwa 1964 ("Famine")

Makondlo ("rat plague") 1966.

Historian Halala (personal interview 14 July 2014) indicates that in Hlengweni (Northern Mozambique) there is an annal called *Lembe ra Ximoyi* signifying the year in which the first Afrikaners arrived there. (Ximoyi derives from Afrikaans *mooi jaar* "a good year"), the Afrikaner visitors expressed their admiration of the fauna and the flora or the area. And the local speakers labelled that year *Lembe ra Ximoyi*. However, it is neither known nor used in South Africa.

This list was helpful even to some government officials in helping to determine the age of an elderly person who applied for an identity document (which used to be called *dompas* [Afrikaans "stupid passbook"]) or a Social Welfare grant. The list has been crafted in such a way that it is not easy to forget a particular year by virtue of its link to an historical event.

3.3.4 Vatsonga Traditional Religion

Like other African peoples, the Vatsonga's traditional religion is a life sustaining force without which the Vatsonga could not lead a normal, peaceful existence. An overseas friend mistakenly commented that a night vigil in the Vatsonga world is simply drumbeat and free-for-all dancing. For an outsider, trying to distinguish religious life from social life amongst the Vatsonga can be a mind boggling experience. This phenomenon has been eloquently stated by Mbiti (1989:3) in the introduction of his *African Religion and Philosophy*:

> Africans are notoriously religious, and each group has its own religious system with a set of beliefs and practices. Religion permeates into all the departments of life so fully that it is not easy or possible to isolate it.

Pointing to the cause of misunderstanding, Mbiti (1989:3) said:

> One of the difficulties in studying African religions and philosophy is that there are no sacred scriptures. Religion in Africa societies is written not on paper, but in people's hearts, minds, oral history, rituals and religious personages like priests, rainmakers, officiating elders and even kings. Everybody is a religious carrier.

According to Piddington (1957:672),

> … the religious customs and practices of an ethnic group, serve as a principal integrative force in the social lives of the people. It has been a crucial factor in maintenance of social cohesion, stability and social constraint remains persuasive.

African traditional religions in South Africa have gone through the ravages of colonialisation and apartheid, which completely hampered their growth and development. The age of colonialisation made it possible for Christianity to use everything at its disposal to wipe African traditional religion from the minds of its followers. One of its tactics was to demonise African traditional religion by labelling the followers of African traditional with pejorative names, such as "heathens" or "pagans."

Followers of Vatsonga traditional religion have no qualms with the translation of *Xikwembu* (literally "ancestor") as *Mutumbuluxi* ("creator") for "God the Father," or "The Almighty". The word *Xikwembu* is understood by the Vatsonga as the proper term for God; the plural form of the noun, *swikwembu,* by contrast, refers to ancestors. The difficulty occurs when some Christians classify *swikwembu* ("ancestors, forefathers, the departed or those of yesterday") with demons (see Hermanson 1999, Dube 1999 and Maluleke 2005). Some Christians also avoid the term *Xikwembu* for God because of its assocaition with traditional religion, preferring instead the terms *Muvumbi / Mutumbuluxi* ("Creator"). Writing in the seventies, Schneider (1970:93), a missionary to the Vatsonga, expressed concern about the word *Xikwembu* ("God"), because as a noun of class 7, it was grammatically classified together with diminutive nouns and personal nouns which denote people with special characteristics, often of a derogative nature, for example *xidakwa / swidakwa*, ("drunkard/s"), *xiphukuphuku / swiphukuphuku* ("fool/s"), *xipuku / swipuku* ("spook/s"):

> What strange company for what had become the name of God on High. How could the Lord possibly sit at the table with sinners and tax-collectors as those of Class 7 and 8? How could he rub shoulders with the ancestors?

Schneider overlooked the fact that language is not like a company's products that can be designed and manufactured according to the customer's taste; rather it is a convention of communication. As such, nobody – not even the Xitsonga mother tongue speaker – can decide that a word should not belong to a certain class because it harbours "derogative nouns." (Schneider 1970:93). That the word *Xikwembu* and its plural *swikwembu* falls under the class

of things "xi – swi" in the Xitsonga language neither connotes a diminution of God, nor does it imply blasphemy in a cognitive sense. On the contrary the Vatsonga perceive of God as *nchumuwukulu* ("a thing/entity"), a super-being so great that it is impossible to sing about him. In addition to his greatness, God is seen as intriguing in that his temperament cannot be readily understood by humans. The qualities of prominence, if not bafflement, apply to other Class 7 words such as *xihontlovila*, plural *swihontlovila* ("giant/s"), *ximuwu*, plural *swimuwu* ("baobab tree/s"), and *xitimela*, plural *switimela* ("train/s") (see Jacques [undated Tsonga Lectures], Marivate, Mathumba & Masebenza [1971:38], Junod [1927], and Cuenod [1967]).

Despite attempts to destroy African traditional religion during the dark history of our country, it has still survived. It continues to be practiced, in spite of scholars who deny that the practice of worshiping ancestors exists. It has been a crucial factor in maintenance of social cohesion, stability and social constraint remains persuasive.

3.3.5 Minor Identity Markers

Minor identity markers serve to distinguish a Mutsonga from a host of other indigenous South Africans. These markers include a wide range of features such as traditional foodstuffs – *timanga* ("peanuts"), *ntsumbulab* ("cassava"), *mihlata* ("sweet potatoes"), *mavele* ("maize corn"), *ni maxalani* ("barley"), and *n'wahuva* (millet") – as well as new recipes and preparation techniques. According to Vatsonga oral tradition, the Vatsonga are unique for their staple foods such as *ntsumbula* ("cassava roots") and *Mavele* ("maize corn"), which originated in Brazil but were introduced to the indigenous people in South Africa by the Vatsonga merchants.

Other minor identity markers include the style of buildings and attire. In 1986, a community project that came to be known as Chivirika was established with the purported aim to revive traditional attire.[3] Traditionally, Vatsonga women wear *tinguvu* ("a long cloth of about 50m to 60m stitched in a gathering fashion to form a huge skirt") around their waists. Another aspect of traditional attire is *minceka yo \rhungiwa hi tiharani ni vuhlalu* ("beaded traditional cloths").

Another characteristic of the Vatsonga is their bohemian character. The Vatsonga are down to earth, humble and kind-hearted people. For many centuries, the Vatsonga had lived peacefully

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[3] Chivirika is a self-help embroidery project in Malamulele, whose words and deeds encouraged the Vatsonga preserve and uphold their rich tradition and culture.

with their neighbours. Portuguese sailors who ventured into the interior of the South-East coast of Africa and met Vatsonga's forefathers at the beginning of 1500, declared that it was *i tiko ra vanhu lavanene* (*Terra da boa gente* "the land of kind people") (Junod 1977:31). It is this mild and peaceful character coupled with their ignorance of warfare that allowed the Vatsonga to be subjugated by Soshangane and his followers. Halala and Mthebule (2014:11) reveal that "the Nguni, who numbered no more than three hundred people, were able to impose their military system and discipline on the Vatsonga because of their military power".

In many other features, the Vatsonga are similar to other indigenous folks in southern Africa in that the Vatsonga are part of the African peoples believed to have migrated to the south from central Africa. Like other indigenous languages in Southern Africa, the Vatsonga have proverbs many of them related to those found in IsiZulu, Sesotho and Setswana. For instance, the Xitsonga proverb *Xandla famba xandla vuya* ("hand goes hand comes") is also found in IsiZulu (*Izandla ziyagezana*) and Sesotho (*Diatla di a tlhatswana*). As a result of their oral tradition, folklore is a treasure trove of Vatsonga cultural wealth. That is to say, wise sayings, proverbs, ethics and its moral and religious codes of conduct as well as its social values are all housed in its folklore.

The Vatsonga are cattle herders who do not entrust the care of livestock to the womenfolk. Agriculture plays an important role and cereals, roots and fruits are cultivated. The Vatsonga also practise *lobola* ("dowry"), and *xitshwengwe* ("polygamous marriages"). Circumcision amongst boys serves as a bridge to adulthood. And in some communities, female circumcision is still practiced, though not like in the olden days. The practices of dowry, polygamy and circumcision would provide a source of cultural conflict with the missionaries, as detailed in the following chapter.

3.4   Conclusion

The chapter provides the socio-cultural frame for Xitsonga Bible translation. It examines the question of how cultural identity should be understood in light of cultural theorists, post-colonial scholars and translation studies. Various perspectives on the question of whether the Vatsonga had a cultural identity before the advent of the Swiss missionaries in the late 19th century are also examined.

Evidence is presented to argue that although the Vatsonga were comprised of a large number of clans, each with its own *vuhosi*, and were referred to by a large variety of names, they should

nonetheless be seen as a loosely affiliated ethnic identity. Furthermore, Xitsonga provides for the concept of identity through the terms *vumina* ("selfhood", relating to an individual) and *vuhina* (literally, "ourselves hood", relating to the community) as well as the term *ku hlawulekisa/vuhlawulekisi* "to classify, distinguish, isolate, pinpoint, or single out…" Vatsonga cultural identity is further expressed through oral literature, especially praise songs and annals lists, as well as through traditional religion and a variety of minor identity markers. Although it is undeniable that the Swiss missionaries' activities re-shaped, re-created and in some ways strengthened Vatsonga identity, it is also the case that the Vatsonga had an identity before the advent of the missionaries.

CHAPTER 4

HISTORICAL FRAME OF XITSONGA BIBLE TRANSLATION

4.1   Introduction

This chapter provides the historical frame of Xitsonga Bible translation through a description of the interactions of the Vatsonga and their language with both colonialists and missionaries. It will provide the historical framework of the Xitsonga Bible translations from the earliest encounters with the Portuguese to the pivotal arrival of the Swiss missionaries in the latter part of the 19th century.

The chapter is organised as follows: The historical overview begins with indications of translation before the watershed event of the arrival of the Swiss missionaries in the late 1880s. Thereafter, an exposition on the role of the Swiss missionaries follows to show the ways in which the Swiss missionaries influenced Vatsonga cultural identity by mission stations, Bible translation and evangelisation and the reshaping of the Xitsonga language identity by language learning, harmonisation of dialectal variants, orthographic development, literacy, and the status of Xitsonga in colonial Mozambique.

4.2   Translation before the Missionaries

Oral translation by the people currently known as the Vatsonga started long before the arrival of the Swiss missionaries in the late 1880s, when their ancestors traded in precious metals like gold, silver and copper with merchants from the Middle and Far East. The Vatsonga forefathers also engaged in oral translation when Arab slavemasters prowled the South-Eastern coastline in search for slaves. However, translation was recorded for the first time when the Portuguese seafarer Vasco Da Gama and his crew members came into contact with the inhabitants of *Tiko ra vanhu lavanene* (Portuguese *Terra da boa gente* ["land of good people"]) along the *Nambu wa Koporo* (Portuguese *Rio do Cobre*; literally "Copper River") in the Nharrime area on January 11, 1498 (Junod 1977:30-31).

The exchange that ensued heralded the dawn of Xitsonga translation. Vasco da Gama's translator, Martim Afonso, who lived for many years in Congo, narrates in his Diary-Roteiro

how pleased the local leader was on being given a pair of trousers, a jacket, hat and bracelets. "*Langutani leswi va ndzi nyikeke swona,*" said the local leader to his followers. (Portuguese: *Batiam Ihe as palmas por cortezia*; literally "Look what they have given me"). The leader then instructed his followers that the two crew members who had visited his quarters "*leswaku lava va xuxisiwa swinene*" (Portuguese: *Mandau agasalhar as dois homens*, literally "that they must compassionately be entertained") (Junod ibid.).

The names of local rulers were recorded in the diaries of Portuguese sailors (Junod 1977:71-72; also see Halala & Mtebule 2014):

> INHACA (modern spelling Nyaka)
> ZEMBE
> RUMO or VUMO or FUMO, which obviously indicates Mpfumu in the modern
>   spelling
> MENA LEBOMBO refers to *Hi mina Lebombo* (Lebombo is Rivombo, in modern
>   orthography).

The appearance of these names in the diaries not only testifies that Xitsonga was spoken in this "country of good people," but also gives a glimpse of the earliest instances of translation of Xitsonga.

Bill (1984) draws to attention to the fact that, "apart from traces of words recorded by Portuguese sailors, other travellers who passed through the South-East coast of Africa made simple lists or 'vocabularies' of the languages they encountered." An example is the list of Dr Wm Peters, on which W. H. I. Bleek relied for the "vocabulary of the language of Lourenzo-Marques," and which formed the basis of his material in *The Languages of Mosambique* (1856) for the Delagoa Bay area. Bleek also quotes from the "greatly inferior" vocabulary of William White, whose *Journal of a Voyage from Madras to Columbo and Delagoa Bay* was published in 1800. He gives, for example, in White's lists the words *gulloway* ("pig") (modern Xitsonga spelling *nguluve*); *matee* ("water") (modern Xitsonga spelling *mati*), and *ribgea* ("stone") (modern Xitsonga spelling *ribye*). Bleek's work represents the first systematic attempt to list material from the Tsonga group.

Table 3 below shows some of the thirty words in Bleek's collection of words in Xitsonga as it was spoken around Maputo and their equivalents in the standard Xitsonga orthography.

Table 3. Bleek's Vocabulary List (adapted from Bill 1984)

Language of "Lourenzo-Marques" (Xitsonga as spoken around Maputo in 19th century)	Standard Xitsonga orthography	English meaning
tinyanyana (pl.)	*tinyanyana*	bird
tanda	*tandza*	egg
matanda/amanda	*matandza/mandza*	eggs
folle	*fole*	tobacco
misava	*misava*	earth
lokoatilovabaleka	*lokotiloribaleka*	storm, tempest
tsirrame	*xirhami*	cold
di'ambo	*dyambu*	sun
munduko	*mundzuku*	tomorrow
mundhluana	*mundlwana*	the day after
muti	*muti*	settlement
tsikomo	*xikomu*	hatchet
tsitsongile	*xi xongile*	beautiful
va-karreleke	*vakarheleke*	tired
a-nga-ambala-ngaentsumo	*a ngaambalanganchumu*	naked, bare
tsaisa	*xahisa*	hot, warm

Vatsonga history did not begin with the arrival of the Swiss mission in Northern Transvaal in the late 1800s. Instead, the history of Xitsonga translation proves that the people referred to as Vatsonga today have been in existence centuries before the Swiss missionaries arrived.

4.3   The Swiss Missionaries

4.3.1   Establishment of Valdezia

The Vatsonga were initially evangelised by missionaries from Switzerland, a smallish country surrounded by the Alpine mountain range in the heart of Europe (see Latourette 1978:319-378, 460-464 for an overview of missions to non-whites in South Africa). They were Switzerland's contribution to the mission endeavour which descended on Africa to sow the Good News to the indigenous peoples (see Latourette 1978:366-367, 402; Bill 1965:149). According to Maluleke (1995:2):

> Originally (1875-1882), Swiss missionary work in South Africa was the concern of the *L'Eglise Libre du Canton de Vaud.* From 1883 to 1928, it became the joint concern of the free churches of the cantons Vaud, Neuchâtel and Geneva who together formed a missionary society called *La Mission Romande.* In 1929, the society became a national

Swiss Protestant concern called *La Mission Suise dans l'Afrique du Sud* (Swiss Mission in South Africa [SMSA]).

The Swiss nationality of the missionaries influenced various aspects of their missionary endeavours, as will become clear below. Illustration 2 shows the location of the cantons of Vaud, Neuchâtel and Geneva in the western part of the country.

In the early 1870s, two French speaking Swiss ministers from *L'Eglise Libre du Canton de Vasud* (The Free Church of the Canton of Vaud), Paul Berthoud and Ernest Creux, arrived at the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society (PEMS) at Morija in Basotholand (see Illustration 3). This happened because of the intimate relations between the Protestant churches of France and Switzerland (Du Plessis 1965/1911:330). While deriving their support from their own church, they stood under the direction of the Paris Society. There they spent three years (1873-1875) in an internship on mission work learning the Sesotho language and culture before proceeding to the erstwhile Northern Transvaal.

Berthoud and Creux proceeded to settle in the Northern Transvaal among the Vatsonga at Riyonde ("Piesangskop" [banana hill]) in the Zoutpansberg area (Maluleke 1995:16; see also Masumbe 2005). Additional members of the missionary exploratory expedition were the wives of Berthoud and Creux, and a number of Sotho evangelists/teachers – Adolphe Mabille with his wife and two children, Eliakim Matlanyane, Asser Sekgakgabane, Bethuel Raditau and Josiah Molepo (Rejoice 1975:19, cf. Creux 1921:2). The missionaries had been led to understand that all native tribes dwelling in Northern Transvaal made use of the Sesotho language, which they had mastered. However, this tribe did not understand Sesotho. There was no other alternative for them but to acquire the new speech of the Vatsonga (Du Plessis 1965/1911:331-332).

The new settlement was located in the area later to be known as *Xipilongo* ("Speloken"). The missionaries "bought" Klipfontein farm that belonged to a Scotsman named Jon Watson for the price of one of their wagons. The acquisition of land for a mission station had not been without difficulties. In a bid to consolidate the Boer hegemony, "the ZAR government had arrested the missionaries for months in Marabastad (the Zoutpansberg headquarters of the ZAR) for having purchased a piece of land and settled in it without any written authorisation from the authority. Albasini (the self-styled chief of the Vatsonga) had agreed for the missionaries to buy Klipfontein farm" shortly after their arrival in Spelonken (Halala &

Illustration 2. Map of Switzerland

Ṽa-Moneri E. Creux na P. Berthoud ni ṽapfuni ṽa ṽona ni midyangu ya ṽona hi lembe ra 1875.

Illustration 3. Creux and Berthoud. Xitsonga caption: "Messers E. Creux and P. Berhound, their respective families as well as their assistants in 1875" (courtesy Giyani Archives).

Le 9 juillet 1950 à Valdézia (Transvaal)

Le 5 novembre 1950 à Lausanne

la Mission Suisse

a fêté le 75ᵉ anniversaire de sa fondation

Valdézia en 1875
à l'arrivée de MM. Creux et Berthoud

Non pas à nous, Eternel, non pas à nous,
mais à ton nom donne gloire...
Ps. 115: 1.

MISSION SUISSE DANS L'AFRIQUE DU SUD, 5, CHEMIN DES CÈDRES, LAUSANNE
IMPRIMERIES RÉUNIES S. A., LAUSANNE

Illustration 4. Valdezia in 1875 (courtesy Swiss Archives, William Cullen Library, University of Witwatersrand)

Mtebule 2014:171, see also Maluleke 1994b:5-7). The Swiss missionaries went on to establish the first ever Swiss Mission Station in Xipilongo. They named it Valdezia from the Latin word for Vaud, the Swiss canton from which they originated (Halala & Mthebule 2014:169). See Illustration 4 for an early photo of Valdezia.

Some local chiefs like "Hosi Sunduza Mhinga mistrusted the missionaries' project as they suspected that their evangelism was a pretext to rob them of ancestral land" (Halala & Mtebule 2014:176). The Swiss mission's arrival in Spelonken coincided with the discovery of diamonds in Kimberly, and later the discovery of gold in the Witwatersrand. The mining revolution was later to rob chiefdoms and the missionaries of economically active men through the migratory labour system.

In the ensuing years, Valdezia was to earn a fitting label as the cradle, the genesis, and the bastion of the Vatsonga civilization. Valdezia lies in the Levubu Valley, about 30 kilometres North-East from the Louis Trichard municipality and 12 kilometres from Elim. According to Maluleke (1994b:16), Valdezia is "now completely surrounded by SAPECO tea, coffee and fruit estates. It consists of two villages, Valdezia and Mambedi." Speaking on 12 July 2015 at the celebration of 140 year anniversary of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in South Africa (EPSA) which was founded by the Swiss mission, Rev S Nyambi the church moderator cited Isaiah 51:1 and visualised Valdezia as the rock from which the Xitsonga cultural identity was founded. He also expressed a wish that Valdezia "should be proclaimed a national heritage site," a wish which was also endorsed by the mayor of the local municipality of Makhado (formerly, Louis Trichardt municipality).

4.3.2   Mission Stations and the Church

The objective of the Swiss mission society *La Mission de la Romande* was to bring light to a country believed to have been steeped in the sordid mud of darkness and sin. The mission's burning ambition was to evangelise and civilise at all cost – to use everything at their disposal to deliver the African heathens from the abyss of darkness into the sanctuary of light (see Halala & Mtebule 2014).

The gospel was first proclaimed to the Vatsonga by two Basotho evangelists who were part of the Swiss missionary expedition from Basotholand to the Spelonken foothills in 1875. As time went by, a network of mission stations was established in the northern and eastern parts of the Transvaal. Later congregations were established on the Gold Reef in the Southern Transvaal

and in the mining towns in the Free State to cater for the local miners pulled by the rapid growth of mining industry. There were congregations in cities like Pretoria and in Zululand where the Vatsonga were found in large numbers.

Table 4 provides the names of the mission stations around the country and the years in which they were established. Illustration 5 provides a map with the location of the mission stations.

Table 4. Mission stations founded by the Swiss missionaries

Date founded	Name of mission station
1875	Valdezia (founded by P. Berthoud and E. Creux)
1886	Shiluvane (founded by E. Thomas)
1880	Magude (founded by Josefa Mhalamhala)
1890	School for Evangelists, Valdezia
1896	Dzombo
1897	Pretoria (founded by Jaques)
1898	Mhinga
1898	Evangelist school at Shiluvane
1904	Johannesburg (also date of first conference of South African missions)
1905	Kuruleni
1911	Premier Mine Pretoria
1927	Masana
1931	Shirley
1931	Brakpan
1931	Spring
1931	Welkom
1931	Cedarville
1931	Mvenyane
1931	Carletonville
1931	Giyani

Source: Swiss Archives, William Cullen Library, University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

Illustration 5. Map of Swiss Mission Stations in South Africa (courtesy of the Giyani Archives).

The missionaries managed to spread the Gospel, and to enlighten the local people by establishing a network of mission stations in the northern and eastern parts of the Transvaal. Missions stations were established on pieces of land bought by missionaries to run their affairs, Maluleke (1994b) brings to attention that the land area purchased by Swiss missionaries was much larger than the area designated as the mission station.

Missions stations contrasted with traditional villages in many respects, except that they were anchored within the Vatsonga society. Headed by a missionary, a mission station had a way of running its affairs that was not familiar to Vatsonga. Its primary aim was to engage itself in evangelical enterprise, but also delve in the development of education and health amongst its "subjects." In the passing of time, it was discovered that mission centres had created a rift between the converts and non-coverts as their faith, beliefs, way of life differed greatly.

Mission stations were, in the language of Gentzler (2008) and his fellow Cultural Approach theorists in Translation Studies, translation centres where the Swiss missionaries' translation process of everything ethnocentric took place without hindrance. Evangelisation, language policy, schools administration and health welfare of the society were planned, formulated and implemented from these Christian villages.

The clerics were referred to as *Vafundisi* ("ministers"). To distinguish the missionaries from African ministers, the missionaries were called *muneri* (singular)/ *vaneri* (plural) which is a corrupt form of an Afrikaans honorific title *Meneer* ("Mister"). Both missionaries and ministers' spouses were respectfully called *Yefro* (singular)/ *Vayefro* (plural) by the majority of Christians. *Yefro* is an adaptation from Afrikaans word *juffrou/jufrau* ("damsel").

A missionary acted as the priest-in-charge and general administrator of the mission station. Guided by religious principles and values, the missionary administrator set rules and regulation. The Swiss missionaries' teachings never permitted converts to embrace any practice that was not Christian. Traditional practices were rooted out, irrespective of whether they were morally good or not. Some of these practices were not replaced with new ones. As a result, the whole fabric of the nation was eroded. The Swiss missionaries saw the protection and transformation of "heathen" societies as part of their mission. As such, they employed various religious propaganda to achieve their goal. The new converts were not allowed to speak, act, sing or dance "like a heathen." D.C. Marivate, born and bred at a mission station in Valdezia, was excommunicated – put under discipline for three months – for going to a "heathen" dancing ceremony (see Masumbe 2002:35). All converts were expected to live in accordance with

Christian principles. Assisted by church elders, the missionaries could easily monitor all traditional practices at close range, due to the proximity of the missionary's house and the church.

If the missionaries governed their converts at the mission stations with an iron hand, what would have attracted people suffering from injustices to these places? The Swiss missionaries' uneasy relationship with firmly established chiefdoms meant that most of the people that the missionaries could attract were refugees. And refugees are by nature a vulnerable species. They would bow to any direction where there is security, food and shelter. Many of the Vatsonga, being refugees, landless and homeless people at the time, were fascinated by the missionaries' evangelisation drive.

Maluleke (1994b) indicates that the people among whom Swiss missionaries chose to work, namely the Gwambas, were alleged by local people in the Zoutpansberg area to be "thieves, liars and deceitful people." Maluleke (ibid.) maintains that

> … many of the early converts of Swiss missionaries were cast in this light—e.g. Lydia Xihlomulo, Jonas, and Calvin Maphophe. The evils from which such converts would be escaping would include the forced marriage of girls to polygamists, accusations of witchcraft, enforced attendance at circumcision schools, and being prevented from going to western-type schools. But the promise of land and a home was probably a significant factor in the attraction of converts to Valdezia, for such stations as Valdezia became places of refuge for displaced persons.

According to Halala and Mthebule (2014), Lydia Xihlomulo was the first person baptised as a Christian by Berthoud on 1st October 1876, and the christening process was a typical instance of a refugee. She had suffered under traditional healers, and was divorced by her husband. All her children had died. Her brother beat her repeatedly demanding that she get married so that he could get *ndzovolo* ("bride-price"). Due to these misfortunes she sought sanctuary with the missionaries at the mission station.

As a religious institution, the Swiss mission gradually built up an indigenous church, the Tsonga Presbyterian Church (TPC), which became autonomous in 1962, although it still relied for support on the Swiss churches. The church's name was later changed to the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in South Africa (EPCSA). Yet to the locals, the church is informally known as *Kereke ya Swissa* ("Swiss Mission Church"), a testament to the enduring heritage of

the Swiss missionaries. In Mozambique it is referred to as *Igreja Presbiteriana do Mozambique* ("The Presbyterian Church of Mozambique"). The church's emblem proudly displays a traditional Vatsonga shield with the acronym SMSA for Swiss Mission in South Africa on it. On the sides of the shield run the motto: "One way, One heart". Xitsonga is the official language of the EPCSA.

The synod is the supreme body of the EPCSA. An executive committee acts on its behalf in between sessions of the synod. Several committees assist the synod, e.g. education, health, youth, literature, ecumenism, women's guild, men's guild. The EPCSA is a member of the Church Unity Commission. The activities and priorities of the EPCSA include evangelism and planting of new churches, promoting the spiritual growth of the church, playing a frontier role in the battle against HIV/AIDS, the empowerment of ministers, lay preachers and administrative staff with management skills, and improving the financial situation of the church. (For the church's creed and it hierarchical structure, see the church's constitution, amended in October 2015.)

The Swiss missionaries felt blessed to be the first people on earth to have guided the Vatsonga from the abyss and darkness of heathism into the light of Christianity. In a way, the Swiss missionaries owned the Vatsonga nation as people who fell in their sphere of ministry. Harries (2007:159) explains:

> This process, whereby the Swiss mission became a de facto national church, confirmed the belief of several of the missionaries that they had been ordained by God to save the Gwamba. The Gwamba "were the race that God had prepared for us".

4.3.3   Re-shaping Xitsonga Linguistic Identity

4.3.3.1   Language Learning

The most formidable social challenge faced by the missionaries as well as the Basotho evangelists, was the medium of communication. As mentioned in the preceding section, the Vatsonga immigrants who sought refuge at Spelonken were from different places in present day Mozambique. Hence they spoke different speech forms. Furthermore, the Swiss missionaries "were not prepared to speak the Xitsonga language because their initial intention was to work amongst the Sesotho speaking communities or those who speak cognate languages" (Harries 2007:157-158). They had no Xitsonga resources such as grammars or dictionaries for reference. Nonetheless, one of the remarkable facts about the Swiss

missionaries is that, unlike the colonists who imposed their language on the colonised people, the missionaries taught themselves the local language. Harries (2007:41) posits that

> … the emergence of African written languages like Gwamba (Thonga or Tsonga) was not, as in Europe, a product of the class needs of an emerging bourgeoisie … the delineation and development of the Thonga language was the product of the evangelizing drive of foreign missionaries.

The missionaries observed and listened attentively to what the locals said in their own language, "pointing here and pointing there, asking the eternal question, '*xini lexi'* [what is this]?" (Helgesson 1971:64). In this way the Swiss missionaries learned to speak the local language, re-ordering and systematising the orthography along the way as they continued with their linguistic study and research. It took the Swiss missionaries almost half a decade to learn the language and the culture of the local people before they could evangelise in Xitsonga, let alone translate the Bible:

In fact it was not until four years after arrival that missionaries felt confident enough to preach in the local language. The Basotho evangelists therefore laid the foundations for mission for a period of about five years, from 1873 to 1878 (Maluleke 1994b).

According to Schneider (e-mail correspondence 3 January 2014) the first catechisms and sermons delivered by the Basotho evangelists Eliakim Matlanyane and Segagabane represent therefore a Xitsonga translation from Sesotho.

The Xitsonga spoken by the missionaries was affectionately dubbed *Xineri* ("Xineri Language", that is, the language of the *vaneri* ["missionaries"]) because of the unsusal way in which they pronounced Xitsonga. Maluleke (1995:37) points out:

> In spite of the zeal and the linguistic insight which the early missionaries applied to their language studies, they still, for the most part, spoke a form of the Xitsonga language to which its mother-tongue speakers gave a special name, 'Xineri', the language spoken by the 'vamuneri', (*menere* [Afrikaans "masters"]). that is, the missionaries.

4.3.3.2   Dialectal Variants and Harmonisation

As mentioned in 4.3.2. above, when the Swiss missionaries met the Vatsonga for the first time in Spelonken, this group of people was misplaced, refugees – people on the run from injustices. Nearly each group of these refugees in Spelonken and various communities spoke different speech forms or dialects.

In order to deal with the problem of different speech forms spoken by their proselytes in different parts of Southern Africa, the Swiss missionaries resorted, though in a small scale, to language harmonization or unification.

Scholars like Doke (Doke (1931), Haugen (1950, 1969), Msimang (2000) Babane and Chauke (2015), and a host of others perceive what is known as harmonisation in sociolinguistics as a process which binds mutually intelligible/related languages or dialects into one standard language for all speakers. And most of these scholars use both harmonisation and unification interchangeably. Msimang (2000:165) posits that "in language planning jargon, harmonisation is used synonymously with unification." Similarly, Lestrade (1935:137) indicates, "unification seeks to construct a common language for such a dialect-group by employing as much as possible, forms which are common to all variants in the group, and where this is not possible, by the use of forms common to the predominant majority, or in previously-attained literary forms." Msimang (2000:172) also notes that "language harmonisation means various things to various people. It can mean the merging of a number of dialects to form a single common language, or merging a number of languages belonging to the same group to form one standard variety or still harmonising only orthographies, and this is strongly desirable in the case of Nguni and Sotho languages."

The Swiss missionaries were free to unify and elevate all dialectal varieties into a standard level according to Haugen's (1969:267) 'compositional thesis approach.' Haugen's approach dictates that, "composite varieties are taken as the basis of the standard and each variety is taken to be representative of the locality where it is used". Or else, they could have used Msimang's (2000) "dialect democracy approach." According to Msimang's (2000:166) "a dialect democracy approach in which all dialects may be elevated to the standard level. It is this kind of standardisation which is very akin to harmonisation. In such an instance, various dialects are then unified, their variants refined and neutralised until they merge into a common standard language."

Yet the Swiss missionaries chose to select and elevate the form of the language which was spoken in the Nkuna and Khoseni chiefdoms for standardisation, an approach to language harmonisation similar to Haugen's "unitary thesis approach" where a dialect is selected out of other dialects and elevated into a standard language." In this way, the unification of dialect variants in Xitsonga reinforced orthographic uniformity. It is interesting to note that although the 1929 version appeared on the public scene a year or two before Doke's (1931) *Report on the Unification of Shona Dialects*, it resembles it in matters of theory, methods and application. This kind of language engineering, to use a term coined in the aftermath of Doke's report (1931) on harmonisation, became the forerunner of standardisation of Xitsonga. Since words and phrases from major dialects were included in the translation, everybody 'owned' the translation, that is, everyone who could read understood the message.

It is informative to compare the ways in which the development of the Xitsonga language was profoundly different from the radical birth of languages such as Afrikaans and Quebec French. Both Afrikaans and Quebec French sprang to life as a result of activism against Anglicisation or British assimilation.

Purported to be the white man's language born in Africa, Afrikaans sprang into life as a result of Anglicisation by the Cape Government, and the fact that the Dutch language was gradually forgotten by the new generations of Burgers. Gillomee (2003:197) indicates that from as early as 1821, the Afrikaner fought against the English cultural supremacy and anglicisation where "English was to be the language of the government." The Free Burghers' prolonged stay in Africa, meant that their generation and the generations that followed could no long communicate in pure Dutch as it was spoken in Amsterdam, Holland. The strife for the recognition of Afrikaans was manned and championed by Afrikaner national and church leaders. One of the Afrikaans social activists on the forefront of the fight for Afrikaans, was an academic and translator named Stephanus (S.J.) Du Toit. Du Toit is reputed to have single-handedly turned a movement for Afrikaans as a religious medium into one with classic nationalist aims.

Writing in *De Zuid Afrikaan*, July 22, 1874, he said "the language of the nation expresses the character of the nation. Deprive a nation of its vehicle of its thoughts and you deprive it of the wisdom of its ancestors" (quoted by Gillomee 2003:217). For Du Toit, Afrikaans was a white man's tongue, a pure Germanic language, one of purity, simplicity, brevity and vigor.

Afrikaners must be taught that Afrikaans was their mother tongue, and that their duty was to develop Afrikaans as a *landstaal* (national language) along with Dutch" (Ibid.).

Determined to maintain the separate identity of Afrikaans, General James Barry Hertzog insisted on the principle of the absolute equality of the Afrikaner and English elements. According to Boyce (1974:213), Hertzog not only advocated the complete equality of treatment of the Dutch and English, but he explained his concept of the South African nation as consisting of "two streams, the English speaking peoples and the Afrikaner, the two streams would flow parallel in the national life; the one would not be inferior to the other."

By contrast, Quebec French or *français québécois* as it is known in French, has its roots in old European French brought to Canada by pioneer French colonists. For two centuries (i.e. from 1759 when the British seized control of New France to 1959 when the wind of change covered the length and the breadth of Quebec province) Quebecois fought against English unilingualism, anglisation, and assimilation. The struggles of the Quebecois to maintain and uphold their language and cultural identify has been explicitly captured by Howard-Hassmann (1991:412): "In 1759 the British conquered New France (Quebec), inaugurating over two hundred years of struggle by the Quebecois to maintain their language and culture against the onslaught of the English."

Since 1959, the province of Quebec has been swept off her feet by the wind of massive transformation metaphorically referred to in French as the *Révolution tranquille* ("Quiet Revolution"). The Quiet Revolution ushered in an era epitomised not only by socio-political developments, but also by sociolinguistic changes which enabled Quebeckers to assert and affirm their linguistic and cultural identiy as a Canadian nation. According to Howard (1991:413-414), the Quiet Revolution ultimately led to the introduction of

> …language legislation, Bill 101, passed in 1977, declared French the only language of the Quebec government and courts. The bill also declared that children of immigrants coming both from outside Canada and from other provinces,were required to attend French schools (and that French-speaking parents could no longer send their children to Englishs schools). Finally, Bill 101 instituted a wide range of rules declaring French to be the language of the workplace, protecting any employee from demands that he or she speaks English.

In contrast with the Afrikaans and Quebecois language activists, the Swiss missionaries followed the same route used by other Protestant missionaries in developing an oral language until it was codified and standardised. Harries (1989:86) posits:

> Henri Berthoud, who was the mission's leading expert in 'Gwamba' and who, as a major explorer, was familiar with many of the language variations of Southern Africa, argued from a pragmatic perspective that a single language with a common grammar and orthography would reduce the mission's printing costs. He also opposed the adoption of a further grammar and orthography as he feared, with good reason, that the creation of two written languages would divide the followers of the mission. Berthoud hoped that the written Gwamba language would unify, in much the same way as Jacobine French, High German, or Castilian had in Europe linked large numbers of people who shared, however distantly, a linguistic relationship.

In following the Protestant missionary route, the Swiss missionaries adopted a method of creating a language out of a maze of dialects. Luther's translation of the Bible gave rise to the German language – it constituted a first decisive self-affirmation of literary German. The Swiss missionaries were tormented by challenges similar to the ones which troubled Martin Luther. In translating the Bible into Xitsonga, the Swiss missionaries had several speech forms from which they should choose a language suitable for Bible translation. Giving an example about German, Brisset (2012:282-283), notes that

> … the difficulty of translation arose from the fact that the target language was not a single language but a number of dialects. Good German is the German of the people. But the people speak an infinite number of Germans. One must then translate into a German that somehow rises above the multiplicity of Mundarten without rejecting them or suppressing them. Thus, Luther attempted two things: translate into a German that a priori can only be local, his own German, *Hochdeutsch*, but at the same time elevate, by the very process of translation, this local German to the status of a common German, a lingua franca. So that the German he used did not become itself a language cut off from the people, he had to preserve in it something of the *Mundarten*, of the general modes of expression and of the popular dialects.

The re-shaping of Xitsonga also differed from the radical development of both Afrikaans and Quebec French in that Xitsonga was reshaped by people who were not Xisonga mother tongue speakers. The majority of Vatsonga were oblivious that their language was being refurbished.

This might be the reason why the re-shaping of Xitsonga neither involved activism or legal battles. It developed peacefully until it reached a stage where it became one of the country's nine official languages long after the Swiss missionaries.

4.3.3.3 Orthographic Development

The most important task facing the missionaries was the transcription of the sound system and the description of the syntactic system of the language spoken in the area. Paul Berthoud and Ernest Creux laid the foundation for Shigwamba (as mentioned previously, their name and spelling for the language Xitsonga) to become a written language. On the whole, the Swiss missionaries followed the same route used by other Protestant missionaries in developing an oral language until it was codified and standardised. The story of the early years of their endeavour is one of unending linguistic dispute about the orthography to be adopted. Bill and Masunga (1983:8) explain how Xitsonga words were initially written before the unification of the spelling system:

> Words were translated directly from Sesotho to Xigwamba, the local dialect of Tsonga, hence the obvious Sotho influence on the first written Tsonga works. For example, the Sotho *b* for Tsonga *v*; the Sotho *o* for Tsonga *u*; and the Sotho *e* for Tsonga *i.*

During the ensuing years, the writing of the second and third person pronouns was changed from *o* to *u*, a more phonetic spelling. In addition, the early use of the apostrophe in the demonstrative adjective and relative pronouns, which was used to denote elision, was dropped. For instance: *vanhu lava'kulu* ("great men") was changed to *vanhu lava kulu* and *vanhu la'va teke ("*the people who came") was changed to *vanhu lava va teke*.

The way in which the Swiss missionaries were obsessed with and possessive about Xitsonga is vividly expressed by Harries (1989:43) in the following lines:

> The monopoly held by the mission and later the government over the publication of Thonga books, crucially shaped and determined what Africans read. The written Thonga language was not only controlled by the missionaries but, in a manner that combined endearment, loyalty and possession, they almost owned it; Thonga was 'our' language with 'our' orthography.

Other missionary societies which followed the Swiss into the area also had strong feelings about the orthography to be adopted, and it was many years before a standardised form was

achieved. Between colleagues of the Swiss mission working in Mozambique and the Transvaal there were differences of opinion as well. Decisions taken at missionary conferences by people actually working with speakers of Xitsonga had to be referred back to the mission council in Lausanne, Switzerland for ratification, and here further differences of opinion arose between the mission authorities, who had never heard the language spoken. They referred these questions concerning orthography to the linguistics experts of the day, Karl Richard Lepsius in Berlin and Ferdinand de Saussure in Geneva. The Swiss mission finally decided on the "Standard Alphabet" of Lepsius.[1]

This process resulted in innumerable delays and considerable frustrations for missionaries in the field, who saw their carefully prepared manuscripts gathering dust for several years. Further delays in the publication of the first works were caused by the fact that the missionaries had no access to a printing press. This was an unusual situation, considering the history of printing in Xhosa, Tswana and Sotho, for instance, where the missionaries arrived with printing presses in their luggage.

All the material prepared by the early missionaries had to be sent to Lausanne for typesetting and printing. The main printers, Georges Bridel et Cie, had agreed to print material for the mission practically free of charge, and this caused further delays. Yet in spite of all these obstacles, the first Gwamba Book was published only eight years after the mission started.

It is important to note that the question of Xitsonga orthography was not decisively settled by the publication of the first translation of the Bible in 1907 or revised edition in 1929. As late as 1944, the Revd Charles Austin Chawner of the Assemblies of God listed twelve different orthographies in use for the Xitsonga language in a supplement to his *Step by Step in Thonga* (1938). In 1949, at a meeting of the Ronga, Tswa and Tsonga language representatives in Pretoria, a common orthography was decided on for these three cognate languages. In 1962 the Department of Bantu Education finally standardised the orthography through the publication of the *Tsonga terminology and orthography No.2*, which initially had been published in the Bantu Education Journal and amended in the October 1960 issue of the same journal. The

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[1] Karl Richard Lepsius (1810-1884) was a pioneering linguist and Egyptologist who developed the Standard Alphabet, initially to transliterate Egyptian hieroglyphic writing. He extended the Standard Alphabet to write African languages using diacritic marks.

centrally located dialect of the Vatsonga area was chosen as the basis for the standard language form.

Although Xitsonga uses the Latin alphabet for its writing system, the language is unique amongst its neighbouring languages because of the inclusion of the letter "x" in its orthography, which is derived from Portuguese. This letter "x" is pronounced /ʃ/ like the initial sound in *shape* and *show* in English. Words borrowed from other languages which start with the consonants "sh" such as *Shigalo* or *Shigamani* are spelled with the letter "x" to become *Xigalo* and *Xigamane* in Xitsonga.

4.3.3.4   Literacy

Of all strategies and methods employed by the Swiss missionaries in improving Xitsonga cultural life, literacy ranks as the most effective measure. Literacy positioned itself as a translation of the Swiss missionaries' brand of Christianity, their social and intellectual beliefs and practices into their Vatsonga hosts. As a driving force behind a massive plan of social engineering, the skills of writing and reading transformed the Vatsonga society into what it is today.

According to Harries (2007:183-187):

> The Swiss missionaries believed that literacy, apart from strengthening and spreading the evangelical message, would introduce new social developments in the life of the local people with far reaching effects. Literacy would revolutionize the natives' intellectual habits and way of thinking, create nothing less than a new people emerging from darkness.

The missionaries claimed that literacy would provide a sense of morality which they believed was denied by kinship groups or chiefdoms. But the actual fact was that they disliked chieftainship as well as kinship – they saw these traditional institutions as rivals to Christianity. Writing would also stimulate memory, and fix images in the imagination and sentiments. Most importantly, the missionaries believed that a new Christian literature would produce a community of readers who shared common expression, ideas and principles, and it would extend their moral community from kin-based clan to a 'tribe' or 'nation' defined by a fixed written language.

Initially, the introduction of literacy amongst the Vatsonga was aimed at the new converts so that they could read the Bible, thus spreading the gospel without constant preaching on the part of the missionaries and the Vatsonga teachers and evangelists. The Swiss missionaries had several reasons for introducing literacy amongst the Gwamba people. Apart from their belief that "literacy would domesticate the savage mind by providing knowledge," (Harries 2007:188), it was also discovered that "literacy allowed the mission to spread without incurring evangelization costs" (ibid.). In ensuing years, the reading skills, coupled with other training like preaching, produced a number of priests and teachers who helped the missionaries in their evangelising work, education, health efforts and ethnography.

The missionaries also believed that Africa's isolation from the world of reading was one of the major reasons for the continent's material backwardness. Unbeknown to the missionaries, literacy was later to launch the Vatsonga's inquisitive mind on the road to unravelling knowledge hidden not only in the Bible, but in all books filled with wisdom. It was to translate the old traditional life into a modern one which competes with the best in the world.

Literacy attracted multitudes of Vatsonga who desired to learn to read and write to mission stations. Parents sent their young ones to schools while they went to the church. Those who passed their grades over a period of time were trained as evangelists and teachers of their own people. In this way literacy made a significant contribution to the missionaries's evangelising drive as people flocked to schools and to the church, rather than have missionaries move from one village to another sowing Good News to the people. Over time indigenous literacy brought cultural knowledge and traditions into schools and changed the ways in which information is presented and transmitted, thus greatly affecting how people interact with one another. Literacy became – and remains – a powerful instrument of cultural change, especially when the institutions promoting literacy are the churches and schools.

4.3.3.5   Status of Xitsonga in Colonised Mozambique

Geographical and political differences between the Union of South Africa (1910-1960) and Mozambique had a negative impact on the position of Xitsonga in Mozambique. In the Union of South Africa (1910-1960), Xitsonga was taught as a one of the subjects at schools by Swiss mission teacher-evangelists and was also promoted by Swiss missionaries both in the church and in the communities. However, this was not the case in Mozambique. The position of Xitsonga was plagued with negligence and underdevelopment. The Swiss missionaries did teach and promote Xitsonga in Mozambique, but they were cautious because the Portuguese

government viewed them with suspicion, that is, as Protestants missionaries out to open the eyes and transform its indigenous subjects. Xitsonga speakers relied heavily on Xitsonga Bible translation, on other literature published by the Swiss missionaries as well as the missionaries' teachings.

Portuguese dominated the entire sociolinguistic and cultural sphere as the national official language of the country, thus marginalising all indigenous languages like Xitsonga. According to Nguga (Ibid:178),

> … during colonial times, almost all African countries had language policy defined by the settlers who chose what was good for the African people. According to what they thought was best for them to take full advantage of the Africans, different colonial powers designed different language policies for the territories they colonised. Thus, for instance, the Portuguese chose assimilation, or creation of a class of 'assimilados' who would best serve the settlers' interests. Through this policy, the Africans were forced by law to give up their culture and language in order to adopt Portuguese culture and language. This way, the 'assimilados' were expected to be different in their behaviour from their own people whose languages and cultures were despised and completely ignored. The colonial language was the only language, and the use of local languages was confined to rural family situations and eventually banned in modern public life in order to enhance the promotion of a few 'civilised' natives.

As the national official language, Portuguese was bolstered by the policy of assimilation. Usually "assimilation" refers to a situation in which people are absorbed "into a larger group" (The Reader's Digest Oxford Complete Wordfinder 1993), but in the case of the native people in Mozambique, they were "absorbed" into a colonising minority.

The effects of assimilation when applied on a colonised society is amongst other things, marginalisation or even annihilation of languages and culture. As Gentzler (2008:ix) says in the case of native American languages,

> today there is greater awareness of how many Native American languages have been obliterated, how many generations of African slaves were forcibly deprived of their original languages, and how many immigrants were compelled to speak their native languages in secret for fear of punishment in schools or at their workplace.

Gentzler (2008:9) further describes the process of colonisation as follows:

… while initiated via military invasion, [colonisation] was primarily carried out in the school systems, and in the indigenous, black and immigrant communities, of the colonies, with European languages being the norm, and Amerindian, African, East Indian languages being marginalised or even eradicated. The further one advanced through the schools and social institutions, the more Europeanised one's writing and speaking became. For those who wanted to get ahead, the primary means was to learn the language of the coloniser and to translate oneself, linguistically and culturally, into that language.

Fortunately, Xitsonga survived obliteration both in Mozambique and the Union of South Africa. But it will be some years before Xitsonga comes of age in Mozambique because Portuguese is still the national official language, selected for its non-ethnic status, and because Xitsonga mother tongue speakers aspire to be fluent in Portuguese in order to participate in the affairs of the country with ease.

Like almost all colonised countries in the world, Mozambique is a multicultural and multilingual country and boasts a variety of ethnic groups, of which Xitsonga is one. The precise number of independent languages in Mozambique (excluding sign language) is disputed, as illustrated by Nguga (2011:180) in Table 5 below.

Table 5. Number of Mozambican Languages

Source	Year	Number of languages
Cabral	1975	15
Cardoso	2005	25
Firmino	2000	24
Katupha	1988	13
INE	2010	21
Liphola	2009	41
Lopes	1999	20
Marinis	1981	8
Matsinhe	2005	19
Nelimo	1989	20
Ngunga	1987	33
Ngunga	1991	21
Ngunga	2009	29
Yai	1983	13

According to the *Ethnologue* (Simons and Fennig 2017), one of the most up-to-date and thorough sources of language data, Xitsonga (s.v. Tsonga, ISO 639-3 <u>tso</u>) is presently one of 43 languages spoken in Mozambique. Of these 43 languages, "41 are indigenous and 2 are non-indigenous. Furthermore, 2 are institutional, 24 are developing, and 17 are vigorous." Most of these indigenous languages existed either as dialects or full-fledged languages before the Portuguese colonised the country.

Xitsonga in Mozambique did not attain official status as a national language, as it did in South Africa. In this respect, Xitsonga is like other indigenous languages in Mozambique, none of which is an official, national language. However, the fact that Xitsonga was promoted and used in South Africa, both in the schools and eventually as an official language, meant that materials developed in and for South Africa could also be used by Xitsonga speakers in Mozambique.

4.3.4   Early Bible Translations

The missionaries had an ambition to publish a Xitsonga Bible translation that would be the guiding light of blossoming Christianity amongst the Vatsonga. The success of Paul Berthoud and Ernest Creux in codifying the sounds of the local language in an alphabet enabled them to translate chapters and books of the Bible (Bill & Masunga 1983). The translation was simply referred to as *Buku* ("The Book") in that it is the first text to appear within the Vatsonga culture. The *Buku* first appeared as *Buku ya Tsikwembo tŝiṅwe na Tisimo ta Hlengeletano* ("The Book of One God and Hymns of the Congregation") in 1883 (facsimile reprint 1983), translated by Paul Berthoud with the assistance of Ernest Creux (Smit 1970:222). This *Buku* comprises the first five chapters of Genesis, the Ten Commandments and several extracts from Gospel of Saint Mathew and the Gospel of Saint Luke in the New Testament as well as 57 hymns of the congregation.

The first complete biblical books to be translated into Xitsonga were The Gospel according to Saint Luke and the Book of Acts. They were published in 1892 by the British and Foreign Bible Society at the request of the Swiss Mission (Smit 1970:223; Bill & Masunga 1983:12).

Apart from the Basotho Evangelists/ Teachers, notably Eliakim Matlanyane who initiated oral translation of Bible passages into Xitsonga, Schneider (3 January 2014, e-mail correspondence) indicates that the first translation team was manned by missionaries such as Paul Berthoud,

Ernest Creux, Auguste Jaques (not Jacques), and Henri Berthoud. Arthur Grandjean, based in Magude (eKhoseni, Mozambique), also dealt with a good number of Old Testament books.

The pioneering translators were assisted by African translators, who played a crucial role in the whole process, notably Evangelist/ Teacher Timoteo Mandlati and Teachers (later, Pastors) Calvin Maphophe (Madzive, wa ka Chauke), Jonas Maphophe and Samuel Malale. According to Schneider (ibid.):

> These prominent Christian leaders were more than just informants – they made their essential contribution by checking and correcting the first biblical drafts, in collaboration with their missionaries.

Bill and Masunga (1983:94) also provide similar information about missionary translators and their Vatsonga collaborators.

The first complete New Testament appeared in 1894, and was translated by the above mentioned translators as well as Henri Berthoud, Auguste Jacques and Eugene Thomas. It was published in Lausanne (Smit 1970:223; Bill & Masunga 1993:12). Work on the Old Testament began with the books of Genesis and Exodus, translated mainly by Henri Berthoud (Smit 1970:223) and published together in 1896 (Bill & Masunga 1993:12).

The first complete Xitsonga Bible translation was completed in 1907. Translators included the previously mentioned translators as well as Arthur Grandjean, Henri-Alexandre Junond, Samuel Malale, Zedediya Mbhenyane and Paul Rosset with Eugène Thomas as co-ordinator (Bible Societies 200 Years 1804-2004:658). It was printed two volumes in Lausanne, Switzerland by Georges Bridel for the British and Foreign Bible Society (BFBS) in London (Bill and Masunga 1983:94). The BFBS together with the mission headquarters in Switzerland made grants of paper and/or financial aid for printing and binding.

The earliest translations were made directly from Sesotho to Xigwamba (also referred to as Shigwamba or Gwamba), the local dialect of Xitsonga, hence the obvious Sesotho influence on the first written Xitsonga works. As mentioned above, the earliest orthography exhibited Sesotho influence (see section 4.3.4). In addition, the translation imitated the Sesotho translations as it was directly translated from this language. This can be seen from the following phrases and sentences from the 1929 translation which resemble its Sesotho counterpart.

The phrase *hikuva ntungu a wu khaukile* ("because the plague has been cut off") (Num 16:50) has its Xitsonga equivalent viz: *hikuva ntungu a wu herile* ("because the plague has abated") (cf. also the Xitsonga ideophone *khawu*); *khauka/khawukile* is a Sesotho derivation for *tsema/tsemekile* ("cut off") in Xitsonga.

Vutshavelo (cf *chava, vuchavelahwahwa*) is a Sesotho derivation meaning a place of "refuge/asylum/sanctuary". In Num 35:13-32, the word has been used seven times. It is a derived from the Sesotho term *Botshabelo*. The Xitsonga equivalent is *vutumbelo/ ndhawu ya vutumbelo* ("place of refuge"). Also see Deut 4:40-42 in the 1929 edition.

In less than a decade (i.e. from 1875-1883), the appearance of Xitsonga biblical texts in the Vatsonga society, had propelled them from orality into the world of a language translated in such a way that it was electrifying to an oral-based culture, which in turn made them own the Bible. Because the Bible was written in the vernacular, they were bold to say that the Bible is their very own. That is, through the Bible, they can communicate directly with God without the help of an intepretor or a translator. The Xitsonga Bible soon became an asset, a national treasure – a badge of their nationhood or ethnicity which rams home their identity. Their growing knowledge of biblical literature offered them new tactics to grapple with human woes such as slavery, servitude, unending wars and starvation on their long journey to Canaan. In addition, various expressions from the Bible became incorporated as part of the modern language. These include: *tiko ra Ntswamba ni Vulombe* ("the land flowing with milk and honey"), *Musamaria wa Musa* ("The Good Samaritan"), *Moše, mulawuri* ("Moses, the lawgiver" used for a leader who gives instructions to the community), *Samson wanuna wa matimba* ("Samson, a man of power" used to describe a strong man) or *Xihontlovila* ("a Goliath").

4.3.5 Evangelisation and the Re-shaping of Vatsonga Identity

Before this study proceeds, it should be emphasised that while Bible translation played a major role in the enhancement of Xitsonga identity, it was however not the sole cause; there were other issues and activity than translation involved, as will soon become apparent in the following paragraphs. Again, the study would like to point out that the mere transference of words from orality to literacy does not constitute the act of shaping an identity. For this reason, the study will analyse the issue in depth – that is, it will go beyond language/translation as a practice to come out with the whole picture.

Furthermore, the study would like to reiterate the fact that Protestant missionaries' contribution in the entire African continent was incomparable. Through their calling as Bible translators, the Swiss missionaries had become champions of social reformation in Vutsonga. Their evangelical enterprise did not only touch the soul of the nation, but also enhanced the socio-cultural life of the people. This observation has been rightly been captured by Miller-Naudé & Naudé (2010) in their perception of a translator as a transformer.

> It has become clear in recent years that the translator is not a technician who mechanically transfers the meaning of a text in one language into another language. Instead, in every choice that is made, the translator is an agent of change and transformation.

The role played by the Bible translation amongst the Vatsonga is similar to the views expressed by Hayes (1971) in the following lines.

> The influence of the Bible permeates almost every aspect of life in the twentieth century Western world – laws, literature, art, music, architecture, morals, and of course religion. Many of the Bible's words and phrases are part of our current speech; allusions to its stories are widely understood. It is a vital part of our total cultural heritage, indeed, many people would claim that it is, for a variety of reasons, the most important and influential collection of writings ever brought together and bound in a single volume.

Amongst the Vatsonga in particular, no doubt, Swiss missionaries are unsurpassed – they are second to none in championing social reformation. As an agent of socio-religious transformation, the Swiss missionaries' evangelizing work was to leave an everlasting mark on the development of the Vatsonga as a people.

Referring to the Protestant missionaries in general, Masumbe (2005), asserts that apart from their evangelisation enterprise, the missionaries provided social services such as education to the African people, In the case of Swiss missionaries, some paid the ultimate price – losing their lives and those of their loved ones for the sake of converting Vatsonga society to Christianity.

Protestant missionaries like Swiss missionaries in Africa are awe inspiring, a matter of thanksgiving that it would take centuries for generations of Africans to forget. Andrews (2009:1) sums up the missionaries' exploits in moving lyrics, "missionaries were thus visible

saints, exemplars of ideal piety in a sea of persistent savagery." The sacrifice, the generous and compassionate contributions made by missionaries to lighten the intense darkness that is Africa, has been explicitly illustrated by Dangarembga (1988:103) in her classic *Nervous Conditions*, in the following lines:

> The whites on the mission were a special kind of white person, for they were holy. They were about God's business here in darkest Africa. They had given up their comforts and security of their own homes to come and lighten our darkness.

Everywhere, Protestant missionaries are reputed to have given their life to the service of Africa, they dragged it out backwardness and beamed it with rays of Christianity. The selfless contribution to social transformation in Africa at large has been summed up by Wilson (1971:103) in the following extract:

> The gospel is revolutionary, and Christianity has been compelling force of change in society for nearly two thousand years…. The function of the Church is to lead, to initiate new services, new institutions, whether for the education of children and adults, or the care of the sick, the aged, the destitute, or the fostering of skills and organizing the hungry that they may feed themselves. This function was evident throughout medieval Europe: it is clear in contemporary Africa.

While Andrews (2009) and others praise the missionaries' work, other scholars have misgivings. They see missionaries as not significantly different from racists – they were Eurocentric, cruel manipulators and collaborators with the colonialists. Unsavoury as the following excerpt may appear, the study would like to argue that these acts are evangelising strategies which enabled the missionaries to achieve their dream. By strategy is here referred to the action programme, an approach or tactics they used in the field.

In their zeal, missionaries overlooked the fact that the acceptance of Christianity by the locals also depended on mutual respect of the potential convert, his culture and his intellectual abilities. Instead, the Swiss missionaries perceived the locals from Darwin's point of view (Harries 2007:38):

> Social Darwinism influenced the missionary pioneers to believe that the African societies around them were at an early stage of human evolution, roughly equal, in terms of development, to the gentes or clans of pre-feudal Europe. It was thus self-

evident and in the natural order of things that African societies exhibited, however hidden, the same structure as their early European counterparts.

When the Swiss missionaries arrived in Vutsonga they did not know how and where to start their evangelical enterprise. They sought refuge in taxonomy in order to develop the kind of the Xitsonga cultural life that would conform with their own brand of Christianity. According to Harries (1989:87):

> Junod and his fellow missionaries interpreted the African world through the prism of a specific intellectual system or structure of knowledge. This demanded a classification of the myriad of new details emerging as much from the invention of the microscope and telescope as from the discoveries of explorers.

Jeannerat et al (2004:26-27) indicate that "the Swiss missionaries wanted to create a new African characterised as one who defers to authority, accepts hierarchy unquestioningly, embraced Christianity in its entirety, live according to the virtues of piety, thrift, industriousness, sobriety and respectability, would have sound knowledge of health and hygiene and the causation of illness, skilled in modern agricultureal methods." They also envisaged an African who would live according to an ideology of self-help and self-reliance "would have new Christian based moral and religious ideals, and it would demonstrate a sense of political responsibility."

While the creation of the "new African" might in principle have been acceptable, the problem was that there was no negotiation or mutual agreement. Everything were imposed on the common people. In their classification of the Shigwamba cultural life, the missionaries did away with collectivism that does not care about morality, but reveres the will of the community and ultimately the superior. They sought to replace it with individualism where a married couple were encouraged to live in a four cornered house built in a row alongside other houses.

For the Swiss missionaries any practice perceived as unchristian was rooted out, irrespective of whether it is morally good or not. Some of these practices were not substituted. As a result, the whole fabric of the nation was eroded. The Swiss missionaries saw as part of their mission to protect and transform pagan societies. As such, they employed various religious propaganda to achieve their ambition despite the fact that it exposed them as, surrogates of the colonial government.

4.3.5.1   Undermining Traditional Authority

As an embodiment of power and authority over the local people, the Vatsonga chiefs were despised and mistrusted by the Swiss missionaries. In the course of time, these crown heads became the first causalities of the missionaries' socio-religious crusade as they were perceived by the missionaries as an enemy to evangelising commitment amongst the common people. The missionaries' attitude towards the traditional authority has been explicitly illustrated by Harries (2007:167):

> Subordinate dialects and patois were linked to the chiefs and headmen who, with few exceptions, presented a major barrier to evangelization. The Thonga print language provided the missionaries with the means of subverting the cultural dominance of the old order.

Once the chiefs, particularly those who refused to be collaborators, were eradicated from their sphere of influence, the missionaries thought it would be easy for them to subdue and convert the common people without interference by the traditional leaders.

Delius (1984:109) indicates that "there was a belief prevalent amongst Berlin missionaries that Christian advance depended on the destruction of chiefly power". Mission Chrisitinity is replete with these kinds of narratives. If a chief was perceived to be uncooperative, he was either demonised or had his leadership rendered unstable.

Virtually no history of Vatsonga's cultural identity would be complete without Joaoa Albasini (1813-1888) in the picture. A Portuguese citizen of Mozambique of Italian-Spanish descent with military background, Albasini became the *hosi* (chief) of the Vatsonga and later a Native Commissioner for the ZAR government in the northern Transvaal. He was one of the first people to welcome the Swiss missionaries and help them to secure a farm of their own which was later named Valdezia mission station. He played a major role in rearranging Vatsonga's identity in the erstwhile Transvaal.

In addition to his military and political obligations, Albasini was invested with the responsibilities to proclaim Vatsonga's national identity to the local people in the Transvaal, safe-guard Vatsonga's culture and religion, maintain, practise and develop Xitsonga. According to Maluleke (1995:17), "Albasini spoke and understood a dialect of the Xitsonga language, knew, accepted and even practiced Tsonga customs." In embracing Vatsonga's mode of being, Albasini had divorced himself from his European identity, so to apeak, and accepted

Xitsonga identity with his body and soul. His camaraderie with Vatsonga earned him recognition as the *hosi* (chief) of Vatsonga in the Transvaal.

Despite his major contribution to Vatsonga cultural identity, the Swiss missionaries decided to vilify and portray him in a negative light. Grandjean (1917:60f) refers to him as "a person of mixed blood" (see also Maluleke 1995:16), Halala and Mthebule (2014) call him "a notorious slave hunter, self-made chief," and Brookes (1925) refers to him as "a Portuguese adventurer, a strange character with many guns." Before the dawn of the 20th century, Albasini's dynasty was destroyed – his subjects were scattered all over the Zoutpansberg area and the converts went to live at different mission stations.

In their classification of the Shigwamba cultural life, the missionaries did away with collectivism that does not care about morality, but reveres the will of the community and ultimately the superior. They sought to replace it with individualism where a married couple were encouraged to live in a four cornered house built in a row alongside other houses (see Harries 2007).

4.3.5.2   Marriage

In traditional Africa, it was regarded as immoral for women in marriageable age not to be married. Marriage would provide for a woman and preserved her dignity as an adult and the children with the legitimacy. Polygamous practice was also used as a strategy for survival as well as for defence. A polygamous family was characterised by a well-defined division of labour. Women acted as food producers and gatherers, boys served as shepherds while men and young men conducted the business of war. The more children (particularly boys) one had, the more he was assured of the survival of his lineage.

Lobola ("dowry"), a purely secular custom, did not escape from the missionaries and anthropologists' crusade. They highlighted the commercial part of it to reinforce its abolishment. Jacques (1911) in a Swiss Mission report on *lobola* argues that "Lobola corrupts the father of the bride, by giving the daughter away, makes him a hypocrite to his Christian values." For Junod (1927:527), "Lobola, being a material method to conclude a marriage, tends to degrade a moral foundation of a true Christian union, mutual love in particular." In other words, "lobola, which constitutes important forces of validation for family organization, was condemned as involving the 'sale of women'" (Piddington 1957:672). *Lobola* is traditionally regarded as a token of gratitude from one family to another and not as a commercial exchange

involving the "sale" of one family's child to another. On the whole, *lobola* serves as a bond of the new relationship that exists between the two families. Biology dictates that a person's child remains his descendant, married or not. Junod (1927:80) considered polygamy "immoral and savage" and felt is should extirpated. His opinion on this would mellow with time, but he continued to regard *lobola* and polygamy as "the linchpins in a communal mentality that curbed individual expression and restricted the spiritual and secular development of African society." Viewing *lobola* as a practice which was "the negation of the moral character of human beings," he argued that *lobola* should be prohibited.

A related issue of interest to the missionaries and anthropologists was polygamy. The Swiss missionaries were against polygamous marriage as any traditional practice was considered to negate the principles of evangelism. According to Junod (1927:532) "polygamy is incompatible with the high moral and the ideal which Christianity brought into the world," but "a polygamist who wishes to become a Christian must be by no means prevented from doing so."

Maluleke (1995:212) indicates that "Maphophe was a fierce opponent of local indigenous customs - at least in his writings." In a series of brief articles published in the *Nye1eti* during 1921 and 1922, the early convert Maphophe wrote to describe the heathen basis of many local customs. The customs that he singled out as evil were beer drinking, *lobola*, polygamy, and laws regarding the inheritance of a deceased person's estate.

4.3.5.3   School of Manhood

In some traditional African communities like the Vatsonga, a boy would not be regarded as a man unless he had passed through the agony and hardship of a circumcision school. This kind of school prepares a boy to be a man and causes him to realise that life is not a bed of roses.

Piddington (1957:672) points out that, "initiation ceremonies, which serve vital functions in regard to moral education, were suppressed because of the religious beliefs connected with them or because the associated bodily mutilations were inconsistent with European standard. It is no small wonder that disorganization ensued." Any person who wanted to go to the school of manhood, had to give up his Christian beliefs because missionaries would not allow the new converts to be circumcised.

4.3.5.4   Polarisation

The polarisation that was brought about by mission Christianity has been explicitly exposed author in Ngugi's novel entitled *The River Between* (1965), which shrewdly portrays how the clans of the Vatsonga were divided by the new religion into factions – the converts and the heathens on opposite sides of the river. The novel's hero, Waiyaki, is caught between the devil and the deep blue sea – he has to choose between the new religion and the ways of his forefathers.

In *Things Falls Apart*, a classic by Chinua Achebe (1971), the clash of cultures is best illustrated by a passage which carries the theme as well as the title of the story. An elder is confronted by a question as to whether the missionary understand his people's ways of life, and he angrily responds (1971:145):

> How can he when he does not even speak our tongue? But he says our customs are bad; and our brothers who have taken up his religion also say that our customs are bad. How do you think we can fight when our brothers have turned against us? The white man is clever. He came quietly and peacefully with his religion. We were amused at his foolishness and allowed him to stay. Now he has won our brothers, and our clan can no longer act like one. He has put a knife on the things that held us together and we have fallen apart.

The act of obliterating indigenous culture and traditional practices is reminiscent of assimilation as articulated by Genzler (2008) in his seminal work where he reveals that the role of translation in the United States is clouded by the policy of assimilation and the need to maintain eurocentricism and monolingualism.

Piddington (1957:673) posits that "the missionaries were the first Europeans to introduce education for literacy, primarily with a view to enabling converts to read the Bible, and this often had the effect of driving a wedge between the literate and non-literate sections of the community, and of making the younger educated men and women contemptuous of their illiterate elders and ready to flout their authority." The "literate" were bound to be "contemptuous of their illiterate elders" in that the missionaries taught them to equate traditional life with pagan practices, and their "illiterate" fathers and mothers as chief exponents of their age old tradition. Giving a glimpse what has become of these "literate" in our times, Alidou and Mazrui (1999:113) say:

Contrary to colonialist views, it is not the traditional African who resembles the ape; it has been more the westernised one often fascinated by the West's cultural mirror. A disproportionate number of these cultural apes continue to be products of universities. Those African graduates who have later become university teachers have themselves on the whole remained intellectual imitators and disciples of the West.

The new converts were called with "Christian names such as James, Maria or Isaac, thus replacing names such as Khensani, Masingita or Honisi. The converts - people sculptured by missionaries were not different from those Salman Rushdie, the author of Satanic Verses rightly called "translated men" (quoted by Snell-Hornby 2006:96), and beings whom Fanon (2003:67) referred to as "those who learned to kneel in docility." That is, people who were domesticated and Christianized." A typical example of submissive Chrastianity or "docile acceptance of missionary Christian Supremacy" is displayed by Maphope (1945), who when he found himself in the midst of white faces in a church hall in Geneva, Switzerland where he was about to give a speech, " felt like a fly in a bowl of milk" (Maluleke 1995:71).

Harrison (1979) gives a general picture of the effects of assimilation amongst African people who came into contact with Europeans for the first time. Assimilation as presented by Harrison also affected the Vatsonga, because after the destruction of their traditional way of life by missionaries, they had no other culture than their conquerors (read, the missionaries). According to Harrison (1979:48-49):

> Cultural imperialism conquered not just bodies, but the souls of its victims, turning them into willing accomplices. Cultural imperialism began its conquest of the Third World with the indoctrination of elite of local collaborators. The missionary schools sought to produce converts to Christianity who would go out and proselytise among their own people, helping to eradicate traditional culture.

4.3.5.5 Religious Beliefs

Referring to missionary work in general, Piddington (1957:672) remarks:

> We know today that primitive magico-religious beliefs and practices serve important social functions in maintaining authority, law and tribal standards generally. But to the early missionaries they were merely works of the devil. Their total elimination was therefore regarded as a wholly desirable goal, the attainment of which could bring nothing but good results.

Religious myths provide a charter for specific institutions and help to promote social conformity. Yet these all these were denounced uncritically as "barbarous superstitions."

Berthoud quoted by Harries (2007:78) claimed that "the only gods worshipped by the locals were their dead, senior, male ancestors who, for fear of their powers, had constantly to be propitiated, had degenerated because of the natives' weak morality. Because their lives were dominated by communal values, they were not unable, as individuals, to recognise personal sin, nor were they capable of exercising the discipline and restraint required to control primitive, often diabolical urges." Berthoud displays ignorance and misunderstanding of African religion in his racist and tainted interpretation of the traditional manner of worship.

According to Mbiti (1989:8), "certainly it cannot be denied that the departed occupy an important place in African religiosity; but it is wrong to interpret traditional religions simply in terms of 'worshiping the ancestors.'" The so-called ancestors' worship was seized upon by the Swiss Missionaries to reveal how poor and backward the Vatsonga were in terms of their knowledge and religious practices.

4.3.5.6   Slavery and Mistrust

The Swiss missionary arrived in South Africa, long after slavery was abolished (see Slavery Abolition act 1833 (citation 3 & 4 Will. IV. c 73) and 1833 of the Parliament of the United Kingdom abolishing slavery throughout the British Empire.) Nevertheless, colonial Christianity was intricately linked with slavery and the slave trade. In South Africa, a kind of modified slavery called *inboekelinge* ("apprentices") was practiced in which African youth were kept in perpetual slavery and sometimes used as beasts of burden until the age of twenty-five (see Giliomee 2004, Naudé 2005, and Halala and Mthebule 2014:9-10).

The first people to convert to the new religion in Valdezia were "refugees" some as young as thirteen years (also see Maluleke 1994b). It is interesting to note that Xitsonga does not have a word for a refugee except *mbanjwa* ("a victim of a slave catcher"). Yet very little has been mentioned in the Swiss missionaries' historical literature about slavery. Junod (1927) was also careful not to comment concerning slavery in his writings. Only Joaoa Albasini (1813-1888), the *hosi* (chief) of the Magwamba in the Zoutpansberg and the man who welcomed the first entourage of Swiss missionaries on their arrival in Spelonken, is portrayed as a slave hunter in missionaries sources.

As a result of fearing slave catchers, Vatsonga were at first hesitant to associate themselves with the Swiss missionaries on their meeting in the Spelonken foothills. Refugees, orphans and other homeless persons (see Maluleke 1994b) were the first to befriend the Swiss missionaries and embrace their new religion. People started to trickle into the churches and the mission stations. It took several months for Vatsonga to realise that the Swiss missionaries were a different kind of white people. However, the Swiss missionaries' authoritarian stance discouraged a good number of the local people from adopting Chrisitinity as their religion.

4.3.5.7 Colonial "Government at Prayer"

As mentioned above, the Swiss missionaries are so highly regarded in Vutsonga that it is unthinkable that these missionaries might have been privy to colonial ambition. In fact, to call the Swiss mission before the colonial government would be equal to committing high treason, let alone blasphemy.

On the one hand, Switzerland, the Swiss missionaries' home country was, according to Harries (2007:35) "a nation without colonies," and it had never had an intention to colonise those countries which were hosting its nationals. For instance, large patches of land like Valdezia which were "bought" to establish mission stations and properties were later returned to the local people (Maluleke 1995:20). Furthermore, there was an element of mistrust towards the French speaking missionaries by the ZAR government. The Swiss missionaries were associated with the Paris Evangelical Mission Society whose missionaries assisted Moeshoeshoe in the fight against the Voortrekkers as they penetrated the interior of South Africa (Maluleke 1995:8).

However postcolonial scholarship is convinced that Protestant mission assisted the colonial governments in their intention to colonise African countries. This scholarship metaphorically refers to the Protestant mission as the "religious arm" or "government at prayer" of the empire.

McNeill (1999:478) confirms that Protestant missions worked hand in glove with imperial governments:

> Actually, Europeans saw no conflict between the two types of enterprise. Quite the contrary, spreading trade and spreading Christianity seemed to go hand in hand. The benefits of western civilization were self-evident to Europeans, so that they easily convinced themselves it was a moral duty to bring Africans (and other backwards peoples) into the circles of civilization – even, perhaps, by force. Millions of well-

meaning Europeans and Americans thus became enthusiastic imperialists. Towards the end of the nineteenth century European governments therefore became more and more ready to send soldiers anywhere in the world to support their missionaries and merchants whenever and wherever these standard-bearers of civilization got into trouble with local rulers.

Masumbe (2002) makes a bold claim that "primary sources bequeathed to the nation by various mission societies do not fully reveal all that occurred in the country during colonial/missionary eras…" He therefore contends that: "(Swiss) missionaries in many ways played a partisan role in the formation of socio-economic and political policies of the country during their tenure. Simple denial of this fact by beneficiaries of the Swiss Mission education system cannot help us to correct the situation…. It should be noted that it is always the admission of flaws that should precede corrective measures."

African scholars like Nwandula (1987), who researched Christian mission education, attest to the fact that the Swiss missionaries were involved in the formulation of South Africa's most hated education sytem called Bantu education. Junod's ideas on South Africa's race problem, explicitly displayed in his writings and pronouncements, contributed generously to the segregationist policies which gave birth to apartheid. His theories gained flesh through his son, Henri-Phillipe Junod, who according to Harries (2007:254), also "advocated segregation as a middle way between the extremes of repressive exploitation and mindless assimilation." The great missionary was convinced that "a missionary can only support the methods of segregation as it regards the development of the Bantus on their soil and in their milieu."

Showing the extent of Henri-Phillipe Junod's belief in segregationist policies, Harries (2007:263) noted that Junod "belief that apartheid could be 'fair and honest,' brought him into conflict with the Third World supporters in the city and finally influenced his resignation (as director of Africa Institute in Geneva). In his last years he returned to South Africa where he wrote a history of the Tsonga-speaking people, supported the government of the Gazankulu Bantustan and approved of the political reforms introduced by former president P.W. Botha. He died believing in the possibility of apartheid without discrimination."

Coming from high culture in Europe the Swiss missionaries looked down on their Vatsonga proselytes. That is, from a religious pont of view, the Swiss missionaries saw the new converts in Vutsonga as their brothers in Christ. But from a sociological point of view, the two parties

had an unequal relationship. Their co-existence with their converts has been aptly captured by by Paton (1983:134) when he declared:

> The truth is that our Christian civilization is riddled through and through with dilemma. We believe in the brotherhood of man, but we don't want it in South Africa. We believe that God endows men with diverse gifts, and that human life depends for its fullness on their employment and enjoyment, but we are afraid to explore this belief too deeply. We believe in the help of the underdog, but we want him to stay under.

For the Swiss missionaries, one could translate into a good Christian as long as one knows his place – as long as he submissively shows respect to his Christian superiors, the european missionaries.

4.3.5.8   Civilising Mission

The Swiss missionaries' collaboration with the colonial government can be duly summed up by the (in)famous French notion of *la mission civilisatrice* ("civilizing mission") as highlighted by Said (2003:4) who contends that European countries, went forth "to colonize others, not in the name of brute force or raw plunder, both of which are standard components of the exercise, but in the name of a noble ideal."

To illuminate his argument, Said (2003:4) goes on to quote Marlow, the narrator in Joseph Conrad's classic novel, *Heart of Darkness*, the story which strikes him as "an ironic and even terrifying enactment of this thesis." He observed that

> … the conquest of the earth, which mostly means the taking it away from those who have different complexion and slightly flatter noses than ourselves, is not a pretty thing when you look into it too much. What redeems it is the idea only. An idea at the back of it, not a sentimental pretence but the idea, and an unselfish belief in the idea – something you can set up, and bow down before you, and offer a sacrifice to.

Marlow explicitly reveals the greed and selfishness of those who left their home countries and flock to Africa to come and civilise African people.

To summarise, we see two different types of strategies facilitating the Swiss missionaries' activities in Vutsonga in particular. There are those who are overwhelmed by the Swiss missionaries achievements and triumphs and those who are angered by the evangelising approach and method of the Swiss missionaries. In their execution of their job the Swiss

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missionaries never stop to check whether their operation is doing harm to their public image. Theirs was to save the souls at whatever cost. As mentioned earlier on, it is this string of evangelisation strategies which prompted some scholars to see them as Eurocentric, racists, colonial coloborators out to destroy African customs and tradition norms and values. At the same time, their work was so successful that the commons are full of praise for the Swiss missionaries. They have no time to condemn the missionaries to hell and damnation.

The emphasis is on the significant contribution made by Xitsonga Bible translation in shaping Xitsonga cultural identity. It should be admitted however, that their re-arrangement of the new identity was not without flaws. The most notable of these flaws was the erosion of the socio-cultural life of the Vatsonga in the name of evangelisation. The Swiss missionaries' ruinous neighbourliness and their inane attitudes towards the local people almost destroyed their divine undertaking.

4.4   Identity and Xitsonga Bible Translation

Xitsonga Bible translation was a long and tedious undertaking which needed courage, determination and prayers. Translators had to spend days on end trying to carve a verse or chapter meaningfully for mother tongue speakers. Part of the problem was that there were no literatures or other sources for reference except for only a handful of mother tongue speakers. Notwithstanding this hardship, the translators' dream came true – chapters of the Bible were published in 1883. The whole Bible appeared on the scene in 1907.

The translation of the Bible into Xitsonga implied the development and refinement of the language. This linguistic evolution was a logical conclusion in that the Bible is such a massive text comprised of thousands of words, some of which were absent from Xitsonga. As a target dialect selected from a host of others, the vocabulary of Xitsonga was expanded so as to accommodate words and phrases originating from the Bible through the translation process. Foreign words borrowed from the source languages, as well as Afrikaans, English, Sesotho and other languages were housed in Xitsonga, thus enriching it and giving it an aura of an international language.

It is through their knowledge of the local dialects and translation of Bible into Xitsonga, more than anything else, that the Swiss missionaries were assimilated to the Vatsonga culture, and in the process, attained a double identity. They identified themselves as Swiss missionaries, and at the same time, they identified themselves with their host country and the local people.

In the lines below, Sanneh (1987:4) explicitly illustrates similar linguistics and literary endeavours undertaken by other missionaries to spread the Good News elsewhere:

> The importance of vernacular translation was that it brought the missionary into contact with the most intimate and intricate aspects of culture, yielding wide-ranging consequences for both missionary and native alike."

Both the Swiss missionaries and the newly translated religion (read Christianity) were readily welcomed and accepted in the Vatsonga society in that their divine pursuit insisted on them being integrated in Vutsonga.

The selection of Xitsonga as the target language into which the Bible should be translated not only sealed the eventual declaration of Xitsonga as a national language and a symbol of the Vatsonga identity, but also endowed it with divine providence as an anointed medium of communication between God and his Vatsonga. By translating the Bible and writing other religious texts, as well as introducing literacy, the missionaries succeeded in developing the Vatsonga culture and identity to a modern standard. On one hand, Henri Alexandre Junod became internationally acclaimed as an ethnographer and priest as the result of a two-volume text he authored which had since became a standard reference of Africa's so-called primitive life, despite the fact that it is riddled with cultural mistranslations. On the other hand, Junod's son Henri Philippe Junod, Paul Berthod, Creux and a host of others also penned several texts (see, for example, Junod 1927), which further contributed to the development of the society's culture. Translation alone has broadened the local people's perception of religion and life in general. It further instilled in their dry throat, the thirst for education – the urge to learn and acquire more knowledge.

Elucidating the manner in which translation has contributed to the advancement of humanity amongst Africans in general; Sanneh (1989:53) has this to say:

> I see translation as introducing a dynamic and pluralistic factor into questions of the essence of the religion. Thus if we ask the question about the essence of Christianity, whatever the final answer, we would be a force to reckon with what the fresh medium reveals to us in feedback. It may thus happen that our own earlier understanding of the message will be challenged and even overturned by the forces of the new experience. Translation would consequently help to bring us to new ways of viewing the world,

commencing a process of revitalization that reaches both the personal and cultural spheres.

Xitsonga Bible translations gave people hope that there is in fact life after death – the scene of Jesus dying and his resurrection was enough for converts to gain more insight about dying and life after death. Jesus died for our sins – and after three days he proceeded to the Father in heaven.

Almost overnight mother tongue speakers involved in translation became seasoned developers - proofreaders and editors of their own language. The translation enabled the language to grow and develop by roping in derived words, foreign words and borrowed words to satisfy the need of the people.

It was not only the Bible that the missionaries translated. Language primers, Xitsonga folklores and language texts were translated as well. In addition to *The Life of a South African Tribe* (1927), linguistics works such as V*utlhari bya Vatsonga (Machangana)* ("The Wisdom of Tsonga-Shangana Idioms and Proverbs") (1957) and *Matimu ya Vatsonga* ("History of the Vatsonga") (1977), were translated. For the Swiss missionaries, translation was also seen as the import of cross cultural wealth in that French, English and Xitsonga ideas were exchanged to enrich one another. Junod (1927) wrote *The Life of a South African Tribe* in English to gain a wider readership. In other words, he translated oral Xitsonga into written English. Towards the end of his text, he translated Xitsonga into Latin (Junod 1927:516) "for medical men and ethnographers."

On the other hand, the Vatsonga were also keen to learn more about the new religion, new knowledge and the way of life brought all the way from across the seas by the Swiss missionaries. So translation got the blessing from the two parties destined to benefit from the whole undertaking. In other words, translation opened a way for Christianity to be accepted within Xitsonga culture.

In addition to their divine calling, the Swiss missionaries have converted (translated if you like) the local people into Christianity; they have built churches, schools, hospitals and training centres where college students were prepared to be fishers of men and as well trained civil servants. Masumbe (2002:36, 113) reveals that "the Swiss missionaries' idea of planning social change around their three major institutions, namely, schools, churches and hospitals were wonderful innovations. They created an interwoveness between schools, churches and

hospitals so as to bring about full scale social transformation within their mission field. All these three institutions complemented each other." In fact, the Swiss missionaries exploited translation to transform nearly every facet of the Vatsonga traditional culture. Starting with their perception of God and religion, their medicine and health, architecture, agriculture, education, recreation… all have been translated and improved to become what we know today. The Swiss missionaries' translation undertaking would had achieved flying colours had they also acknowledged the fact that they were not alone in this divine calling.

New converts and the missionaries' domestic workers, Mbizana (nay, Gideon Mpapele and Yosefa Mhalamhala) and a host of others were indispensable as translators (see Harries (2007). They served as translation and interpretation assistants who made communication possible between the local people and the Swiss missionaries. Otherwise, the Swiss missionaries would not have been successful in translating the Bible and other literary works on their own. Of the early Bible translation assistants, Bediako, quoted by West (2009:45) contends that "missionaries were entirely dependent on Africans for the translation process, though the African presence was not usually acknowledged in the official missionary record."

This experience is similar to that of South Africa's famous heart surgeon, Christiaan Barnard who relied on the assistance of his skilful African colleague, one Hamilton Naki, yet Barnard never acknowledged Naki as a home grown doctor. Fortunately, the latter was recognised as a heart surgeon in retirement by the new South African government.

The Vatsonga's contributions in missionary Chrisitianity were not in Bible translation alone. Calvin Maphophe (1864-1955) whom Maluleke (1995) describes as "a missionary who 'sacrifices' are of no lesser proportions than those of Berthoud who, amongst other things, 'planted' their children in the Spelonken soil" (Baloyi 1965:37). Maphophe entered mission life at the age of thirteen as a domestic worker at Berthoud's household, spent a decade in Basothiland training as a qualified teacher Evangelist, went on to establish schools and administer mission station in Mozambique. Some of ten children died while Maphope was in the priesthood. By the time he retired, Maphophe had spent almost half a century in mission service (also see Maluleke 1995).

4.5   Conclusions

This chapter has attempted to set out the historical frame for Xitsonga Bible translation through a description of the interactions of the Vatsonga and language with both colonialists and

missionaries. From the earliest encounters with Portuguese explorers to the intensive interactions with the Swiss missionaries, Xitsonga has been learned, studied, written, analysed and developed. The activities of the Swiss missionaries and the Sotho colleagues in learning the language, struggling with dialects and dialectal variants, developing (and promoting and defending) orthographic representations of the language and promoting literacy, all served to develop the language as well as to re-shape its linguistic shape. The early Bible translations into Xitsonga also exhibit the influence of Sesotho. Finally, the evangelising efforts of the Swiss missionaries, while respected and appreciated in many respects, nonetheless served to re-shape Vatsonga identity through their undermining of traditional authority and their rejection of a wide variety of crucially important social values.

CHAPTER 5
THE 1929 XITSONGA BIBLE TRANSLATION

5.1   Introduction

This chapter attempts to assess the ways in which the 1929 version of the Xitsonga Bible translation has been translated and its contribution to the development of Xitsonga as a language as well as the reshaping of the speakers' identity. In casting a critical look at the translation, this chapter deals with orthography and morphology, as well as words, phrases and sentences grouped together according to their common features (e.g. loan words, coined words, words from traditional Xitsonga religion, etc.).

As already discussed in 4.3.4, the first complete Bible was published in 1907 in London by the British and Foreign Bible Society. It was printed in two volumes in Lausanne. The translators were Paul and Henri Berthoud, Ernest Creux, Timothy Mandlati, Calvin Maphophe, August Jaques, Arthur Grandjean, Henri-Alexandre Junod, Samuel Malale, Zedediya Mohenyane and Paul Rosset, with Eugène Thomas as co-ordinator. The harmonisation of Xitsonga's various dialects and the creation of the new orthography which ultimately led to the standardisation of the language motivated the translators to revise the translation and they produced a complete Xitsonga Bible translation in 1929. The revised translation was prepared by Marguerite Cuenod, Rene Cuenod, Joseph Mawelele and Edward Mtebule. For more than half a century, the 1929 version remained the only Bible translation used by the faithful in various congregations around Vutsonga as a whole.

5.2   Theoretical Background

Historically, translation studies has long been normative (telling translators how to translate), to the point that discussions of translation that were not normative were generally not considered to be about translation at all. Given the new developments in translation studies, one should not evaluate a translation normatively but rather describe it (see Naudé 2005). Thus, the representation consists of the linguistically inscribed preferences of the translator(s) concerning the choice and construction of discourses in Bible translation. In this chapter the

1929 version of the Xitsonga Bible translation is analysed and explained with respect to the ways in which particular cultural and religious identities were formed. The context of the translation, its source texts, the translation team, the translation process and the sociocultural impact of the translation are considered. This section utilises the sub-discipline of translation theory herein referred to as the narrative frame theory. The study is firmly anchored on Naudé (2005), Baker (2006 and 2007), Wilt 2003 and Wendland (2008), as described in more detail in Chapter 2. It seeks to describe and analyse the contextual frames of the 1929 Xitsonga Bible translation.

This section seeks to position translation techniques applied in the 1929 version of the Xitsonga Bible translation within the larger framework of translation studies from the second half of the 20th century. The 1929 Xitsonga Bible translation happened during the pre-theoretical period of the discipline referred today as translation studies. It is for this reason that this translation is based primarily on formal equivalence, the word-for-word translation method which dictates that every word in the source text should be carefully transmitted into the target text.

5.3   Organisational Frame

Wilt (2003:46) sees the organisational frame as the external influences (e.g. financial, social pressure and prestige, policy statements) that an organisation or organisations have on the perceptions, attitudes and behaviour of individuals and communities associated with them. At the same time, Wilt (ibid.) argues that this frame also entails (amongst others) the translators' perception and understanding of the organisational aspects of their task.

5.3.1   Translation Process

The history of the Xitsonga Bible translation began with the arrival of the Swiss missionaries in Zoutpansberg area in the latter half of the nineteenth century. The real translation process started shortly after Paul Berthoud and Ernest Creux's return from Basotholand in 1875 after a study leave which lasted for three years. The early translations into Xitsonga have been described above in Section 4.3.4.

The 1929 and its predecessor (i.e. the 1907 version) are mainly modelled and relied heavily on the Setswana, Sesotho and Sepedi Bible translations (Schneider, e-mail correspondence 3 January 2014) (see also Section 5.3.4 below). The fact that almost all pioneer translators were trained in Morija – Basotholand means that Sesotho and its cognate dialects were highly influential in shaping the Xitsonga Bible translation. For instance, Paul Berthoud and Ernest

Creux spent three years (1873 – 1875) in Basotho learning the Sesotho language and culture, the first oral translators Eliokim Matlanyane and Asser Segagabane were the Sesotho mother tongue speakers, and the first group of the Xitsonga mother tongue speakers were all educated at Morija in Basotholand (see also Section 4.3.1). The influence of Sesotho, as well as other neighbouring languages (Setswana, isiZulu, Afrikaans, English, French and Portuguese) can also be seen in the loanwords into Xitsonga, as described later in this chapter, for example, sections 5.4.3 and 5.5.1.4.

The evidence provided in this chapter will therefore justify the hypothesis that the first Xitsonga Bible Translation (1929) played a role in empowering and legitimising colonialism and paving the way for submissive colonial faith within the Vatsonga society as shown by the many loan terms from dominant languages (English, Afrikaans and Sesotho), see section 1.3.

5.3.2 Translation Strategies

Hermanson (e-mail correspondence, 29 November 2013) points out that in preparation for their work, many missionaries studied Hebrew, Greek and Latin. Translation theory was not well developed and so when they came to translate the Scriptures they did so with formal equivalence, in the same way as they had been taught to translate the Classics, matching word for word and structure for structure wherever possible. It must be noted, however, that some translators made an attempt towards what would have been regarded at the time to be a more idiomatic rather than literal, involving mother-tongue speakers and using something of the genius of the language into which they were translating.

The Description Translation Studies analysis later in this chapter provides a detailed examination of many of the specific translation strategies employed.

5.3.3 Translation Team

During the missionary era, Xitsonga Bible translation was undertaken by a group of Swiss missionaries, from the Mission Suisse Romande (Swiss Mission in South Africa), who were assisted by a number of African evangelists and translators. The 1907 Bible was not as sophisticated as that of the 1929 revised Bible. However, it served as a launching pad of the 1929 edition, which is a full-fledged Bible which has served the Vatsonga community for more than half a century.

The Swiss missionaries Rev. René Cuénod and Mrs Marguerite Cuénod (born Berthoud, the daughter of Henri Berthoud, the pioneering missionary to the Vatsonga) took the leading role in preparing the 1929 translation. They were assisted by Evangelist Joseph Mawalele, a prominent African Christian leader, who made an essential contribution by checking and correcting the drafts, in collaboration with the missionaries.

The Swiss missionaries' translation team did abide by the principle of gender equity, albeit on a very small scale. The missionaries' wives such as Marguerite Cuénod were instrumental in the preparation and revision of the 1929 Xitsonga Bible translation. Gender equity is one of the main themes of gender as a field of research. According to Snell-Hornby (2006:100), Gender Studies, of which feminist translation forms a part, developed in reaction to asymmetrical power relationships, caused by patriarchal hegemony.

5.3.4   Source Texts

Reflecting on Bible translation sources, Hermanson (e-mail correspondence: 29 November 2013) indicates that

> Some missionaries did not have the latest available Hebrew and Greek texts. However, even when translators use the original languages as their basic texts for translation, they are often also influenced by the text with which they are familiar in the Bible in their own language, or other languages they may read. So, these missionaries may also have been influenced by the French, German, English, and possibly also Latin texts.

Schneider (e-mail correspondence, 3 January 2014), however, adds that the Biblical languages, namely Classical Hebrew, Aramaic and NT Greek, formed part of the Swiss missionaries' theological and missiological training. This formation period lasted from four to six years. They were all ordained ministers, whose secondary and high school curriculum generally included Latin (seven years for Schneider's generation), six years of classical Greek, and two years of basic Hebrew as a matriculation subject for future pastors. He also emphasises the availability of Hebrew and Greek texts for the early translators:

> New scholarly editions of the Hebrew and Greek source texts were already at the disposal of exegetes and translators during the second half of the 19th century, in Europe and therefore also in Africa. From the days of their theological training, the first

Swiss missionaries were familiar with the Kittel Hebrew Bible, or the Nestlé Greek New Testament.

Schneider (ibid.) further draws attention to the fact that the Swiss missionaries and their African colleagues were not the first to translate the Bible in a regional language of Southern Africa. They had local African translation models at their disposal. This is of crucial importance for the history of the first Bible in Xitsonga. This new Bible had a mother and a grand-mother as it were, namely the Bible in Sesotho and the Bible in Setswana. The first biblical texts and the first hymns printed in Xitsonga (the *Buku*) were closely related to the Scriptures in Sesotho. The first Bible in an African language of Southern Africa, namely Setswana, was prepared and printed by Robert Moffat, the father-in-law of David Livingstone. The Tswana Bible in turn influenced the French and Swiss missionaries working in Lesotho, who elaborated the Sotho Bible using French orthographic symbols such as ea for ya, oa for wa, etc. (the so-called, still current, "Lesotho d") "The first Tsonga Bible is therefore, in part, the grand-daughter of the Tshwana Bible, the daughter of the Sotho Bible, … and the cousin of the Bible in Sepedi!"

In addition, the translators – whether Swiss, South Africans or Mozambicans – had access to Bibles in western languages such as French, English and Portuguese. Among these are the King James Version, the Moffatt Bible and the American Standard Version. In French, the first Swiss missionaries had at their disposal an authoritative modern version based on Hebrew and Greek, prepared by Prof. Louis Segond during the second half of the 19th century, and still in use today.

5.3.5   Prestige

As indicated in 4.4 above, both Xitsonga Bible translations enabled the Vatsonga to own the Bible as their very own in that it was published in the Xitsonga language rather than a foreign language, just like what the Batlhaping in Bechuanaland did when the Bible was first translated into Setswana. West (2009:44-45) points out that the translation of the Bible allowed Africans to engage with the Bible on their own terms:

 The Bible would "speak" for itself, but like the letter Campbell showed to Mmahutu, the Bible would not always speak as the ones who carried it anticipated. Once the Bible was translated and read by the Africans, it was a source of cultural revitalisation and a message which went beyond the imaginations of those who brought it amongst them.

In addition, translations had united the Vatsonga around one language – thus creating, re-arranging and re-shaping a linguistic identity.

5.3.6 Social Pressures

In producing the Bible translation of 1929, the missionaries were faced with a great number of difficulties. Although the missionaries were financed by their headquarters in Switzerland, they had to contend with a land having underdeveloped transport and communication infrastructures, insecurity generated by unending wars, plagues and unbearable weather conditions. These conditions had a negative impact on the progress of the 1929 Bible translation. Other organisational difficulties were purely linguistic – they related to determining the orthography and spelling that should be adopted in the translation process. Their chief concern was how to unite all the dialects into one linguistic entity (including words and phrases from all of the Xitsonga dialects), thus making the translation accessible to every person in Vutsonga. During the course of time, the missionaries discovered that they could not publish their manuscripts as fast as they wanted because, as indicated previously, they did not have printing press. They had to send their manuscripts in Switzerland, which caused many delays (see Bill 1983).

5.3.7 Sociocultural Impact of the 1929 Bible Translation

The annihilation of Albasini's dynasty and the subsequent absorption of the Vatsonga into their former subjects' and vassals' chiefdoms nearly strangled the Vatsonga as an emerging nation in South Africa. [1] The publication of the complete Bible translation in 1907 and the first major translation in 1929, was a momentous era in the history of the Vatsonga as a linguistic, cultural and political group. The translation served as a symbol of unity and as one of the main identity markers for the Vatsonga. It succeeded in influencing various speech forms to recognise and accept the speech form used in the translation as their own. As an encyclopaedic reference of

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[1] The background of Albasini's dynasty is relevant to this discussion. In the Zoutpansberg, the misplaced Vatsonga settled under *Hosi* Joaoa Albasini. They came to him to look for protection. In turn, Albasini employed them as "indunas" and defenders of his fort-like home called Goedewensch. The Vatsonga, who affectionately christened him 'Jiwawa,' acknowledged him as their chief (for further reading, see Maluleke 1994b).

the language, both the learned and the common people look up to the Bible translation for the correct use of language.

5.4   Linguistic Frame

5.4.1   Phonological Overview

"Phonology," as Fromkin and Rodman (1983:70) explain, "is the study of sound patterns found in human language, it is also the term used to refer to the kind of knowledge the speakers have about the sound patterns of their particular language." The investigation of Xitsonga phonology here is based on linguistic scholars such as Cuenod (1967), Baumbach (1987) and Janson (2001) who conducted extensive studies of Xitsonga phonology. The study also relied on the enormous early contributions of the missionaries to the analysis of Xitsonga − *Notes on the Tsonga Language* by P.D. Beuchal and *Tsonga Lectures* by A.A Jacques (see AC1084/70.5.1, and AC1084/70.5.3, respectively, Swiss Archives at William Cullen Library). Like any human language, Xitsonga phonology consists of vowels and consonants. The focus throughout will be on the phonemes as they are represented in Xitsonga orthographies. Throughout this section, the Xitsonga words illustrating each phoneme are those of the researcher.

5.4.1.1   Vowels

The identification of vowel phonemes in Xitsonga is disputed, although orthographically only five vowels have been written from the 1929 translation to the present − /i e a o u/. These vowels and their phonetic realisations are illustrated as follows (see also Cuenod 1967 and Nyembezi 1959):

     a [a]   an open vowel pronounced as in *aka* ("build")

     e [ɛ]   a semi-closed mid front vowel pronounced as in preposition *eka* ("to")

     i [i]   a closed front vowel and pronounced as in *Ingilishi* ("English")

     o [o]   a semi-closed mid back vowel pronounced as in *oka* ("take an ember from one fireplace to another")

     u [u]   a closed back vowel pronounced as in *huku* ("fowl")

Cuenod (1967) indicates that there are seven phonemic vowels in Xitsonga:

     i [i]   a closed front vowel

e [ɛ]   a semi-open mid-front vowel

e [ə]   a semi-closed mid front vowel

a [a]   an open back vowel

o [ɔ]   a semi-open mid-back vowel

o [o]   a semi-closed mid back vowel

u [u]   a closed back vowel

Baumbach (1987) describes the vowels and their realisations as indicated in Table 6.

Table 6. Baumbach (1987) vowels in Xitsonga

Vowel	Phonetic symbol	Description of vowel	Category of vowel
i	[i]	High front vowel	Front vowels
e	[ɛ]	Mid-low front vowel	
u	[u]	High back vowel	Back vowels
o	[ɔ]	Mid-low back vowel	
a	[a]	Low back vowel	
e	[ə]	Low central vowel	Central vowel

However, Jansen (2001:18) refers to the vowels [e] and [ɛ] as allophones for */e/,* and the vowels [o] and [ɔ] as allophones for /o/. The closed allophones are used in syllables before syllables with /i/ or /u/*;* the open ones are used in all other positions.

5.4.1.2   Consonants

The consonantal inventory of Xitsonga is very large. As Janson (2001:18) explains:

> It is obvious that the language has a larger number of different stops than most other languages in the world. In a published inventory of more than 300 representative languages of the world (Maddieson, 1984; see especially pp. 25-31), there is no language with a set of stops that is as large as this one.

In this section, the most common consonants are described and illustrated.

According to Janson (2001:18), "there are two glides, /j, w/. They function phonologically just as other consonants, occurring only in prevocalic position. They are spelt {y w}". Glides are

also referred to as semi-vowels in that their sounds are produced with little or no obstruction in the mouth. For instance, {y} *yingwe* ("leopard") and {w} *wanuna* ("man").

Xitsonga has four plain stops /p, t, tl, k/ which, according to Janson (2001:18), may be said to form the basis for an impressive system of stop consonants that differ from the plain ones in that one or several more features are added. Table 7 provides examples.

Table 7. Examples of four main stops in Xitsonga

Consonant	Phonetic Symbol	Description	Example
p	[p]	A voiceless radical bilabial explosive	*Papawa* ("pawpaw")
k	[k]	A voiceless velar explosive	*Kala* ("live coal")
t	[t]	A voiceless ejective alveolar explosive	*Tala* ("garbage heap")
tl	[tl]	A voiceless alveolar lateral explosive	*Tlula* ("jump")

Table 8 expands upon the four plain stops to illustrate the stops that are modified by the addition of another phonetic feature such as aspiration or palatalisation:

Table 8. Plain stops, aspirated stops and palatalised stops

Consonant	Phonetic Symbol	Example
p	[p]	*papawa* ("papaw")
ph	[ph]	*phuphu* ("pillar")
phy	[phj]	*phyama* ("tasteless")
b	[b]	*baku* ("cave")
by	[bj]	*byanyi* ("grass")
t	[t']	*tana* ("come")
th	[th]	*thamuka* ("spring")
thy	[thj]	*thyeke* ("kind of vegetable")
d	[d]	*duma* ("sound")
dy	[dj]	*dyondza ("learn")*
k	[k]	*kama* ("squeeze")
kh	[kh]	*khavisa* ("decorate")
g	[g]	*gaga* ("unripe fruit")

tl	[tl]	*etlela* ("sleep")
tlh	[tlh]	*ntlhamu* ("trap"), *tlhava* ("pierce")
dl	[dl]	*dlamula* ("annoy")

Table 9 provides examples of fricatives in Xitsonga, including aspirated fricatives and lateral fricatives.

Table 9. Fricatives

Consonant	Phonetic Symbol	Example
f	[f]	*famba* ("walk")
v	[ß]	*vana* ("children")
vh	[v]	*vhengele* ("shop")
sw	[s,]	*swoswo* ("offal")
s	[s]	*sasa* ("please")
z	[z]	*zonda* ("hate")
x	[ʃ]	*xaka* ("relative")
h	[ɦ]	*hahani* ("paternal aunt")
hl	[ɬ]	*hleka* ("laugh")

Table 10 provides examples of affricated consonants.

Table 10. Affricates

Consonant	Phonetic Symbol	Example
pf	[ɸf]	*pfula* ("open")
bv	[ɸv]	*bvebve* ("bird")
tsw	[tʂ]	*tswariwile* ("conceived")
tshw	[tʂh]	*tshwatshwa* ("spider")
dzw	[ʣ]	*dzwambula* ("naked")
ts	[ʦ]	*tsolo* ("knee")
tsh	[ʦh]	*ntshungu* ("crowd") *tshinya* ("trunk, stem, stalk, a block of wood which carries all branches and leaves")
dz	[ʣ]	*dzovo* ("cowhide")

c	[ʧ]	*cema* ("scream")
ch	[ʧh]	*chela* "frog")
j	[ʤ]	*jamu* ("jam")
(n)jh	[ʤh]	*Njhakanjhaka* ("name of a person")
ts	[ʦ]	-tsutsuma ("run")
tsh	[ʦh]	-tshamela ("await")
dz	[ʣ]	-dzuka ("sweat")
(n)dzh	[ʣh]	ndzoho ("seed") *ndzhaka* ("inheritance")

Table 11 provides examples of retroflexive affricates.

Table 11. The Retroflexive Affricates

Consonant	Phonetic Symbol	Example
ts	[tʂ]	*tsakama* ("be wet")
tsh	[tʂɦ]	*tshamela* ("await")
dz	[dʐ	*dzuka* ("sweat")
(n)dzh	[dʐɦ]	*ndzoho* ("seed")

According to Junod (1927:31) Xitsonga possesses some peculiar sounds which prove its uniqueness. It is characterised by the frequent occurrence of a labial sibilant sound, a little like *ps* pronounced with a kind of whistling which corresponds to the isiZulu /z/ in the plural of the noun class isi-izi. The Xitsonga whistled sibilants are also similar to those of Chishona language of Zimbabwe. For instance, /sw/ corresponds to /sv/ in Chishona, and /dzw/ corresponds to /dzv/ in Chishona. The whistled sound in Xitsonga is written in this manner – /sw/ belongs to Class 7 of the noun classes or the (x-sw) class viz:

xikwembu ("god") – *swikembu* ("gods")

xipuku ("ghost") – *swipuku* ("ghosts").[2]

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[2] This word is a loan word from Afrikaans *spook* ("ghost"), see 5.5.1.5 below.

Additional examples include:

[sw]   *sweswi* ("now")

[tsw] *tswala* ("bear fruit")

Fromkin and Rodman (1983:50) point out that nasals are "produced with a raised velum that prevent the air from escaping through the nose, or with a lowered velum that permits air to pass through the nasal passage." Below follow the nasals in Xitsonga and their Xitsonga examples.

m [m] is a voiceless bilabial nasal, e.g. *mama* ("suck")

mh [mɦ] a voiceless aspirated bilabial nasal, e.g. *mheho* ("breeze")

n [n] a voiceless alveolar nasal, e.g. *nuna* ("husband")

nh [nɦ] a voiceless aspirated alveolar nasal, e.g. *nhongo* ("gnu")

ny [nj] a voiceless prepalatal nasal, e.g. *nyuku* ("sweat")

Liquids, which Cuenod (1967) refers to as "continuants", are represented by phonemically distinct sounds /l r/ in Xitsonga. Janson (2001:26) also adds:

There are also labialised liquids, /lw/ and /rw/, respectively. Prenasalisation can also be applied, to produce /nr and fnl/.[3] There seems to be no doubt about the existence of these six sounds, which are clearly separate phonemes.

Examples include the following:

l [l] is a voiced lateral liquid, e.g. *languta* ("look")

r [r] a voiced alveolar vibrant, e.g. *rungula* ("narrate")

rh [rh] is a voice aspirated alveolar vibrant, *rhengu* ("trick")

Xitsonga has three click phonemes, a simple click, a voiced click and a nasalised click (Janson 2001:27). All words in Xitsonga which contain the click phonemes /q gq/, such as *qala* ("to start"), *riqingho* ("telephone"), *xigqoko* ("hat") and *mugqomo* ("drum") are loan words from

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[3] Jansen provides no examples to substantiate the claim that /nr/ and /fnl/ are phonemes; his claim seems dubious.

isiZulu. The Nguni (Amazulu and Amaxhosa) adopted clicks from the Khoi-San because, unlike Vatsonga, these two nations were directly in contact with the Khoi-San. Subsequently, Vatsonga adopted the clicks from the Nguni languages (isiZulu and isiXhosa). It is interesting to note that words with click sounds are so indigenised in Xitsonga that many speakers (especially those of the young generation) are not even aware that they are loan words.

5.4.2   Orthography

Studies like phonology were highly explored during the last half of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century. The implication is that the translators were aware of phonological processes. Translators knew the sound pattern and the structures of the phonemes of the language. So they used the knowledge of phonology in the translation to the best of their ability.

Fromkin and Rodman (1983:156; see also Bolinger 1968) define orthography or rather spelling in terms of its function: "Spelling is the written trace of a word. Pronunciation is its linguistic form." Orthography is a science which focuses mainly on the systematic study of conventional spelling of a speech community. The need for the maintenance and preservation of Xitsonga spelling system was crucial as it was the forerunner of the standardised language that was to take place in the course of time. In other words, a standardised Xitsonga would have remained a dream without a validation by its own orthographic realisation.

The 1929 version of Xitsonga Bible translation was translated and finally published during the "orthographic war" (this researcher's phrase) that ensued as soon as the Swiss missionaries began to systematise and codify the language in the 19th century. Apart from its reliance on Sesotho orthography due to the lack of biblical references and related literature in Xitsonga, the version used revised spellings from both the 1883 and the 1907 versions of the Xitsonga Bible translation. They also exploited their linguistic skills, particularly those of the mother tongue speakers.

The orthography of the 1929 version is essentially a revision of the 1907 version. The influence of Sesotho is still seen in this version in the presence of diacritics such as š, ŝ, ṭ, ḍ, ṅ. See the examples of these diacritics in the Table 12 below.

Table 12. Examples of Diacritics in the 1929 Xitsonga Bible

Consonant with Diacritic	Example	Translation
ḍ	*Mulonḍovoti*	the Saviour
	Nḍzi	I
	Nḍoho	cereal/seed
	Wanḍisanyana	boy child
dž	*Badži*	jacket
	džovotela	peck repeatedly
ǹ	*ǹwana*	child/infant
	ǹweni	owner/master
	ǹwina	you (people)
š	*Rišaka*	Tribe/ethnic group/nation
	Šikwembu	God
	Moše	Moses
ŝ	*Testamente leyi'ntŝha*	New Testament
	ŝeŝi	now
ṭ	*ṭaka*	be happy
	Nṭhava/tinṭhava	mountain/mountains
	Tinṭumi	angels
ṽ	*ṽanhu*	people
	ṽulaṽula	speak

There exist within the Xitsonga written language of the late 1800s and the 1920s countless anomalies caused by the developing orthography. Most of these predicaments revolve around speech sounds and spelling itself. As Fromkin and Rodman (1983:156) indicate:

> The irregularities between graphemes (letters) and phonemes (in English, my addition) have been cited as one reason 'Why Johnny can't read'. Different spellings for the same sounds, the same spelling for different sounds, 'silent letters' and 'missing letters' all provide fuel for the flames of spelling reformers movements.

It is these irregularities which have come to characterise the turbulent nature of Xitsonga orthographic history in its formative years. For instance, some words have the same spelling but different meanings: *mavele* ("maize corns") and *mavele* ("breasts"). Other words have different spellings but the same meaning: *byala* ("liquor") *dzwala* ("liquor") or *bwalwa* ("liquor").

A standardised orthography in Xitsonga was not something which happened overnight. It was a gradual process which took some years to accomplish, hence the constant bickering amongst pioneering Bible translators about the choice of a suitable orthography. As Bill (2007:69) explains:

> Other mission societies which followed the Swiss into the area also had strong feelings about the orthography to be adopted, and it was many years before a standardised form was arrived at. In the meantime, the Church of the Nazarene worked out and used its own orthography, as did the Lebombo Mission of the Anglican Church in Mozambique.

Orthographic changes brought about in some phonemic categories in Xitsonga became the main bone of contention. A summary of these phonemic categories is presented by Bill (2007:70) below, with a phonetic representation given to facilitate the description.

Table 13. Orthographic Variation 1883-1962 (from Bill 2007:70)

	Phonetic symbol	**1883**	**1890**	**1908**	**1938**	**1949**	**1962**
Fricatives	[ß]	b	v̆	v		v	
	[ʃ]	ts	š	sh	š	x	x
	[ʂ]	tŝ	ŝ	sw	ŝ	sw	sw
Nasals	[ɲ]	ń				n'	n'
Retroflexive affricates	[tʂ]	Tj/thts	ts/t		ts		ts
	[dʐ]	dz/dh	dz/d		dz		dz

The differences in opinion amongst the missionary translators on Xitsonga orthography have also had adverse effects on the names given to the Vatsonga and their language as Bill (2007:70-71) indicates below:

Thonga/Sithonga/Tonga/Sitonga/Xitsonga/Tsonga/Gwamba/Sigwamba

Tzonga (in the orthography adopted by the Church of the Nazarene)

Shitron'ga

Tshangaan/Shangaan/Shangana/Xichangaan/Shangani/Changana/Chixangane/

Xichangana/Xangane (The name acquired after the setting up of the Nguni empire of Kwa Gasa—the people being called Machangana, or other variants of this.)

According to Masunga (1999:37), "the first Tsonga Language Board was formed in 1938 by the Transvaal Native Education Department." Its membership was comprised of one Mutsonga, two Swiss missionaries and three government officials. The duties of the first Language Board are described as follows (Masunga 1999:40):

> The duties of the first Language Board were to decide on the orthography to be used in all departmental schools, to decide on the prescribe books to be used in all different standards and to draw up a program in connection with the preparation and publication of school books which were urgently needed.

However, the Board did not have the welfare of the Vatsonga community at heart. It rubbed salt into the festering wound of orthography rather than try to heal it as Masunga (1999:40-41) explains:

> The board took a controversial decision of implementing changes in the orthography of Xitsonga without consulting broadly within the Vatsonga community. Anticipating possible protests about the changes in the Xitsonga orthography, the Board came to an agreement that decisions taken by the Board would be final and nobody would be allowed to challenge those decisions.

It was not until 1949 that Xitsonga orthography was finally authorised. Bill (2007:70) indicates that "in 1949, at a meeting of the Ronga, Tshwa and Tsonga language representatives in Pretoria, a common orthography was decided on for these three cognate languages, and in 1962 the *Tsonga Terminology and Orthography No. 2* M:424 of the Department of Bantu Education finally standardized the orthography." The *Tsonga Termnology and Orthography No. 3* of 1980, declares that "Tsonga orthography remains the same as previously published in the Bantu journal of October, 1956 (Vol. 11. 8) as ammended in October, 1960 (Vol. V1, 8)."

Janson (2001:31) and a host of other spelling reformers feared that the introduction of new spelling system in a speech community would render old literature difficult to be understood: "The disadvantage is mainly the usual one, that any spelling reform makes it more difficult to read the texts that already exist in the old spelling." However, the new spelling brought in by the common orthography of 1949 does not make it difficult to read the 1929 Xitsonga Bible translation. This version is read side by side with the 1989 version with understanding.

5.4.3   Morphology

Bauer (1988:3) describes morphology as a study which "deals with the formation of words and their structure." For Fromkin and Rodman (1983:113), "the study of the internal structure of words, and the rules by which words are formed, is called morphology."

If there is a tool or instrument which the translators of 1929 version of the Xitsonga Bible translation used to create a translation that has since become a classic – one of the Xitsonga's most treasured literature – it was morphology. The pioneering translators exploited almost all word classes, word sets, compound words, coinages, loanwords, foreign words and even words from Xitsonga traditional religion in the translation. These are explored in detail later in this chapter.

This version is also noted for harbouring the inflection *e-* at the beginning of each word, phrase or sentence. The */e/* inflection does not change the meaning of the word in Xitsonga. For instance, the first page of Genesis chapter one has been colonised by these inflections. *E Bkuku ya Genesa* ("The Book of Genesis"); *emisava* ("the earth"); *emoya* ("the air") and many more. The appearance of this inflection in the version indicates the influence of the register or manner of speaking of the Nkuna clan (that is, the Xinkuna dialect), which is one of the linguistic homes from whence the first Xitsonga Bible emerged.

The translators modified and incorporated foreign words and derivations from other languages into the Xitsonga Bible as a translation strategy to facilitate their translation process. They did this by adding affixes to the root of the word to turn it into a noun, a verb, an adjective or an adverb. For example, the foreign word, *tempele* ("temple") in Luke 21:5 has been adapted in such a way that it is easy for the Xitsonga mother tongue speaker to pronounce in Xitsonga. Xitsonga syllables have a CV [Consonant – Vowel] structure; *te-mpe-le* consists of three CV syllables. Examples of other loan words that are modified to fit the CV syllable structure of Xitsonga include:

> *ke-re-ke* ("church")

> *xi-tu-lu* ("stool")

Loan words can then be employed syntactically in whichever way the speaker wants to use it. *Tempele* falls under noun class number 3; the **yin – nti** class in Xitsonga language, which includes animals, birds, reptiles vaieties of people, fruits, organs of the body, and houses. A

locative form for the word *tempele* ("in/at the temple") results in a change in the shape of the word to *tempeleni:*

tempele + locative suffix *–ni*

Other examples of loanwords with Xitsonga morphology include:

vapatiaki ("patriarchs") (Heb. 7:4)

muprista ("a priest") (1 Kgs 4:4)

vaprista ("priests") (2 Kgs 16:16; Ezra 7:5)

mubarbari / babarbari ("barbarian/s") (1 Cor. 14:11; Acts 28:4)

All these words have undergone a change to facilitate pronunciation in Xitsonga. In addition, a prefix *mu-* or *va-* has been added so that they may fit into the morphology of the language with ease. The prefix *mu-* represents singularity while the prefix *va-* represents plurality of class 1 words. All these words belong to noun class 1, (*mu – va*) the class of people. For example, *munhu* ("one person") and *vanhu* ("more than one person").

The incorporation of foreign words into Xitsonga morphology took place with "open classes" of words, such as nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs. For instance, *vona* ("see") was modified to produce the new noun *xivoni* ("mirror"). Words like pronouns, prepositions and conjunctions which belong to the "closed classes" of words and are less profitable for forming new words.

Fromkin and Rodman (1983:121) indicate that "new words may be formed by stringing together other words to create compound words." The formation of compound words was an important strategy used by the Xitsonga Bible translators. Some of these compound words include the following:

Vanhu-va-hava ("worthless people", literally "empty people") (Deut. 13:13)

Rila-mbyana (literally "dog's cry") in Num. 22:4 is a kind of grass that is a favorite food of cattle

Mpima-vayeni ("twilight/dusk", literally "time of guests")

Xikwiri-kwiri ("crop", literally, "a fowl first stomach") (Lev. 1:16)

Note the use of hyphens in the orthography to indicate the compounding of two or more words.

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5.5 Translation Frame

This lengthy section provides a Descriptive Translation Studies analysis of the 1929 translation. The data presented here were collected by the researcher through close reading and compilation of words, phrases and constructions in the translation.

5.5.1 Loan Words

As indicated above in 5.3.1 and 5.3.4, the first Xitsonga Bible translators heavily relied on Sesotho, while local translators had IsiZulu influence because of the Nguni conquest. The coordinators depended on English, Afrikaans and, much less frequently, French when there was no indigenous word or phrase they could use in their translation.

5.5.1.1 Loan Words from Source Text Tradition

Loan words from the source text tradition(s) may express foreign concepts, may be used even though an indigenous Xitsonga expression was available, and may be used for proper names. This strategy (see Baker 1997) is often used when dealing with culture-specific items. All the same, the use of loan words enriched Xitsonga in that many of them have now become part of the Xitsonga vocabulary.

In many cases the rendering of the Xitsonga term has been filtered through one or more translation traditions before it is borrowed into Xitsonga. For example, the Xitsonga word *Sabata* "Sabbath" as found in Luke 4:16 originated in the Hebrew *šabbat* and was a loan word into Greek as *sabbaton* and eventually into English as *sabbath*.

(a) Expressing Foreign Concepts

The following are examples of loan words from the source text tradition (Hebrew for the Old Testament and Greek for the New Testament) which are used to express foreign concepts in Xitsonga.

> *Yubile* ("Jubilee") (Lev. 25:10 see also Lev. 25:28; Deut. 15:1-18; Neh. 10:3) introduces a new concept into the Xitsonga language, a celebration of 50 years which was unknown in the Xitsonga world.

Sabata "Sabbath" (Lk. 4:16) is another new concept. The Vatsonga were previously not aware that there is a day set aside for dedication to the Almighty God, let alone its name.

The fragrances *miri* "myrrh" and *kasia* "cassia" from (Ps. 48:8[9]) are foreign words."Aloe", however, is translated with the indigenous word *mhangan*i ("aloe").

Statera (Mt. 17:27) is a loanword from the Greek source text for a kind of money.

Titalenta ("talents") represents the Hebrew measure of weight *kikkar* (plural *kikkarim*). The term *talenta* is generally understood as a gift, endowment or capacity in Xitsonga. But in Ezra 8:26, where it appears three times, it refers to a unit of weight. Compare the English *talents*; Afrikaans 1933 *talente*; French *talents*.

In a report to the secretary of the BFBS (London) on the Revision of the Tsonga Bible (May 1959), the Revd Paul Leresche (1959:5-6) rightly bemoans the fact that

…a great number of words in the Bible (particularly in the 1929 Xitsonga Bible) refers to things which do not exist in primitive Africa; therefore the words to express them do not exist in Bantu languages, for instance, synagogue, Pharisee, Sadducee, temple, Sabbath, manna, tabernacle, etc. There are more than 100 of them. Most of these words in the Bible in Bantu languages have been kept from the original (Hebrew and Greek) with small changes at the end, or in the middle, to make them sound like Bantu words (ex. *Sinagoga*, *tempele*, *sabata*, etc). When these words occur frequently in the Bible, this is all right, because they are explained not only in pastoral and evangelists' schools, but even in Primary schools... but what about the great majority of these foreign words, which remain always foreign to the mind of our African converts? Is it good to put into their hands a Bible which contains dozens of words which they do not understand?

No doubt, it is sociolinguistically unacceptable for a Bible translation to contain "dozens of words" which the readership "does not understand." However, during the Leresche era, Bible translation was not yet developed to replace most of the foreign words which appear in this version. And many of these foreign words which could not be replaced, had made an essential contribution to the Xitsonga vocabulary.

(b)   **Instead of Indigenous Xitsonga Expressions**

In some cases, Xitsonga has its own indigenous words, which *could* have been used in the 1929 translation but were not. Xitsonga speakers were forced to use the foreign words found in the translation:

> *Alfa and Omega* (Rev. 1:18), reflecting the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, were used instead of *Masungulo ni Mahetelelo* ("Beginning and End")

> *Evangeli* ("Gospel") was used instead of *Mahungu Lamanene* ("Good News") in Xitsonga.

> *Eli, Eli lama sabaktani* (Matt. 27:46, citing the Aramaic sentence from Ps. 22:1). This could have been translated into Xitsonga as *Xikwembu xanga, Xikwembu xa nga, undzi tshikele?* ("My God, my God, why have you let me down?"). In this case the Greek source text also transliterated the Aramaic and then provided the translation of it.

> *Demona/Mademona* ("demon/s") (Mt. 9:34; Lk. 11:15 and Mk. 15:22) is a word that is now readily used in Xitsonga although there is an indigenous Xitsonga word for it, *moya/mimoya wo/yo biha* ("evil spirit/s").

> *Epistola/epistle* (used in the Pauline letters in the New Testament) could have been translated with either *papila* or *xitluka—*both stand for "a letter." The word *papila* is itself a loan word from English *paper*.

> *Muproselita* (Acts 6:6) refers to "a proselyte". The indigenous term is *mupfumeri lontshwa* ("a new convert").

> *Apocalypse* ("revelation" as in the title of the Book of Revelation) could have been translated with *Nhlavutelo* ("revelation").

> *Amen,* occurring at the end the book of Revelation and elsewhere in the Bible, is indeed now a very common word amongst the Vatsonga. But there is a Xitsonga version of this word which could have been used as well, namely, *a swi ve tano* ("let it be so"); this phrase would reflect the meaning of the Hebrew origins of the word.

Kandelari refers to "chandeliers" in Num. 8.2. The Xitsonga equivalents are *xitlhoma-mavoningo* ("lights holder") or *xitlhoma-timboni* ("lamps holder").

Tistadia ("stadia") in Rev. 21:16 contextually refers to the measurement of city's ground or floorings. In Xitsonga, the indigenous word is *vuandlao* ("circumference/ site/ landscape/ topography").

Xitiringo ("string/musical instrument") in Job. 30:31, Jer. 48:36.

Psalteri na harpa ("psaltery and harp") in Ps. 150:3.

Masatrapi ("satraps") in Dan. 6:1 could have been translated using *tihosana* ("princes").

Vaapostola) (*Varhumiwa*) ("Apostles") in the New Testament, could have been translated using the Xitsonga word for "missionaries."

Leviatan (Job 3:8, 41:1; Ps. 74:14; 104:26 and Isa. 27:1) is another biblical term that is unknown to the Vatsonga society. The Xitsonga word for ("reptile") is either x*ivandzana* or *xikokovi*.

*Dragona*in (Rev. 12:9) is from the Greek by way of the English instead of the Xitsonga phrase *nyoka leyikulu* ("big snake"), which is a general term for a big snake.

The names of the books of the Bible were often drawn from translations known to the missionaries, going back to the Greek and Latin translation tradition: *Genesa* ("Genesis") rather than (*Masunguloni Mahetelelo*) and *Eklesiasta* ("Ecclesiastes") rather than *Mudyondzisi*a ("teacher/instructor").

The title of the second book of the Old Testament was rendered as *Eksoda*. The Sesotho uses precisely the same rendering *Eksoda*, whereas Tswana uses *Ekesodo.* The name is immediately drawn from either English or Afrikaans *Exodus,* which derives from Greek/Latin name for the book. It would have been possible for the translators to use the Xitsonga phrase *Ku Rhurha* ("to move from place to another"). However, the word *eksoda* entered the Xitsonga language and now is commonly used to mean "mass departure" or "mass immigration."

Tinhlayo ("Numbers") serves as the title of a book in the Bible which is mainly about taking a census, a practice which was previously unknown to the Vatsonga. It

would have been possible to translate with *ku hlayiwa ka vanhu* ("counting of people").

Tikronika ("Chronicle") as a term implies records or memoirs which keep the history of the kings. Xitsonga could have translated this concept using *Switsundzuxo swa Matimu ya Tihosi* ("The Kings' Records").

Psalma ("Psalms") is a term which is now deeply embedded in Xitsonga as part of the language. However, the title of the biblical book could have been translated using *tinsimu* ("songs") or rather *tinsimu ta ku dunisa* ("prayer songs") in Xitsonga.

Tiproverbia and *Swivuriso* both have been used in the translation for "Proverbs." *Swivuriso* is Xitsonga for "Proverbs." In other words, *swivuriso* is an indigenous Xitsonga word that can stand unaided, without a loan word like *Tiproverbia* appearing in the heading.

(c)   Proper Names

The translators' choices concerning how to render proper names, especially the names for God provides additional insight into their translation strategies.

Yehova ("Jehovah/Yahweh") Another identity marker for this version is the Hebrew tetragrammaton which has since become a bone of contention amongst modern translators. For almost half of a century, this honorific title has penetrated the church's liturgy and its hymn books. Even to this day, the common people mostly refer to their Maker as *Yehov*a in Xitsonga.

Yesu ("Jesus") hi leswaku Muponisi ("that is, the Saviour") in Mt. 1:21.

Proper names were regularly adjusted to fit Xitsonga:

Mordecai wa Mu-Yuda ("Mordecai, the Jew") (Esther 5:13, 6:10, 8:7, 9:29, 9:31, 10:3).

Wansati wa mu-Kuxi ("a Kushite woman") in Num. 12:1.

Vunazira ("Nazirites") in Numbers 6.

Names of foreign lands like *Ur* ("Ur"), *Kanana* ("Canaan"), *Egipita* ("Egypt"), *Siriya* ("Syria"), *Damaska* ("Damascus") and even great rivers with wonderful names – *Nile* ("Nile"),

Yufrata ("Euphrates")*, Tigirisi* ("Tirgris) – have since become familiar in the Xitsonga language because of constant usage.

Over the years, foreign words which were initially an obstacle the Xitsonga to mother speaker's understanding of the Bible, have been regularly used and absorbed into the Xitsonga with the consequence that they have enriched and broadened repertoire of the language.

5.5.1.2   Loan Words from Sesotho

The Xitsonga 1929 translation exhibits extensive influence from Sesotho (see 4.3 and 5.3 for the history of Sesotho influence). This can be seen in a number of loanwords from Sesotho in the translation:

> *Khawuka* in Lev. 15:28: *Ku khawuka/khawukile* is a Sesotho word for *ku tsemeka* ("stop, cut short, terminate, discontinue or break off"). The Xitsonga equivalent words are *tsemaka, ku yima, ku hela.*

> *Lavene: Lebana* ("against"): *Ku levane* in Deut. 1:1 is derived from the Sesotho *go lebana*. The Xitsonga phrase is *ku langutana* na ("to next to or stand against someone").

> *Mehlwaare:* In Mk. 11:1 the translation uses *mitlhwari* for *entshabeni ya mitlhwari* ("at the Mount of Olives") as a loan word from Sesotho *meehlwaare* ("olives").

> *Maakha* ("ointments") appears three times (in 2:4, 2:9, 2:12). It is strange words whose tone suggests a Sesotho language origin. The vernacular Xitsonga word is *mafurha yo tola* ("ointments, lotions or skin creams") . In addition there is no such thing as *mafurha yo saseka* ("good looking or attractive oil or lotion") in Xitsonga. Oil can only be crude or pure but not gorgeous. Again this phrase indicates that some of the translators were Sesotho speakers translating into Xitsonga while thinking in Sesotho, see Lev. 24:2. The Xitsonga phrase is *mafurha yo tenga* ("pure oil").

> *Swiphampha* in Deut. 10:1 is derived from Sesotho. In Xitsonga the term is *swiphepherele* ("flat stones or tables").

> *Sinkontlokontlo* in Num. 13:34. The word *swinkontlokontlo* is a Sesotho derivation which refers to the ("sons of Anak, a nation of giants").

Vakulu in the phrase *Vakulu va tiko* in Num. 11:16 is derivation from Sesotho *baholo*. The Xitsonga word is *vakulukumba* ("elders or the village sages"). Also see Num. 22:7 and Deut. 19:14.

Vuso in 2 Kgs 8:15 is a Sesotho word for "a face". The Xitsonga equivalent is *mombo/xikandza*.

Vutshavelo in Num. 35:13-32 and Deut. 4:42 (see also Deut. 4:40): *Vutshavelo* is a Sesotho derivation from *Botshabelo* meaning ("a place of refuge/ asylum/ sanctuary"). There indeed nothing wrong with the word *vutshavelo* except that it is a Sesotho derivation of *Botshabelo*.The Xitsonga equivalent is *vutumbelo/ ndzhawu ya vutumbelo* but these words are rarely used.

Phiriwa ("to be dishearted, dispirited, dismayed, saddened, discouraged, depressed") in Lev 26:14, is a Sesotho word whose Xitsonga equivalent is *ku swirheka timbilu* ('blackened hearts, to be annoyed, to be disturbed").

Rindi ("hollow on the ground") in Ps. 6:5 from Sesotho *molete*. The Xitsonga word that may be used as a substitute is *goji*.

Ritlama in Gen. 41:42 is from a Sesotho word (*letlama*) referring to a metal ornament. The related Xitsonga word is *rihlalu* ("necklace"); *sindza* ("bangle") and *xingwavila* ("ring") could also be used to refer to jewelry.

Bere ("horse"): In Gen. 16:11-12, Ishmael's wild character is described metaphorically as a "wild donkey." In the Xitsonga translation he is described as a *bere* ("horse"), which is a loan word from Sesotho *pere* ("horse"), which in turn is a loan word from Afrikaan *perd* ("horse"). Historically, the indigenous people in South Africa at large and in the Vutsonga in particular were not familiar with a horse before European settlers arrived in country. According to Swart (2010:15):

> Horses were not indigenous to southern Africa and were only introduced by the European ships. Those vessels not only brought settlers and merchandise but introduced the equine species from Europe, Arabia, the Americas, China and Japan into parts of the world where horses did not yet exist.

However, there is a confusion in the 1929 translation concerning the word *bere*. In Gen. 16:11-12 it refers to a "horse" whereas in 1 Sam. 17:26 it refers to a "bear", which was also unknown to the Vatsonga. The correct spelling for "bear" in Xitsonga is *beri*, a loan word from English. It is used in 2 Sam. 17:8. (The Xitsonga word for "horse" is *hanci*, a borrowing from isiZulu *ihashi*; see 5.5.1.3 below.)

5.5.1.3   Loan Words from Tshivenda

Xitenda-nandu: The compound word, *xitenda-nandzu* in Job 22:6 implies "the act of pleading guilty". However, the verb *ku tenda* is a foreign word, which is Tshivenda and Shona for pleading. The right Xitsonga word is *xikhensa-nandzu*. The context of the sentence refers to *ndziho* ("reparation/compensation/reimbursement").

Xumbadza (Rom. 2:23) is a Tshivenda loan word which means to "pester/annoy/hound". The indigenous Xitsonga word is *ku xanisa* or *ku hungela*.

Xitamelo ("a handle of a spoon/fork/knife/spade/pick") in Judg 3:22 is derived from a Tshivenda word which is used alternately with Xitsonga *xikhomo* ("a holder/a handle of an implement or a tool.")

5.5.1.4   Loan Words from isiZulu/Nguni

Mufundisi is the Xitsonga term for a ("priest") which was derived from IsiZulu where it basically means a person who teaches. But in Xitsonga it refers to a priest, a pastor or minister. It comes from the verb (*-funda*) meaning to learn. In Xitsonga this word has been specially reserved to refer to a priest, a pastor or minister. *Mudyondzisi* ("a teacher") is the indigenous Xitsonga version of *mufundhisi*. According to the Swiss mission tradition, there is a *mudyondisi* who is neither a priest or a teacher, but a preacher, one who gives a sermon to the congregation.

Sihlalu (Num. 22:21) is an isiZulu word for a seat or stool. In this context it refers to "a chair". The Xitsonga word is *xitshamo.*

Xihluthu (Song 5:11) *ku tibombisa hi misisi* in Xitsonga refers to a "hair style". Cuenod (1966) refers to it as "a special way of wearing hair."

Ndlulameti (Gen. 30:37) is an isiZulu derivation which means "a tree that is taller than other trees". This name has been awarded to the bluegum tree, which was unknown in the Vatsonga society because it is not indigenous to Africa.

Malunganeni ya yindlu (Neh. 3:23, 26) is a word with isiZulu influence. The Xitsonga equivalent word is *kusuhi na* or *ku langutana na* ("against or near the house").

Hlupheka ("cause to suffer") (Ps. 47:21) is a Nguni word that is frequently used in Xitsonga. The equivalent word in Xitsonga is *xaniseka* ("to suffer").

Hanci (2 Kgs 5:9) is the word for a horse in Xitsonga. It is borrowed from the isiZulu *ihashi*.

5.5.1.5   Loan Words from Afrikaans

The following Afrikaans loanwords occur in the translation for concepts which do not have an equivalent word in Xitsonga.

Kereke (1Cor. 14:34-35; 1 Cor. 15:9) is from Afrikaan *kerk* ("church").

Timpetsyana (Mk. 5:4) is derived from Afrikaans word *kettings* ("chains"). (The 1989 version has *tinketani*, also derived from Afrikaans *kettings*.)

 Duku (Jer. 6:26) is from *doek* in Afrikaans ("headscarf").

Roko (Lev. 8:7) is a word derived from Afrikaans word *rok* ("dress") that is, a garment worn mainly by the womenfolk.

Mutoloki (Gen. 42:25) is a corrupt word for *tolk* in Afrikaans which stands for an interpreter. The appropriate Xitsonga word is *muhundzuluxi* ("one who turns things [words] around").

Gamboko (Rev. 1:14) is a corrupt word from Afrikaans *kapok* which means "snow". Geographically. The Vatsonga society is located in tropically hot climate. Thus, snow is not common amongst the people. However, *gwitsi* is the indigenous word for "snow" or "frost."

Koroni ("wheat") in Deut. 16:9 is derived from Afrikaans *koring*. Since wheat does not form a staple food for the Vatsonga, later translations, particularly the 1989 Xitsonga Bible and *Biblia Go Basa* used *mavele* ("maize"). Leresche (1959:8) draws attention to the fact that the Xitsonga language in Mozambique has been strongly influenced by Portuguese while in South Africa "Afrikaans and English have penetrated the Bantu languaes and given them many new words. Hence differences of expression between the two parts of tribe. In Luke 12:18, in the text I have used "mavele" which means cereals, but particurly mealies (maize) and in a note I wrote: Greek: korone, or trigo," "korone" being the Tsonga deformation for the Afrikaans *koring* ("wheat" or the British English "corn") and "trigo" the Portuguese word for corn. There is no African word for corn, as corn has been introduced recently only, by white settlers." Substituting words such as *koroni* ("wheat") for *mavele* ("maize") implies using a functionally equivalent word. The strategy is known as functional equivalence strategy.

Makausi (1 Sam. 17:6). The translator succeeds in capturing the reader's mind by his use of imagery in his description of the giant that is Goliath. Yet he uses sometimes uses foreign words in his description of this warrior. For instance *makausi* has been derived from Afrikaans *kouse* ("socks"). These were a special kind of socks as *Die Bybel* (1983) refers to these socks as *broonsskerms* ("bronze protections"). There is nothing that can be described as "socks" in Goliath's army attire. What is here described as *makausi* should be understood as *swisirhelelo* ("protection devices") used by the Philistine soldiers in the battle fields – this phrase is used in the 1989 translation (see 6.5.6). In the Afrikaans translations, *Die Bybel* (1933) refers to these socks as *skeenplate van koper* and *Die Bybel* (1983) calls them *broonskerms.*

Xilotlela ("key") (Judg. 3:24) is a derivation from Afrikaans for *sleutel* ("key").

Mafester ("windows") (Ezek. 40:16) Xitsonga for *vensters* ("windows") in Afrikaans.

Kamara (Ezek. 40:16) Xitsonga for a *kamer* ("room") in Afrikaans.

Hondo ("makeshift for heating baked mud bricks") (Lev. 11:35; Ps. 21:9) comes from the Afrikaans word *oond* ("oven").

Maplank/plank (Ex. 36.24; Ezek. 41:22) refers to *plank/planke* in Afrikaans, also in English although there is difference in pronunciation of the word by the two languages (i.e. English and Afrikaans). The board for the tabernacle is referred as a *pulangi* ("plank") in that there is no name for a wood shaped in the form of a plank in Xitsonga, see Ex. 27:15. In modern Vatsonga society, this word has been completely accepted.

Masaka (Rev. 11:3) implies *sake* in Afrikaans, that is "sacks" in English.

Xitarata from Afrikaans *straat* ("street"). The word is frequently used for both tarred streets and dirt roads in townships and villages. While traditional words such as *ndlela* ("footpath"), *nsoko* ("trail"), *xindledyana* ("track"), are reserved for words such as path, track and trail.

Buruku/maburuku ("pant/s"): In Lev. 16:4 and Ex. 28:42), the term for the priests' pants is borrowed from Afrikaans *broek*.

Hembe (Ex. 28:39) is a derivation from Afrikaans for *hemp* ("shirt").

Tafula (Ps. 23:5) is from *tafel*, Afrikaans for a "table".

Jazi (2 Kgs. 2:8) is borrowed from Afrikaans word *jas/jasse* ("jacket"). In Xitsonga the appropriate wording is *nguvu ya yena* ("his robe").

Mabantsi (1 Kgs. 22:30) refers to *nguvu ya vukosi* ('kingly robes'") because *mabantsi* is derived from an Afrikaans word *baadjies* meaning "jackets/gowns".

Timpompi ta kopor (literally "pumps of copper") is derived from Afrikaans *pompe* ("pumps"). However, the phrase does not contextually refer to "copper pumps" but means *tiphuphu ta kopor* ("copper pillars").

Mavhiki (Dan. 9:24) is derived from *weke* in Afrikaans which refers to weeks. (Note the spelling of the loanword in Xitsonga, which suggests that the word was borrowed from Afirkaans *weke* rather than English *week*.)

Xipuku (Jer. 6:26) is derived from Afrikaans word *spook* or from the English word with the same spelling but different pronunciation.

Enkaseni (Gen. 50:26) means "in the box". It is derived from the Afrikaans word *kas*.

5.5.1.6   Loan Words from English

Silivhere ("Silver") (Dan. 5:4. 11:8, 11:43). The issue of money appears again in Gen. 20:16 where it is referred to in terms of shillings rather than in silver. A "shilling" is a coin which was part of the old British currency in South Africa sixty to eighty years ago. The word *masheleni* ("shillings"), is borrowed from English, and has since become part of the Xitsonga vocabulary.

Xitsonga does not have names for all the different shades of colours referred to in the Bible. For instance, it borrows from English the names for colours such as *scarlat* "scarlet," *crimson* ("crimson") (see Ex. 28:6 and 28:15).

Xikalo ("scale"): In 2 Kgs. 12:11, *exikalweni* ("onto the scale") is an appropriate word (see Tonga Terminology and Othography No. 3 1980) although it is a borrowing from English as Xitsonga does not have a word for a scale.

The word *hafu* (1 Kgs. 3:25) features as a borrowed term in Xitsonga and has since been accepted by the average Xitsonga speaker even though Xitsonga has an appropriate word *xiphemu* ("a piece" or "fraction, fragment") (see Cuenod 1967).

Sikela ("sickle") (Deut. 16:9) – the indigenous Xitsonga word is *rihwevo*.

Mujeka ("flag") (Ps. 20:5): A flag (*vlag* in Afrikaans) is known as *Mujeko* in Xitsonga. The etmology of the word is unknown, but one assumes that the word flag was introduced to the Vatsonga as a name rather than a concept itself. For instance, the Union Jack (British Flag) was modified in Xitsonga to become *mujeko*.

Mirhi ya Miribeila ("trees which are Mulberry") (2 Sam 5:23) is derived from the English, *Mulberry trees.* Similar translations are found in the *Tshwana Bibele* (1909), which renders *Mbulubere,* the Xitshwa Bible (a dialect of Xitsonga) *A Biblia Go Basa* (1995) which renders *tinsinyeni ya Timora*, The Holy Thonga Bible (1948) calls it *Miribeila.* In comparison to the use of a loanword from English in the first Xitsonga translation, the 1989 translation rendered the term with *mabaka*, apparently a borrowing from Northern Sotho (Sepedi) (see section 6.5.2.4).

Bokisi (2 Chron. 24:8) is borrowed from the English word *box*.

Buku (Josh. 1:8; Jer. 36:20) is Xitsonga for a "book".

Tikamela (Jer. 49:32) refers to "camels", animals previously unknown to the Vatsonga.

Banga (Judg. 3.21) refers to a panga knife or a sword.

Matshiza (2 Sam. 17:29) is a corrupt word for "cheese" in English. Chizi is a modern derivation.

Burukuya line ("trousers of linen") (Lev. 16:4 and Ex. 28:42): the term for "linen" is borrowed from English; it is not known in Xitsonga.

Timillion (Dan. 7.10) are "millions" in English. Xitsonga usually wrote numbers in figures (see 5.5.10 below).

Tivinya (Neh. 5:3) implies vines, that is, *masimu ya vinya* ("vineyards").

Inki (2 Cor. 3:3) is a corrupt word for *ink* in English.

Peni na Inki (Jn. 1:3) refers to a pen and ink in English.

Filosofia (Col. 2:8) ("philosophy") is *Ntivo-vutivi* in Xitsonga according to Tsonga Terminology and Orthography (1980:154).

Mu-Babari ("a barbarian") (Col. 2:11). The plural is *Va-barbara* ("barbarians") (Acts 28:4) .

Fever ("dari") (Mk. 1:31).

Vapatriarka ("Patriarchs") (Acts 7:11) is *vakulukumba* in Xitsonga.

Vinagri (Num. 6:3) refers to "vinegar" that is *swihalaki swo dzunga* in Xitsonga.

Magolonyin ("wagons") (1 Sam. 17:20) is an English loan word which has since been accepted by the Vatsonga as there is no indigenous word for this vehicle. This word came through to Xitsonga via Sesotho which was the first language to derive it from the English (e.g. *koloi* meaning a wagon) when they met missionaries like Robert Moffat who went past

their country driving a waggon. During the course of time, the term was taken up by the Vatsonga when Paul Berthoud and his mission entourage arrived in the Zoutpansberg in 1875.

Makaletsi ("chariots") (Ex. 15:19) another loan word from English. It has since attained archaic status because chariots are not frequently used this days.

Phorisa (Mt. 5.25) has also been loaned from English and means a "policeman".

Xileyi ("sledge") (Amos 1:3) is a primitive means of transport whose words has been borrowed from English and absorbed into Xitsonga.

Joko ("yoke") (Is. 10:27) is an English derivation. Yoke was unknown in the Vatsonga society as they used an African hoe to till the soil rather than a plough and a span of oxen.

Mašilin ("shillings") is borrowed from English in Lk. 10:35.

Xifaniso xa timpondho ("the parable of pounds") another English derivation referring to British notes ("pounds") (see Lk. 19:11).

5.5.1.7 Loan Words from French

French, although it was the colonial language spoken by the Swiss missionaries, had much less influence on the translation than either English or Afrikaans. Only one loan word that entered through French has been identified.

Tidarika ("drachmas") (Ezra 2:69): Hebrew *darkkəmōnîm* are small units for weighing gold. The French has *dariques d'or* ("dariques of gold"); compare the English KJV "drams of gold". The Vatsonga had no word for these units and they did not have a scale to weigh gold. Hence the translator's adaptation of the term into Xitsonga.

5.5.2 Literal Translation

The 1929 translation is essentially a literal translation. This can be clearly seen in cases where the source text contains unusual cultural items and idioms, as in the following:

Ku khoma timhondo ta altari ("to hold on to the horns of the altar") in 1 Kgs 2:28.

Kutani a tshulula lwandle ra koporo ("and he poured down a molten sea of copper") in 1 Kgs 7:23.

In some cases, a literal translation is used, even in cases where Xitsonga has the resources available for a more communicative translation. For example, in Esth. 3:15 one is confronted with the word, *vatsutsumi* ("runners" / "athletes") (see also Esth. 8:10; 8:14 and 2 Kgs 11:4) whose root *tsutsum-a* refers to the activity of "running." The Sesotho 1908 also uses *batsamaisi* ("people who walk fast"), which is close to a literal translation of the Hebrew "runners". However, the passage has nothing to do with athletics – that is, people engaged in a competition – but is rather about people carrying messages. Two other words would have been possible: *tintsumi* ("messengers") or *varhumiwa* ("messengers"/ "missionaries" / "apostles"). The *tintsumi* are the messengers who go between the two families in determining the *lobola* ("marriage price") and the term is also used in the Bible for "angels."

In some cases, the result of the literal translationis a very good translation that communicates well in Xitsonga; in other cases, the literal translation causes difficulties in Xitsonga. The following sections explore the effect of various literal renderings.

5.5.2.1   Literal Translation is Effective in Xitsonga

The defilement of Dinah by Shechem in Gen. 34:5 is an example of euphemism that is the same in the source text and in the target text. The Xitsonga says that Shechem *onha* ("damaged") Dinah; the source text uses "defiled." Xitsonga has a word for rape (*pfinya*) but it would have obscene to use it in the translation. We see another instance of the euphemism in Judg 19:25 *a n'wi tisa ka vona ehandle, kutani va n'wi tiva va n'wi onha vusiku hinkwabyo* ("He brought her to them outside and then they knew her and they defiled her the whole night").

One of the typical instances of euphemism is found in the following sentence (1.Kgs. 1:4). *Wanhwana a sasekile ngopfu: a hlayisa hosi, a yi tirhela, kambe hosi a yi n'wi tivanga* ("The girl was quite beautiful. She worked for him, but the king never knew her"). The use of "know" to express a euphemism for sexual relations is identical in the Bible and in Xitsonga.

In some cases, a literal translation of the poetic language of the Old Testament produces poetic language in Xitsonga. In Gen. 27:28-29, Isaac blessed Jacob using powerful metaphors. The Xitsonga renders the source text literally and refers to rain as *mbera ya tilo* ("the dew of

heaven") and farm produce as *ni swa mafurha ya misava ni ndzalo ya vuswa ni vinyo* ("the fatness of the earth and plenty of porridge and wine"). What is interesting is that the poetic language of the source text is also understood as poetic in the target text.

5.5.2.2 Literal Translation Creating Cultural Confusion in Xitsonga

A translation of the source text often results in cultural estrangement in the 1929 version. For instance, in Ps. 23:5 the symbolism represented by a table, oil and cup in this verse combine to form powerful imagery that implies a feast, blessing and happiness respectively. Xitsonga has its own genuine style of expressing a feast, blessing and happiness. In Xitsonga a feast is called *nkhuvo* made of various food, like mutton, beef or goat's meat. These are taken with porridge and washed down by sorghum beer. There is also some blessings from the gods because *nkhuvo* starts from the family shrine where the gods are asked to bless the feast before it starts.

The use of *katetesthio* ("to eat up, to devour, eat one another") (Gal. 5:5) created problems of understasnding for the Vatsonga. In the Report on the Tsonga Bible (1961-1962) by the Revd Paul Leresche, one of the translators working to revise the 1929 Xitsonga Bible, he noted his surprise when his African friends asked him whether he thought the Apostle Paul believed in witchcraft. In Xitsonga, "to eat somebody" implies the maleficient activities of wizards and witches. Leresche also described the difficulties of translating the Bible for a "people whose language and minds have been framed in the heathen background of the animistic religions."

The term *mucheleleri* ("waiter/steward") in *mucheleri wa hosi* ("waiter of the king") (Neh. 1:11) is an appropriate translation of the Hebrew. But from a Vatsonga cultural point of view it is has negative connotations. The verb *ku chelela* literally means "to pour liquid," particularly some drink into a container like a cup or glass on behalf of or for someone. Decanting drinks in this manner means dispensing concoctions into the cup or glass of a drinker with intent to kill him or her. Mother tongue speakers prefer the word *ku kela swakunwa* ("to serve with drinks") as a waiter does in a hotel or restaurant.

In dealing with Gen. 24:28, a translator should pay special attention to the word "house" lest he loses the contextual meaning of the sentence. *Kutani lo wanhwana a tsutsuma, a ya amba e ndlwini ya mana wakwe* ("Then a girl ran to tell in her mother's house"). In traditional Xitsonga society, only a father owns a house rather than a mother. This literal translation of the source

text creates confusion. A Xitsonga reader might assume that the girl told the news to her mother who was sitting in her own room or the girl told her mother standing next to the family house.

Vukulu ("greatness") in Job 1:3 refers to a person's physical stature whereas the sentence is speaking about his fame or wealth.

Ku yisa voko ra wena emirrini ("to put his hand unto the body") in Job 1:12, is a powerful metaphor implying that Satan is not allowed to harm Job's body. However, a modern Xitsonga reader could interpret the phrase as meaning that Satan's hand is contagious, that is, it causes illness.

Kutani Job a ba hi marimba layo vavisa ("And Job was hit by aching skin deseases") in Job 2:7. Normally in Xitsonga a person *u khoma hi vuvabya* "gets ill" rather than being hit by illness as in the Hebrew expression.

Ndakambula ka milomu ya n'wina ("to rant") in Job 16:5 should be replaced with *ku hokomula* because as it is, implies a harangue, tirade or scolding.

In 1 Sam 28:1, a question is asked thus: *David a nga tumbelanga Xitsungeni xa Hakila, ku langutane ni mananga xana?* ("Is David not hiding himself on Hakila Hill against the plains?"). Although rhetorical questions may be used in Xitsonga, in this context the reader is likely to understand the question as a real question and to be confused by it. Nida & Taber (1974:30) maintain that "answers to rhetorical questions must often be provided, so that the hearer should not misunderstand what is involved."

Literal translation sometimes creates ambiguities. For example, the polysemic nature of the word *muti* in Xitsonga is such that it makes it difficult for both the translator and the readership as to which kind of *muti* is being referred to. *Muti* in Xitsonga may either refer to a "homestead" or a "village" or a "town" or even a "city." If *muti* is used independently without a qualifier it is confusing as to what *muti* one is referring to. *Muti wa Davhida* is easy in that the readership can easily identify it as "the house of David". In Xitsonga the word *muti* may mean a village or a homstead but not a palace or a royal house, which is *exihulu* in Xitsonga.

5.5.2.3　　Literal Translation Creating Obscene Words and Phrases in Xitsonga

These are culturally unacceptable words in the Vatsonga community. For instance, in 2 Kgs 6:25 the use of offensive language, *matsimba* ("doves' droppings") would not be readily acceptable to an average reader. The appropriate word is *matoto* ("dirt").

Culturally, the term *mucheleleri* ("waiter/steward") in *mucheleri wa hosi* see Neh. 1:11, is appropriate. The problem comes in when one read it from a cultural point of view in that it has negative connotations. The verb *ku chelela* literally means to pour liquid (particularly some drink) into a container like a cup or glass on behalf of or for someone. Decanting drinks in this manner means dispensing concoctions into the cup or glass of a drinker with intent to kill him or her. Mother tongue speakers prefer the word *ku kela* ("to serve") like what an attendant does in a hotel or restaurant.

5.5.2.4　　Literal Translation Followed by Explanation

In a number of cases, the Xitsonga translation gives the meaning of the Hebrew or Greek source word/phrase in parentheses, where it is important for the reader's understanding:

> *Benjamin (Nwana wa voko ra xinene)* "Benjamin (the child of the right hand)" Gen. 35:18.

> *Ben-oni (N'wana wa ku vaviseka ka mina)* "Benoni (child of my sorrow)" Gen. 35:18.

> *Mene, mene, tekel, ufarsin (ku hlayiwa, ku ringanisiwa, ku avanyisiwa*) "Mene, mene, tekel, ufarsin (to be counted, to be measured, to be judged)" (Dan. 5.2).

> *Vadiyakoni: vatirheli va kereke* (deacons: church servants) (1 Tim. 3:8).

> *Manna (vuswa) Manna hi leswaku i yini* (Manna [what is it]) (Ex. 16:31).

> *Sukot (Matshanganyana)* "Sukkot (shelters made of branches)" (Gen. 33:17).

> *Gershom(Muluveri)* "Gershom (a refugee)" (Ex. 2:22).

> *(Matshanganyana)* "Sukkot ("shelters made of branches")" (Gen. 33:17).

> *Rabi (hi leswaku mufundisi)* "Rabbi (a priest/pastor/minister)" (Jn. 1:39).

Siloe (hi leswaku xirhumiwa) "that can be sent on an errand" (Jn. 9:7).

Golgota (ripala hi Xiheberu) "plain ground in Hebrew" (Jn. 19:17).

Rabuni (hi leswaku mufundisi hi Xiheberu) "a priest/pastor/minister in Hebrew" (Jn. 20:16).

5.5.3 Functional Translation

The word *vuhlotwana* ("divining bones") was positioned by the pioneer translators of the 1929 Xitsonga Bible as the Xitsonga version of the foreign terms "Urim and the Thummim" (Ex. 28:30; Num. 27:21; 1 Sam. 14:41; Ezra 2:63). The term is not well understood in the Xitsonga world because it is confused with *tinhlolo* ("the divining bones"). The confusion and significance of the translated word is reinforced by minutes of a meeting on Tsonga Bible Revision, that is the revision of the 1929 translation.[4]

> The Chairman then re-opened discussion on *vuhlolotwana*, and various alternatives were suggested. It was agreed that the term used was not of paramount importance in regard to the heathen Roman soldiers (the present reference) but that when the Committee comes to the final revision of the Acts of the Apostles, great care will need to be taken in Acts 1:26, and that we should seek to reject *vuhlolotwana*, *hlahluvaand tinhlolo* as these all have reference to the activities of witchdoctors. Either the translators may choose to retain the term from the source language with some explanations at the end of the page or seek to coin a new term.

In Gen. 13:2, silver coins are referred to as *mali yo basa* ("white money").

Although some colour terms are loan words from English, in some instances the translators used a functional translation for colour terms. For instance, in Ex. 25:4, *rihlaza ra tilo* (literally, "green of the sky") is used for "blue", though blue is more recently known as *wasi* in Xitsonga.[5]

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[4] Tsonga Bible Revision Committee: Minutes of a meeting held in the Swedish Church Hall, Johannesburg, 29 November to 1 December, 1966, and in the Board Room of the Nazarene Publishing House, Florida, on the 2nd December.

[5] The Xitsonga – English Dictionary 2005 describes blue as *wasi*.

In some cases, a euphemism in the source text is translated with a culturally appropriate euphemism in the target text. For example, in Gen. 38:8-9, we see an example of such a euphemism when Judah instructs his son to *ku hlambela nsati wa hosi ya wena* ("wash off yourself in your brother's wife"). This expression is used to describe a man having sexual relations with the wife of his dead, elder brother. This cultural practice is common and accepted among the Vatsonga. The translation strategy involves substituting the euphemism of the source text ("go into your brother's wife") with a culturally appropriate euphemism in the target text.

5.5.4 Explicitation

Explicitation is often used in Xitsonga 1929 translation. Sometimes explicitation relates to a cultural practice. In Gen. 35:22, the 1929 version refers to Bilhah, Jacob's junior wife as *nhlantswa*. This word refers to the niece of a man's wife, who, according to the Vatsonga culture, has the right to be married to the same man as her aunt. The word *hlantswa* comes from the verb *ku hlantswa* ("to wash/clean") and basically refers to a young woman who washes goods, utensils and etc. A woman's niece is called a *hlantswa* because in the olden days, when there were no hospitals or old age homes, elderly women relied on their nieces to *hlantswa* ("wash"), that is, for their upkeep. In the case of Bilhah, she is a junior co-wife to Reuben's mother because she began her career as a *hlantswa*. The Hebrew term refers to a secondary wife. In using the term *nhlantswa*, the translators ensure that Bilhah has a legitimate role or position in the family in Vatsonga culture.

In 1 Sam. 2:29, the man of God pronounces an accusation on Eli because of the actions of his sons in eating the sacrifices of the Israelites. There are two ways to render "eating" in this context. The phrase *ku nyuhwela* ("in order to get fat" [used of persons]) is neutral. However, the translation uses the phrase *ku tinonisa* ("in order to fatten themselves") which is used primarily of animals. If it is used of people it means "a person fattens him/herself" or metaphorically "a person is too full of himself" and has negative connotations. By using this latter phrase in this verse, the translators convey the negative connotations of the accusation against the sons as well as a play on words: the sons are eating animal sacrifices that they should not eat and are fattening themselves like animals.

Explicitation may also be used to explain a concept that is unknown to Xitsonga readers. In 1 Kgs 10:1, we are introduced to *hosi ya wansati ya Sheba* ("a female king of Sheba").

Surprisingly, she is known by her country's name rather than her own name. The way the Queen of Sheba is addressed shows that traditionally, the Vatsonga never had female monarch. A lady attains a title of *Nkosikazi* ("a Queen") only if she is married to a *Hosi (*"King"). In other words, a lady cannot be called a ruler or *nkosikazi* on her own without having been married to a king. It is only in modern times that we now have *hosi ya wansati* ("a queen", literally "female king"). The Vatsonga's forefathers had never had an opportunity to be ruled by a queen. *Bibela e e Boitshèpō* (The Bible in Tshwana) (1908) refers to her as *Mohumagadi kgosi ya Sheba* while *Bibele e Halaleng* (The Bible in Sesotho) (1961) calls her *Mufumahadi wa Sheba* ("a lady king of Sheba").

Asael a tiva ku tsutsuma kukotisa mhunti ya nhova ("Asael knew how to run like a wild duiker") (2 Sam. 2:18). The simile succeeds in describing Asahel's physical prowess, but it is riddled with problematic word choice and tautology. For instance, one does not "know" how to run as the Xitsonga Bible puts it, but rather one "is capable of". That is "Asahel could run like a duiker..." Again to say an antelope or a roe is "wild" is an instance of tautology in that there is never a domesticated antelope. A duiker or a roe is by nature a wild animal; as such there is no need to mention it. The Vatsonga regard *xipene* (another kind of antelope) as the one with light feet rather than either the *mhuti* (duiker) or the *mhala* (impala). For this reason, the simile itself is not valid as it is. It could rather have been translated *Asael a tsutsuma ku kotisa xipene* (Asahel could run like a Xipene antilope).

Throughout the Xitsonga Old Testament, there are three terms referring to a temporary shelter or dwelling which are prevalent in the 1929 Xitsonga Bible. The one is called *mixaxa* which is made of tree branches, and *ntsonga* which is not different from temporary dwellings or "shanties" seen in informal settlements. In 1 Sam. 7:6, a mention is made of *etenteni* (in the tent). Tent is also a temporary dwelling which was foreign to the Vatsonga society until recently.

5.5.5   Coined Expressions in Xitsonga

Coined expressions are phrases engineered by the translators when there were no words available to make the readership understand what is implied.

> *Swikhandziyo* ("things which enables a person to climb") (2 Kgs 20:9). The noun has been created out of a verb*, -khandziya* ("climb") by adding plural prefix *swi-*

and a suffix –*iyo* at the end. Then *swikhandziyo* becomes a functional equivalent word for "steps/stairs".

Switwisiso ("things which enable a person to understand") (Dan. 9:22). *Ku twisisa* implies to ("understand as well as understanding") in Xitsonga. There are no organs other than brains which make a person to understand. So this is a coined word constructed by adding a prefix *swi-* to the noun *twisiso* and a suffix –*o* at the end. Out of this construction comes a new noun *switwisiso*, which does not exist in Xitsonga. However, *switwisiso* as it appears in this version serves as a functional equivalent word for "brains".

Vuheriso ("the process of finishing up") (Dan. 9:27). The noun *vuheriso* ("extermination/obliteration") has been coined from the verb: -*herisa* ("to finish") by adding a prefix *vu-* and dissolving the suffix –*a* to become -*o.*

Vunavelo ("a mat or a stool to rest one's feet") (Mt. 5:35). In Xitsonga, *ku nava* means to "stretch". So this verb, -*nava* has been turned into a noun by adding a prefix *vu-* and a suffix –*elo* to the root –*nav-.*

Vungheno ni vuhumo ("entry and exit") (Ezek.43:11). *Vungheno* refers to ("entry") and is made by the prefix vu-, the root –*nghen* and the suffix –*o.* For example, *vu-nghen-o* to form a new noun, *vungheno.* The same method has been applied to *vuhumo*. This coined word comes from the verb *huma,* which means ("walk out or exit"). The prefix *vu-* and suffix –*o* have been added to turn it into the noun *vuhumo.*

Xikomba-ndlela (Jer. 31:2) (literally "road-pointer") refers to its functional equivalent word "a sign-post or waymarker".

mafurha yo saseka ("pretty/beautiful oil/ lotion") in Lev. 24:2. The coinage implies "pure oil".

In Josh. 2:1, *vakamberi,* which stands for "school inspectors", has been used in place of *tinhlori* ("spies / scouts").

Mahleko ("laughs") for "ridicule/mockery" in Deut. 28:37.

Byetlelweni ("a place where one sleeps") that is, a bed, in 2 Sam. 11:2.

5.5.6   Words from Vatsonga Traditional Religion

The translators made use of a number of words from Vatsonga traditional religion, using them to describe religious practices in the Bible:

> *Mhamba* ("sacrifice") Lev. 7:7: In traditional religion, this word refers to a sacrifice made of ammulets and charms to protect the bearer from the forces of evil.
>
> *Vuhlolotwan*i ("divining bones") Ex. 28:30: These are divining bones used to find out the causes of illness, usually witches. The bones are basically used for witch hunt and to seek ways to prevent evil activities by them.
>
> *Vangoma* ("traditional healers") Gen 41:24: These are senior traditional healers who usually deal with community issues rather than issues concerning individual. They are used to identify withes in the community, predict the outcome of the war, predict daught or abundance
>
> *Musingasoro* ("headgear") Lev. 8:9: This is a traditional healer's garment for covering the head. It is more like a wig rather than a *doek* ("scarf").
>
> *Gandzelo/Magandzelo* ("offering/s") Lev. 7:1: The word also refers to a shrine, usually a Morula tree where a beast is killed and its blood is poured down. Other offerings include sorghum beer and some snuff sprinkled on the soil.

5.5.7   Literary Translation

In 2 Kgs 2:19-22, the sons of the prophets inform Elisha that although the place where they are staying is beautiful (*sasekile*), the water is bad (*bihile*). After Elisha throws salt into the water, the water is *sasekisiwa* ("beautified") (verse 22). This is an unusual translation of the Hebrew metaphor "the water was healed" and it is not found in the Afrikaans, English, Tswana or Sesotho translations. The expected word would be *tengisiwa* ("purified"). Perhaps the use of *sasekisiwa* ("beautified") to connect the water in verse 22 to the beautiful place in verse 19. This seems to be a kind of literary translation.

5.5.8   Sesotho Translation as a Model

Vatsari ("writers") in Esth. 3:12 is a wrong choice of word in that it refers to writers/authors rather to scribes. It seems that the translators were following the Sesotho *bangodi* ("the writers"). At the 1929 Bible was translated, very few Vatsonga were literate. When they wanted something written, they needed to dictate the letter to an individual who could write. In this sense, the translate *vatsari* ("writers") is appropriate. However, in the modern Vatsonga culture, the word *vatsari* refers not to individuals who can write for others, but instead to authors. So the translation *vatsari* is confusing to a modern reader. A more precise word in modern Xitsonga should be *vatsaleri* ("scribes", literally "those who write for someone else").

The word *anatema* ("anathema") is prevalent in the 1929 Bible. It occurs in 1 Cor. 16:22 as a transliteration of the Greek which went into the Latin and then into Western European languages (see, for example, the KJV "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema"). However, this is the only verse in which Western European translations may use *anathema*. The Xitsonga translation, however, uses *anatema* ("anathema") far more frequently. For example, it is used to translate the Hebrew *herem* 'the ban' for which the Septuagint uses *anathema* in Lev. 27:28-29 (the Vulgate does not use *anathema* in these verses). In Josh. 7:1, *anatema* is also used and in parentheses it is explained as (*le'so yila*) ("that is a taboo"). In Deut. 7:26, Josh. 6:17 and Josh. 7:13, the Xitsonga instead of *anatema*, a taboo word *yila* is used. What is important to note is that in all of these verses, the Sesotho translation consistently uses the word *anathema*. It seems clear, therefore, that the Sesotho translation was a model for the Xitsonga in the use of *anatema*, but the Xitsonga translators did not follow this model consistently. In Josh.7:1 Sesotho *anathema* is translated as *leswo yila* ("that which is taboo"), in Num. 21:2 it is described as *yirisile* ("abolished") and in Is. 43:28 the same word is referred to as *yirisiwile* ("something that has been banned or erased").

5.5.9   Varieties of Xitsonga

5.5.9.1   Archaic Xitsonga Words

Along with words which do not exists in the Vatsonga society, this text boasts of archaic words which contributed to the realisation of the 1929 Xitsonga Bible.

Nyundzu (Judg.4:21) means "a hammer" in Xitsonga (see Cuenod 1967). Traditionally, *nyundzu* means *ribye/nchila* a smooth, big, round stone used as a tool more or less like a hammer except that it does not have a handle. However, in current usage *hamela* ("hammer") from English and Afrikaans is used rather than *nyundzu*.

Malondzokoe (Jer. 20:8), refers to ("tresuers or labour").

Marimbeni (Ex. 12:7), refers to ("frames").

Mungundu in Lev. 22:22 is an archaic word which refers to skin disease like scurvy, or scab. The modern day word is *tinhlalu*.

Words such as *Xisungunu* ("forearm") (Gen. 6; 1 Sam. 17:4; Mt. 6:27; Lk. 12:25; John 21:8), which were used as a unit of measurement in the past, are not used in modern Xitsonga.

Mbingo in Judg. 3:31 refers to *nhonga yo tlhava* ("a goad or a sharpened stick") .

Ravarava (Judg. 9:53) refers to "a skull". *Nhloko* ("head") or *xipalapala* ("skull") are frequently used nowadays.

Vulwandla (Ezra 5:8) is more about "refinement" than *vutshila* ("art").

Ku tsohoka (Ps. 106:16) features an archaic term. The modern version is *ku vondzoka* ("to be jealous").

Singarela ("protect") (Gen. 33:4) to protect or wrap a head from the sun as in a wig.

Ripewapewani ("edge") (Lev. 8:23) verge/end of something

Swiipyindzi ("lizards") (Lev. 11:29) reptiles or crawlers

Mbingo ("a goad") (Judg. 3:31) means a poker, an instrument used to nudge, elbow or prod.

Mawetana ("riddles") (Judg. 14:12) refers to play or pastime involving mental exercise.

Musinga soro ("headgear") (Lev. 8:9) is a wig, used mostly by traditional healers in traditional religion.

In some cases, the 1929 translation used a word which is now not precise. In Josh.2:1, the translation uses *vakamberi* ("investigators") for the spies that Joshua sends to scout out the land. In modern Xitsonga, however, the word is used for "school inspectors"; a more precise word in modern society is *tinhlori* ("scouts").

5.5.9.2   Dialectal Variants in Xitsonga

According to this version, Hagar gave birth to *nwana wa wanuna* (literally, "child of man") (Gen 16:15) rather than *wandisanyana* or *nwana na mufana* (literally, "child of boy"). (See also Exod 2:2; 2:22; 2 Sam 5:13; Job 1:2). The translator used a strange diction because the Xitsonga language does not have such a wording as "a manly baby or infant." The translation uses the expression for a male infant that is used in the dialect of Xitsonga spoken in Northern Mozambique in the Hlengweni county. The most common word is *wandisanyana* ("a boy" child" or "a baby boy").

Most Xitsonga speakers in South Africa might not be familiar with the word *fulameta* (1 Kgs 5:9). The context of the verse in Xitsonga and English is as follows:

> *Malanḓa ya mina ya ta yi **fulameta** e Lebanoni, va yi fikisa elwande, kutani mina nḓi ta ruma vanhu va yi boha e lwandle, yi ta ya fika laha u nga ta ruma ka mina; nḓi ta yi nṭhuša kona, kutani u ta yi teka. Na wena, u ta endla leswi ndi tsakisaka hi ku phamela yindlu ya mina le swakudya.*

> My servants shall bring them down from Lebanon unto the sea: and I will convey them by sea in floats unto the place that you shalt appoint me and we cause them to be discharged there, and thou shalt receive them, and thou shalt accomplish my desire, by giving food to my household (KJV).

According to Vitorino Bila (e-mail correspondence, January 29, 2015), *kufulamela* comes from the Xirhonga dialect. Bila explains:

> Its infinitive, in Xironga, is "kufulamela" which means "to go downs straight forward". So "fulameta" is an extension verb as the morpheme "ta" proves, and semantically means "to make something/someone go downs straight forward". In Xitsonga I might admit that the verb should be "ku ngirimela", in infinitive tense.

The inclusion of the word in the translation clearly indicates that the pioneering translators used words from various speech forms in Vutsonga to bind all dialects into one language.

5.5.10 Numbers

The Vatsonga are originally an oral society who acquired literacy skills from missionaries. For this reason, their language is not well developed in the area of numbers or arithmetic. Before the Swiss missionaries arrived within their society, the Vatsonga could only count up to several hundred as they did not have numerals. Furthermore, their counting starts from one as they have no word for zero. Beyond a thousand, the number would be referred to as *ntsandza-vahlayi* ("an uncountable number").The phrase, "an accountable number" is a wise saying that enriches the language - it does not appear in the Bible. The translators readily resort to the figures whenever they are faced with "an accountable number." For instance, *vanhu va ntlhanu wa mathousand na mathousand mabmirhi* (7000 thousand people) (Rev. 11:13). Another example is *madzana mambirhi ya timillion* (200 000 000) (Rev. 9:16).

This feature is more apparent in the 1929 Bible translation where the numbers of days on which God created the universe are written in words. Words are also used to express figures, and units of measurement as can be seen in Gen 6:3, *dzana ra malembe ni makume mambirhi* ("hundred and twenty years") and in Gen 6:15-16 where measurements of Noah's Ark have been done in terms of arm's length units – *swisungunhu swa madzana manharhu* ("three hundred cubits"). However, in Gen. 5:3-9, the ages of Adam, Seth and Enos are in numbers because words would have occupy a large space. The 1929 version of the Xitsonga Bible translation seems to be troubled by inconsistency. In some verses it prefers to write large numbers in figures, but in Deut.1:11, "one thousand" comes in the form of words, *khume ra madzana* (lit. ten hundreds).

In the Book of Numbers the total numbers of Reuben's tribe is 46 500, Simeon's is 59 300, Gad's is 45 650, etc. In Num. 1:21-46, the numbers are so big that they can only be written in figures and uttered in English. The word *mathausen* in Num. 31:14 and in 1 Kgs 7:26 is an English derivation of thousands. That is, rather than saying *ntsandza-vahlayi* ("a countless number") the translator chooses to write *mathausen*.

5.6   Conclusions

The 1929 version enhanced the vocabulary inventory of Xitsonga but expanding the range of items that are described in the language. Most importantly, the 1929 version bound together the diverse sub-units of the Vatsonga around a single translation of the Bible. Let us deliberate this issue further to increase clarity.

In their bid to translate the Bible into Xitsonga, the Swiss missionaries had to contend with the fact that the Vatsonga refugees from the coastal plains spoke various speech forms. According to Harries (2007:156), "when he (Berthoud) and Creux moved to the Spelonken in mid-1875 they discovered that the rudimentary taxonomy used by philologists in South Africa belied the linguistic complexity of the situation. They came to realise that the immigrants in Spelonken could not be slotted into the existing framework of linguistic studies." The community in which they found themselves was made up of potpourri of refugees drawn from the length and breadth of coastal south-east Africa. The Swiss missionaries faced similar problems experienced by other Protestant missionaries in other parts of southern Africa. For instance, a report about the History of Setswana Bible (1989) reads:

> The very large area of Southern Africa where Tswana is spoken contains a number of dialectal variations, as the tribes are in many cases separated by long distances from each other, as well as by tribal rivalries. Their dialects vary somewhat from south, say Thaba Nchu, to north, say Maun, but even-more from west to east. Eastwards across the Transvaal, Tswana becomes increasingly hospitable to elements of Sepedi or Northern Sotho, a related but distinct language.

To deal with this impediment, the missionaries went on to settle in the middle of the Vutsonga country from where they started to translate the Bible, using the Nkuna-Khosa dialect. Lersche (1959:8) asserts:

> The first two editions of the Tsonga Bible were prepared by missionaries who had lived and worked amongst the Nkuna clan of the Tsonga people (in the north-east part of the Transvaal) and that dialect has been the language of the Bible except for a few local forms of expressions. For the second edition, prepared by the Rev. Cuenod, who is the chairman of our present Tsonga Bible revision committee, the linguistic bases has somewhat widened and extended to the Khosa dialects of the Nkomati valley. The

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Nkuna and Khosa dialects are very similar, and may be considered as forming a kind of linguistic group between the Tsonga spoken in the northern Transvaal and the Tsonga of Limpopo valley in Mozambique.

The missionaries were also fortunate to have combination of Xitsonga translators from different clans, that is, who hailed from different linguistic homes. Translator Calvin Maphophe was from the Madzivi sub-clan of the Chauke/Tshwa clan in the north of the Mozambique. Translator Josefa Mhalamhala was from the Khoseni county in Antioka, ka Magude, and was familiar with the southern dialects. Timothy Mandlati (Zambiki), was from the Nkuna (Mavutani) around the Limpopo-Oliphant confluences. Like derivations and borrowing of words from foreign and other indigenous languages, other dialects spoken in Vutsonga at the time contributed with words, though in a small scale, to the translation of the Xitsona Bible. In this way, the finished product, "Buku" - the Xitsonga became the Xitsonga national treasure - a rallying point for every clan in that it harnessed all speech forms in Vutsonga to form a linguistic unit.

The analysis in this chapter, however, has shown that the translators made extensive use of loan words from source text traditions, from Sesotho and other neighbouring African languages, as well as from English, Afrikaans and French. They also incorporated various dialectal features of Xitsonga. Furthermore, although the translation is viewed as a literal one, the analysis above demonstrated the sensitivity of the translators in using functional equivalents in many instances.

One effect of the Xitsonga Bible translation was the binding together of a large number of related clans into one group, thus creating a cohesive social community. As a result, the Vatsonga could be more easily administered by the mission in their evangelistic and charitable efforts. However, what was achieved by the missionaries could also be exploited by the colonial powers for their own ends. The evidence provided in this chapter thus justifies the hypothesis that the first Xitsonga Bible translation (1929) played a role in empowering and legitimising colonialism and paving the way for submissive colonial faith within the Vatsonga society as shown by the many loan terms from dominant languages (English, Afrikaans and Sesotho).

Today the Vatsonga from many different polities are viewed as a single ethnic group as they are speaking the same language, that is, the language of the Bible in Xitsonga. Bible translation

in Xitsonga contributed enormously to the national government's eventual recognition of Xitsonga as one of the national languages of South Africa.

CHAPTER 6
THE 1989 XITSONGA BIBLE TRANSLATION

6.1   Introduction

The 1989 Xitsonga Bible translation is the latest Xitsonga translation of the Bible and was published in Cape Town by the Bible Society of South Africa. It was translated by Rev DC Marivate, Prof CPN Nkondo, Rev SD Maluleke, Mrs AK Manyike, Mr MJ Makhuvele, and Rev EFC Mashava with Rev TR Schneider as project co-ordinator.

In writing an overview of the 1989 Xitsonga Bible, the study intends to give a brief description of the 1989 Xitsonga Bible in terms of frame analysis -- the organisational frame (Section 6.3), the linguistic frame (Section 6.4) and the translation frame (Section 6.5). The brief historical background builds upon the historical surveys provided in previous chapters and relates only to the 1989 version (Section 6.2).

This chapter serves to justify the hypothesis that the role of the 1989 Xitsonga Bible translation is to strengthen the cultural identity of Xitsonga itself by utilising not only indigenous cultural terms of Xitsonga, but also indigenise the Bible translation by utilising and coining natural Xitsonga equivalents.

6.2   Historical Background

The 1989 Xitsonga Bible translation was the product of two decades of work. It appeared on the scene shortly before the dawn of the new dispensation in South Africa in 1994. Both the 1929 and the 1989 Xitsonga translations were based on a philosophy of Presbyterianism as a confessional tradition where churches express their faith in the form of confessions of faith. Presbyterianism sprang into existence from the reformation in Europe of the 16th century with John Calvin as its chief exponent. The two translations differ, however, in their theological approaches in a way similar to the two Afrikaans translations of 1933 and 1983. According to Naudé (2005), the 1933 Afrikaans translation is based on the Calvinist doctrine of naïve realism as represented in conservative biblical theology and has its origins in fundamental theology.

Critical realism, which characterises the 1983 Afrikaans version, represents a more sophisticated approach, which entails that theology should be studied as a science. Similarly, the 1929 Xitsonga translation was a missionary-era translation with conservative theology, whereas the 1989 Xitsonga translation was based on a critical, scientific approach.

There were many factors which led to the second Bible translation. Some of these factors include: political circumstances, the separation of the language community (dialects) by the creation of Kruger National Park, orthographical changes and language standardisation. However, the most important factor was the need to break away from the pre-theoretical period in translation as perpetuated by the missionary societies.

By the 1960s the pre-theoretical era of translation had passed and a new period in Bible translation had dawned (Naudé 2005). During a seminar on Bible translation in 1967 in Pretoria where Eugene Nida was the plenary speaker, the decision was made to produce a new translation rather than to continue perpetually revising the 1929 text. This decision was influenced by the recommendation of Eugene Nida, who developed the translation method of Dynamic Equivalence.

6.3   Organisational Frame

This section examines the organisational frame of the 1989 translation with respect to the translation process, the translation team, the source texts, prestige of the translation, social pressures of the translators, policy statements and financial responsibility for the translation. These aspects of the organisational frame are preliminary to the translation frame in section 6.4.

6.3.1 Translation Process

The Translation Committee for the 1989 version was formed shortly after a translators' seminar held in Turfloop, South Africa, in July 1967 where Eugene Nida, who developed dynamic-equivalent translation theory at the time, was a plenary speaker. The seminar lasted from 8 to 26 July 1967 and was attended by some of the Xitsonga Bible translation representatives who were later to become members of the newly formed committee.

Hermanson (e-mail correspondence, Nov 29, 2013) describes the orientation and working procedures of the translation team:

Further seminars for all the translation teams were held from 8-18 January 1979, led by Dr. Eugene Nida and Dr. Jan de Waard; from 12-22 January 1982 on manuscript preparation, and from 24 June to 6 July 1985, once again led by Dr. Nida and Prof. J.P. Louw.

Existing revision and translation committees were introduced to the theory of dynamic equivalence, and where the churches and missions felt the need for new translations, training seminars were held to give practice in the application of the theory and to select competent translators who were acceptable to the churches who would use the Bible once it was published, and the Bible Society.

The pattern has been to select an Editorial Committee, consisting of a co-ordinator who has had theological training including Hebrew and Greek and who has at least a thorough working knowledge of the indigenous language, and two mother-tongue speakers, who do not necessarily have any knowledge of the original languages, as translators. This committee makes a draft translation based on existing translations after each passage has been examined and explained in a session with the co-ordinator.

Use is made of commentaries, especially the Translators' Handbooks and other helps, published by the United Bible Societies. The translators are free to ask assistance from Old and New Testament scholars and African linguists. Once the Editorial Committee is satisfied with their draft, it is distributed to a Review Committee for comment. This committee is an active interdenominational group of interested people consisting of mother-tongue linguists, clergy, schoolteachers, authors and others, such as missionaries, who have knowledge of the language and interest in the translation. In order to ensure the greatest possible involvement by any who have an interest in the translation, the draft manuscripts may also be sent to others who request them, but who may not necessarily respond with comments.

6.3.2 Translation Team

The 1989 version's translators were not as many as the pioneering translators on the 1929 and earlier versions. However, they had an advantage because they were mother tongue speakers (except for the coordinator), they were experts in their respective fields, and they boasted university educations.

The Revd Dr Théophile Robert Schneider who worked amongst the Vatsonga for more than forty years, served as a priest and co-ordinator of the Xitsonga Bible translation committee. The Revd Dr Sikheto Daniel Malukeke, a minister in the Dutch Reformed Church of Africa, The Revd and Teacher Daniel Cornel Marivate, minister for the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Rev Elias F.C. Mashava of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Mukhacani Jackson Makhuvele and Mrs Ann K Manyike and Prof Charlotte P.N. Nkondo were all first language speakers of Xitsonga.

Unbeknown to both the Swiss missionaries' translation team as well as Schneider, the translation team did promote the principle of gender equity (see Snell-Hornby 2006:100), albeit on a very small scale. Mrs Ann K. Manyike and Prof Charlotte P.N. Nkondo were two female members of the translation team. It is worth mentioning that whereas the 1929 translation had a sole female member in the person of a missionary wife, Mrs Marguerite Cuénod (see 5.3.3), the 1989 translation had two Vatsonga women. This is in accord with an organising principle of the translation that the translators should be mother tongue speakers of the language.

6.3.3   Source Texts

Extensive information concerning the source texts for the 1989 translation comes from personal correspondence with Schneider (e-mail correspondence, 3 January 2014), the translation consultant for the team. The team had access to scholarly editions of the Hebrew and Greek source texts, namely, the second edition of the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* and the Greek New Testament (edited by Aland, Black, Metzger and Wikgren). He indicates that "Rev Dr Daniel Sikheto Maluleke had a functional knowledge of Greek and Hebrew, most useful in our daily debates in the translation office. Such knowledge was also shared by several of our consultants."

Schneider (ibid.) notes that the translation team also had access to Bibles in a number of western languages. In English, they consulted The Revised Standard Version, The New International Version, The New English Bible, The Good News Bible etc. In French, the edition prepared by Louis Segond in the second half of the 19th century was still consulted. In addition, "a number of new versions, some of them based on the so-called functional equivalence principle, have been elaborated and published in Europe, such as *La Bible de Jérusalem, La Traduction Oecuménique de la Bible, La Bible en Français Courant, Parole de Vie, Die Bibel im Heutigen Deutsch, Die Gute Nachricht Bibel*, etc. When necessary, I consulted them and

shared the English and Tsonga equivalent of their renderings with the members of my BST team."

6.3.4 Prestige

Translators succeeded in producing the true Xitsonga Bible in a standardised language. This version of the Xitsonga Bible further consolidated dialectical unity of various clans amongst the Vatsonga.

6.3.5 Social Pressures

The 1989 version was produced from the 1960s to the late 1980s. This was the period when the policy of separate development was at its climax in the country. It was also the period of fierce civil strife when African nationalists intensified their fight against the apartheid regime. Almost every important meeting was under suspicion. Consequently, translators had to execute their divine duty under the auspices of the government of the day. This kind of environment generated a negative psychological impact in the mind of translators. They were writing in "a state of siege" as André Brink once put it.[1]

6.3.6 Policy Statements

The basic policy was that the translation should be done using the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* text as the source text for the Old Testament and the UBS Greek text as the source text for the New Testament. The translation was to be done according to the Dynamic Equivalent (later known as the Functional Equivalent) theory of Dr Eugene Nida, so that the resulting Xitsonga text would be the "closest natural equivalent" of the Hebrew and Greek source texts.

6.3.7 Financial Responsibility

Hermanson (e-mail correspondence Nov 29, 2013) describes the financial responsibility for the translation:

> The payment of the Tsonga translators and the costs of the Review Committee meetings was borne by the Bible Society, while Dr Schneider continued to be supported by the Swiss Mission. I also understand that Dr Schneider was able to raise some money from

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[1] André Brink was one of South Africa's prolific writers who belonged to an influential group of writers called *Die Sestigers* ("the sixties", that is, the 1960s).

his supporters in order to give something to the reviewers for the work they did in reading through the various stages of draft translations and sending in their comments to the translators.

However, the whole project was under the direction and sponsorship of the Bible Society of South Africa. The liaison between the Society and the project was through the late Rev Dr J L Reyneke, the Translation Consultant.

6.4   Linguistic Frame

6.4.1   Orthography

In the half century following the first Xitsonga translation, the diacritics used in the 1929 of the Xitsonga Bible were replaced by the new ones which appear in the following table, and were used in subsequent translations such as the 1989 Xitsonga Bible. In a letter to the British and Foreign Bible Society (BFBS) dated January 25, 1954, Revd R.H. Bill informed the society of the adoption of the new and simplified orthography. He pointed out that the mission has done away with all the diacritics such as ă. ŝ. ṭ. ḍ. ṅ. etc. and that these have been replaced by consonants:

Table 14. Simplification of Orthography

Diacritics of 1929 Orthography	Simplified Orthography after 1954
š	x
ŝ	sw
ṭ	ts
ḍ	dz
ṅ	n´
šh	ch

Xitsonga as a written language was codified by pioneer missionaries more than a century ago. No doubt, the orthography used in the 1929 version of the Xitsonga Bible was not without flaws. One being that it was difficult to read. Therefore, the reason behind replacing the old diacritics was mainly a pursuit for simplicity, clarity and readability. Changes in the spelling of personal names, names of places, towns, rivers, etc. resulted from the introduction of the new orthography to conform with standardised Xitsonga. Some of the names which underwent a change in spelling are:

Table 15. Examples of Names which Experienced Orthographic Change

	1929 Xitsonga Bible	**1989 Xitsonga Bible**
Names of Persons:	Abraham	Abrahama
	Isak	Isaka
	Yakob	Yakobo
	Davida	Davhida
Names of Cities:	Samaria	Samariya
	Yerusalem	Yerusalema
Titles of Biblical Books:	Levitikas	Levhitika
	1 Samuel	1 Samiele

These orthographic changes also resulted in names that are more indigenised because they follow the CV [Consonant-Vowel] pattern of syllables in Xitsonga.

6.4.2 Sociocultural Impact

The 1989 translation was done by mother tongue speakers. It expresses the language used by the common people. It sought to achieve simplicity, clarity and readability. Explaining how the 1989 version binds almost all Xitsonga speech forms into a linguistic unity, F Zitha (2015), indicates that they used to work hand-in-hand with the Xitsonga Language Board, the Bible Society of South Africa and the Bible Society of Mozambique, to consult different speech communities to find out how they speak the language. In the footnotes of the translation, they have listed various words, phrases and/or sentences, not only to increase comprehension but to make each speech community feel included. This act reinforces the Xitsonga Bible language as the standard language which is accepted by everybody.

By the time of the publication of the 1989 version, many people could read, particularly the young generation. The 1989 translating team members were all university graduates, a fact which implies that the translation was thoroughly accepted and had a significant impact on the development, enrichment and promotion of the Xitsonga as a national language, as well as on the shaping of South African society in the 20th century.

6.5 Translation Frame

6.5.1 Metatranslational Material

One of the most important additions to this version was the "metatranslation" materials added to it in order to aid comprehension.

Some of the metatextual materials include:

- An expanded title: *Bibele- ma nga Mahungu Lamanene Ya Testamente ya Khale ni Leyintshwa hi ririmi ra Xitsonga* ("Bible, which is Good News of the Old Testament and the New One in Xitsonga language"). The influence of the dynamic equivalent translation, The Good News Bible, can be seen in the use of the phrase "Good News" in the title.

- List of the contents of the Bible

- Foreword: A forward provides a brief history of the Xitsonga Bible.

- Introductions to each book. The Good News Bible provides a model for the inclusion of introduction to each book which sets out its contents and themes.

- Headings and sub-headings with page numbers.

- Footnotes offering an alternate translation of a word or phrase so that all of the various Xitsonga speech communities were included in the translation (see 6.4 above). However, their translation had to conform to norms of Vatsonga society and that it had to abide by the rules of Xitsonga standard language. Table 16 shows a few of the dialectal variants found in footnotes.

Table 16. Xitsonga Dialectal Variants in the 1989 Footnotes

Word	Variant	Dialect	Biblical Reference	Gloss
nghinghiya	*xikwirikwiri*	Xinkuna		gizzard
mavele	*trigo*	Ximaji (Portuguese)	Mt. 3:12	maize
tiphuphu	*tinsika*	Mozambican	2 Chron. 3:15	pillars
swihukuva	*switsande*	Eastern dialect	2 Chron. 3:7	verandah
yinkho	*mipando*	Mozambican	2 Chron. 2:10	big clay pot
switshetshela	*Rihuhu ra n'hweti*	Mozambican		epilepsy

- Cross-references to other biblical verses
- Maps showing the biblical world
- An index of special terms

- A glossary to explain the meanings of foreign words (e.g. *tempele* [temple], *synagoga* [synagogue]*, manna* [manna]) to help indigenise them.

- Square brackets […] to show that the words are disputed because they are found only in some of the source texts of Hebrew or of Greek (e.g. Mk. 16:19-20; Jn.7:53; Jn.8:11).

- Abbreviations. The list of abbreviations provides for each abbreviation the Xitsonga word and its English and Portuguese equivalents. For instance: *m. mitara* ("meter, metro"), *km. kilomitara* ("kilometre, quilómetro"). In this way the Bible can be used by Xitsonga speakers who also speak English or Portuguese and the same printed Bible can be distributed in South Africa and Mozambique.

- Metric system to express measurements and weight

In spite of these additions, foreign words still remain in this version, especially the names of stones, trees and currency, and the term *moya wo biha* or *demona* ("demon"). The name for Psalms could have used the indigenous word *Tinsimu* ("songs"). However, looking at it positively, the use of these borrowed words have enriched Xitsonga.

6.5.2   Loan Words

6.5.2.1   Loan Words from Source Text Tradition

Many loan words from the source text traditions (see the definition in 5.5.1.) that were incorporated into the 1929 version are also found in the 1989 version. They are now considered permanently part of the standardised language. Among these are the following:

Jubili ("Jubilee") (Lev. 25:10, 28; Deut. 15:1-18; Neh. 10:3)

Savata ("Sabbath") (Luk. 4:16)

Levhiyatana ("Leviatan") (Job 3:8, 41:1; Ps. 74:14; 104:26; Is. 27:1).

In the glossary section, the translators have given definition of foreign words such as: *tempele*, *synagoga, sanna, tabernacle,* etc. to help indigenise them.

6.5.2.2   Loan Words from Afrikaans

The following Afrikaans loanwords occur in the translation for concepts which do not have an equivalent word in Xitsonga. Many of these words also occurred in the 1929 version and were commented on in chapter 5.

Tinketani ("chains") (Mk. 5:4) is derived from the Afrikaans word *ketting*.

Mutoloki ("interpreter") (Gen. 42:25) is from Afrikaans *tolk* "interpreter".

Meyila ("mule") (2 Sam. 18:9) is derived from Afrikaans word *muil* ("mule"), another member of the equestrian family unknown in the Vatsonga society.

Gamboko (Rev. 1:14) is a word from Afrikaans *kapok* which means "snow". Geographically, the Vatsonga society is located in a tropical climate. Thus, snow is not common amongst the people.

Xilotlela ("key") (Judg. 3:24) is a derivation from Afrikaans *sleutel* ("a key").

Mafester ("windows") (Ezek. 40:16) is Xitsonga for *vensters* ("windows") in Afrikaans.

Kamara (Ezek. 40:16) is Xitsonga for a *kamer* ("room") in Afrikaans.

Buruku/maburuku ("pant/s") (Lev. 16:4; Ex. 28:42) is the term for the priests' pants which is borrowed from Afrikaans *broek*.

Hembe (Ex. 28:39) is a derivation from Afrikaans *hemp* ("shirt").

Timpompi ta kopor (literally "pumps of copper") derived from Afrikaans *pompe* ("pumps"). However, the phrase does not contextually refer to "copper pumps" but means *tiphuphu ta kopor* ("copper pillars").

6.5.2.3 Loan Words from English

The following loan words from English are found in the 1989 version. Many of these also occurred in the 1929 version, as discussed in chapter 5.

Mijeko (1989) Mujeka ("flag") (Ps. 20:5): A flag is known as *Mujeko* in Xitsonga from the English colonial phrase *Union Jack* to describe the British flag.

Masocha ("soldier") (2 Sam. 18:9, 12) is derived from English *soldier*. The Xitsonga equivalent term is *tinhenha*.

Swithezi ("stairs") (1 Kgs 6:6) is from English. In this context it implies floors of a building.

Tithani ta 26 ("26 tons") (Ezra 8:26) from English *ton*, expresses an extremely heavy weight of which there is no word for it in Xitsonga.

Bokisi ("box") (2 Chron. 24:8) is borrowed from the English *box*.

Buku ("book") (Josh. 1:8; Jer. 36:20) from English *book*. It is completely accepted in Xitsonga.

Tikamela ("camels") (Jer. 49:32) from English *camel*, animals previously unknown to the Vatsonga.

Chizi ("cheese") (2 Sam. 17:29) is from English *cheese*. A footnote appears in the 1989 version to provide other words for cheese that are known among the Vatsonga: *Kajo* or *queijo* (see above 6.5.1).

Buruku ya line ("trousers of linen") (Lev. 16:4 and Ex. 28:42) is borrowed from English "linen," because the term is not known in Xitsonga. (For *buruka* from Afrikaans, see 5.5.1.5.)

Penisele ("pencil") (Is.44:13) is from English *pencil*.

Magolonyi ("wagons") (1 Sam. 17:20) is apparently an English loan word from *wagon* which has since been borrowed indefinitely by the Vatsonga as there is no indigenous word for this vehicle. However, the Sesotho word *koloi* is cognate to the Xitsonga. It is not clear whether Xitsonga and Sesotho independently borrowed the word from English or whether Xitsonga borrowed from Sesotho.

Makalichi ("chariots") (Ex. 15:19) in another loan word from English. It has since attained archaic status chariots are not frequently used these days.

Phorisa in (Mt. 5.25) has also been borrowed from English *police*, and it means a "policeman". It is the standard Xitsonga word.

Swipano ("spans of oxen") (Job 42:12) from English *span* has been since been adopted as a Xitsonga word. Before the Great Trek symbolised by spans of oxen pulling a flotilla of wagons criss-crossing the country, spans of oxen were unknown to the native people. For this reason, there is no indigenous word for spans of oxen.

Joko ("yoke") (Job 42:12; Is.10:27) is an English derivation. Yoke was unknown in the Vatsonga society as they used an African hoe to till the soil rather than a plough and a span of oxen.

Xifaniso xa timpondho ("the parable of pounds") another English derivation referring to British notes ("pounds") (see Lk. 19:11).

6.5.2.4　　Loan Word from Northern Sesotho

A new loan word from Northern Sotho (Sepedi) is apparently introduced into the 1989 translation. In 2 Sam. 5:23-24, the translation has *Mirhi leyi vuriwaka 'Mabaka'* ("trees which are called 'Mabaka'") for "Mulberry trees". Compare the 1929 translation, which uses a loan word from the English *miri ya miribeila* ("trees which are called Mulberry") (see 5.5.1.6). The term *Mabaka* is not known in Xitsonga. The Bible in Northern Sotho (Sepedi), which has *ditlhare tsa Baka* ("Baka trees") seems to be the origin of the 1989 translation. Precisely how the term should be translated is disputed, but it is probably a kind of poplar tree. The Sesotho Bible (1961) calls it *Monokotswai*. The Afrikaans translations of the term are both incorrect – the 1933 translation calls it *Balsembosse* ("sweet basil") and the Afrikaans 1983 translation calls it *Melkbosse* ("milk weed"). The new Afrikaans translation currently in progress uses *balsempopulier* ("balsam poplar"), which is a good translation.

6.5.3　Functional Translation Equivalents

In Gen. 16:11-12, the imagery to describe Ishmael's wild behaviour is translated as a *bere* ("bear") in the 1929 version (see 5.5.1.2.), and as a *mangwa* ("zebra") in the 1989 version. Although these words are both appropriate, they reveal the fact that historically, the indigenous people in South Africa at large and in the Vutsonga in particular were not familiar with a horse before European settlers arrived in country. *Mangwa* is appropriate as it belongs to the equestrian family like a horse, and the Vatsonga has been familiar with it from time immemorial. Unlike a horse, *mangwa* is a wild beast like *die wildedonkie* (1983) in the Afrikaans 1983 *Bybel*.

Tihariki ta nsimbi ("rakes of iron") (Amos 1:3): The KJV (1611) calls these tools "threshing instruments of iron", thus making the Xitsonga phrase a functional equivalent even though the word *tiharika* is from Afrikaans.

Murhi wa nsihani ("tropical tree common in the lowveld in South Africa"): This is another instance of functional equivalent in that the translators chose to use an indigenous tree in Gen. 30:37 rather than the "green poplar" (KJV 1611).

Hisopa ("hyssop") is a plant used for general cleansing in biblical culture. The Xitsonga equivalence is called *Nxuva* or *Ndzedze Nuva*. In Vatsonga polity, *Nxuva* is used for cleansing mourners immediately after the burial service of their loved one in a ceremony when the mourning period is over. It is also used for cleansing for those who feel blackened in spirits (that is, those who are depressed).

Yesu i vuswa bya vutomi ("Jesus is the porridge of life") (John 6:27) becomes a functional equivalent in that unlike bread, porridge is the staple food of the Vatsonga. In KJV (1611) the phrase stands: "Jesus is the bread of life". Similarly, Mt. 4:4 maintains that *Munhu a nga ka a nga hanyi hi vuswa ntsena* ("Man can't live with porridge only"). The KJV (1611) version reads "Man shall not live by bread only".

6.5.4   Incorporation of Xitsonga Idiomatic Expressions

Language fluency coupled with linguistic expertise on the part of the translators meant that they could fit in Xitsonga wise sayings easily, thus increasing clarity and idiomaticity.

> *Inkomu!, Ku dya k'engeta! U nga ndzi cukumeti* ("Thanks for a cow!, to eat is to eat again! Don't cast me away, oh my king, my Lord") (2 Sam. 16:4): Firstly the expression *inkomu* means any head of cattle, it can be an ox, a bull, a cow or a calf. When a person voiced this expression, s/he implies ("thank you for an ox or a calf"). The English phrase nearest to this hyperbole is "thank you a million". The phrase *Ku dya i ku engeta* ("to eat is to eat again") means "thank you once more". The expression *U nga ndzi cukumeti, we hosi nwini wanga* ("never throw me away, my Lord") is the proper way to make a polite, urgent request. As conspicuous as it is fathomable, the chain of these phrases seeks to express gratitude in a passionate way.

> *Masasani u fele nhoveni* ("the sponsor died out in the bush") (1 Sam. 25:21): In full the saying goes like this: *Masasani u fele enhoveni, mabihani u fele ekaya* ("the sponsor/benefactor died in the bush, whereas the miser died at home"). The saying has been used by David to express his disappointment.

Ku nga ha Sali na un'we wa mhamba! ("Not even a single one for sacrifice would be left!") (Mal. 4:1) is a traditional saying which in this context implies that nobody was left out.

Nkandza-vukati (Is. 62:4) is a compound word made of the verb n*kandza* ("to pound mielies or cereals") and *vukati* ("marriage"). Literally it means ("to pound marriage"), that is, to get married. This expression is said of a young woman of between 18 to 21 years, fresh from a circumcision school, who is ready for marriage.

Tiya nhlana, u tikomba ku va wanuna ("have a strong back, look like man") (1 Kgs 2:2) is a common saying in Xitsonga which implies that one must have courage, and behave like a (real) man. This is the wise saying David gave to his son Solomon shortly before he dies.

An important distinction was made in the 1989 version between the term for "glory," *ku kwetsima* ("to be very bright, glorious/unapproachable light"), and the term for "holy," *ku hlawuleka* ("holy," literally "distinguished"). As pointed out by Leresche, a Swiss missionary based in Mozambique (see Report on the Tsonga Bible Revision for the year 1963), the translators of the 1929 Xitsonga Bible failed to make a distinction between *ku kwetsima* ("glory or glorious") and *ku hlawuleka* ("holiness or holy"). Leresche (ibid.) argues that

> In the 1929 Xitsonga Bible, Is 6:3 reads as follows: "Glorius, glorious, glorious is Jehova of hosts: The whole earth is full of his glory." No distinction between glory and holiness! The word for glory or glorious (ku kwetsima) is being used dozens of times in the Psalms, and in the other books of the O.T. as well as in the N.T. It comes from the old and primitive root *ku kwetsi* which was reduplicated and used as an ideophone to express the dazzling light of a thunder bolt, or of something which reverberates directly the light of the sun, the glory of the sun. Hence the use of the verb and the verbal noun, *ku kwetsima* ("glory"). But the same word (ku kwetsima) is also being used in the Bible for holiness, holy, saint etc. and especially for the Holy Spirit, "Moya lowo Kwestima."

As a result of Leresche's careful research, the 1989 version uses the indigenous word *ku hlawuleka* to translate "holy" or "holiness" and retains *ku kwetsima* for "glory."

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6.5.5 Coined Words

The 1989 translation has a number of coined words. Some of these are found in the 1929 version; others replace a loan word found in the 1929 version.

Swisirhelelo ("protective devices") (1 Sam. 17:6) used by the Philistine soldiers in the battle fields"). Afrikaans *Die Bybel* (1989) refers to devices as *broonsskerms* ("bronze protections"). The 1929 version used *makausi*, a loan word from Afrikaans (see 5.5.1.4).

Xitshamo (a general term for "seat, stool, bench or chair") coined to refer to a saddle. The phrase *xitshamu xa ndzivalelo* in Lev. 16:2, 13 refers to the "mercy seat" (KJV), the covering of the ark of the covenant.

Bartimiya lowo fe mahlo ("Bartimeus whose eyes are dead") (Mk. 10:46) uses a coined word to qualify Bartimeus' physical condition. A blind man is called *bofu* in Xitsonga.

Mavonakule ("distant seer") in 1 Sam. 9:9 refers to a "prophet" believed to be spiritually far-sighted in the Vatsonga society. This is a compound word made by a prefix *ma/* which represents a person, and a verb *vona* which means to ("see") and *kule* which means ("far").

Xisirhelelo (Lev. 16.7) is used to imply a shelter. The word *swisirhelelo* is used also as a protective devices such as an amour, but in this context it is used as a shelter.

6.5.6 Numbers

In some passages the 1989 translation uses numerals rather than words to convey numbers. This translation strategy can prove confusing.

In the three phrases below, it is difficult to determine to what the "year 23" refers. A modern reader might wonder if it refers to 23 BC, 23 AD or the 23rd year on which a historical event took place. All these three phrases express their message in a similar, confusing way. This is a direct influence of the 1929 Xitsonga Bible, which contrasts with both the Sesotho Bible (1961) and the Tshwana Bible both of which have written these years in words rather than in figures.

Hi lembe ra 23 ("In the year 23") (2 Kgs. 13:1)

Hi lembe ra 39 ("In the year 39") (2 Kgs. 15:17)

Hi lembe ra 50 ("In the year 50") (2 Kgs. 15:23)

In a striking contrast to the above phrases, the use of numerals in the phrases below expresses their message in an acceptable form of the Xitsonga language:

Hi lembe ra vu-11 ("on the 11th year") (Ezek. 31). The prefix *vu-* in *hi lembe vu-11* indicates that we are talking about the 11th year.

Hi siku ra vu-13 ra n'hweti ya vu-12 ("on the 13th on the 12th month") (Esth. 9:1).

The fact that these styles of writing appear in the same version (i.e. 1989 version) demonstrates that there is an element of inconsistency.

6.6   Conclusions

The 1989 edition of Xitsonga Bible marks a giant leap from the pre-linguistic era of translation into the scientific age of TS as represented by Nida's Dynamic Translation Approach. No doubt, there are pockets of loanwords here and there, many of which were introduced in the 1929 translation and incorporated into the Xitsonga language and culture. But on the whole this edition comes in standard Xitsonga that can be read by almost every Xitsonga reader. In other words, the edition is characterised by simplicity and readability. The revised, simplified and standardised orthography also promoted readability and contributed to the development of Xitsonga as a language. The footnotes to other varieties of Xitsonga helped to hold all of the dialects of the language together into one linguistic and cultural group, reading one Bible. It justified the hypothesis that the 1989 Xitsonga Bible translation played a role in strengthening the cultural identity of Xitsonga itself by utilising not only indigenous cultural terms of Xitsonga, but also indigenising the Bible translation by utilising and coining natural Xitsonga equivalents. The 1989 edition was thus highly influential in helping Xitsonga to be selected as one of the country's official, national languages after 1994.

CHAPTER 7

THE CONTRIBUTION OF XITSONGA BIBLE TRANSLATION TO THE FORMATION OF XITSONGA CULTURAL IDENTITY

7.1   Introduction

The Swiss missionaries created and exploited a complex system of strategies and organisational skills to achieve their ecclesiastical goal. Inspired by the Latin catch phrase, *Orare et labore* ("pray and work"), generations of Swiss missionaries spent their lifetimes devising plans and tactics, formulating policies, strategising and organising their proselytes to make the enterprise a roaring success. As a result of this integrated approach, the whole Swiss mission evangelical enterprise came to depend entirely on the conversion strategies and tactics they employed in their operation. In this, the Swiss missionaries were blessed by a relative stability in Southern Africa and in the Mozambique of the late 1800 and the early 1900. There were indeed pockets of political upheavals in Southern Africa during this era, but the Swiss missionaries managed to continue with their divine vocation. On the other hand, the Vatsonga's welcoming attitudes and cooperative spirit encouraged the missionaries to work much harder. It is this network of strategies and a litany of tactics which sustained the Swiss missionaries' work amongst the Vatsonga. While education, health and planting of mission stations remain the most common examples of the Swiss missionaries conversion strategies, the previous chapters of this study showed that Bible translation, language and literacy, to mention but a few, were amongst the most valuable strategies in the Swiss missionaries evangelical drive.

In this chapter, it will be argued that Bible translate has contributed to the enhancement of Xitsonga cultural identity. All official languages (i.e. including Xitsonga) in South Africa had the Bible translated into their languages as opposed to the Khoi-San who nearly lost their language and must struggle for cultural identity. While new efforts are currently underway to save the endangered Khoi-San languages, Bible translation would have gone a long way to enhance the development of these languages and the cultural identities of the people who speak them. As Olsen (2008:15) explains:

It took immense efforts, most of it too little too late, to get Khoisan language and oral literature recorded, let alone respected. Despite vestigial traces of the Khoisan languages in Afrikaans, the former have disappeared and survive almost exclusively in place names.

Olsen (2008:22) contends "that had the early missionaries not studied and recorded the African languages, we would not know much of what we know today of early South African indigenous culture."

Chapters 5 and 6 demonstrated how the two Bible translations into Xitsonga (1929 and 1989) served two respective purposes – to develop and then to standardise the Xitsonga language. They also contrasted the two Bible translations in Xitsonga in terms of their socio-cultural and linguistic frames. In this chapter it will be shown how the two Bible translations by means of language development and standardisation effected the identity of the Vatsonga and the differing contributions of each translation to the culture, society and ultimately, identity of the Vatsonga. It was through translation that a multi-faceted and diverse ethnic group such as the Vatsonga was able to attain its modern selfhood or identity.

7.2   Evangelisation as Strategy for the Formation of Xitsonga Cultural Identity

In biblical times, apostles like Saint Paul used to travel far away from their home villages or towns to spread the Word of God amongst people who had never had the chance of hearing about the Good News. Just as the apostles used strategies in their evangelisation enterprise in biblical times, so did the missionaries use them to convert people in many African countries. Evangelising strategies come in many varieties, and missionaries used them irrespective of their kind or age, as long as they were effective when and where they used them. A number of evangelising strategies used in biblical times such as teamwork, travelling to various places and church planting are still used today. They are applied together with modern ones such as converting ransomed slaves to Christianity, church planting and grooming of church leadership amongst proselytes. Catholic missionaries known as the Congregation of the Holy Ghost or the Spiritans in east Africa formulated a particular strategy of evangelising slaves. They "ransomed slaves from the slave market (until closure in 1873) and then sought to make them Catholic" (Kollman 2005:xvi). This example of the strategy has aptly been captured by Father Vincent Doonovan (cited by Kollman 2005:xvi) in the following lines:

They bought slaves. They bought them left and right, with all the money they could get their hands on. They bought them by the hundreds and the thousands – and they Christianized all they bought.

Evangelisation had its ups and downs. Missionaries were forever challenged by those they sought to convert to Christianity. The Spiritans, for instance, were challenged by their African converts (Kollman 2005:1-2):

The behaviour of the Christians of these stations, whose formation has been the missionaries' preoccupation since its inauguration, worried the missionaries. African Catholics, almost all of whom had once been slaves, were failing to live up to Spiritans' hopes. They chafed at the restrictions on their behaviour and complained that they were not paid for their labor. They often refused to carry out their expected work for the mission. Escapes from the missions grew rampant.

According to Kollman (2005:269-270) the Spiritans pursued the evangelisation of slaves for two reasons. They did so first to begin the church in east Africa, targeting former slaves for the formative and educative processes that they thought would make them good Catholics. Within that strategy also rested the hope that such Catholics-to-be would themselves become evangelists of sort, either as the members of the Congregation of the Holy Ghost, nuns or as assistants of another sort in the missionary process.

In the course of their evangelisation, the Swiss missionaries were confronted by challenges similar to the ones experienced by the Spiritans. They were challenged by alcohol abuse, polygamy, superstition and witchcraft. To deal with these challenges, the Swiss missionaries resorted to relevant strategies. Like the Spiritans, the Swiss targeted the lowly, the marginalised in the Vatsonga community. Chiefs who were willing to embrace the new religion were heartily incorporated into the scheme of things, and those who refused were vilified or deposed. A group of people who met with the Swiss missionaries for the first in the Zoutpansberg area were a mixture of refugees, displaced people from different areas of the present Mozambique. Unlike the ransomed slaves in east Africa, this group had a collective culture, they were part of Vatsonga and they had a common language. They paid their allegiance to Joaoa Albasini whom they regarded as their chief. Joaoa did not embrace the new religion. His reign did not last long after the arrival of the Swiss missionaries. Eventually, the Swiss missionaries' evangelising enterprise went on to cover the whole Vatsonga society. Evangelisation is similar

to civilisation in terms of its modus operandi, but it differs slightly with civilisation in that it focuses mainly on the replacement of traditional religion by Christianity. It was evangelisation which led the Swiss missionaries to devise a string of strategies to help them in their field of operation because it was not easy to change many local people by evangelising alone.

7.2.1   Health Care and Education as Vehicles for Evangelisation

Education and health care are the twin-sisters of evangelisation which together form part of the three pronged approach to social transformation. The three sisters were a strategic plan to consolidate proselytisation. Masumbe (2002:81) asserts that

> While the duty of hospitals is to restore health to those afflicted by disease, mission hospitals had an additional function. They aimed to convert the patients to the Christian religion. Patients were warmly received and fed during their stay at the mission hospitals to encourage them to break with the traditional healers.

The missionaries were motivated to give formal education (that is literacy and numeracy) so that Africans could read the Bible (evangelisation) and spread the gospel to others. Needless to say, it is interesting to note that both parties (the Swiss missionaries and Vatsonga) profited immensely from evangelisation, education and healthcare.

7.2.2   Mission Stations as Community Formation Strategy

Highlighting the value of mission stations compared to mere preaching, Kollman (2005:85) cited the head the Spiritans who said, "Instead of beginning with a preaching hampered in a thousand ways and generally unproductive for years, we apply ourselves to implanting there in one fell swoop fully formed Christian communities." It did not take long for the Swiss missionaries to buy a piece of land on their arrival in the erstwhile Northern Transvaal. This act of church planting as shown by Kollman (2005) later became the first mission station for the Swiss missionaries from whence they continued with their evangelising enterprise. In addition to their responsibility as centres for proselytising for new members from the neighbouring communities, mission stations also served as a haven of administrative functions to make evangelisation as effective as possible. According to Masumbe (2002:6)

> The church was the seat of government. It was the nerve centre for control and administration of social services. Rules and regulations governing schools, churches

and hospitals were formulated by the clergy who were the executive officials of the church government.

Furthermore, mission stations were engaged in poverty relief and other charitable activities as part of luring people to conversion. Displaced people, refugees and the hungry were assured of security, food and clean water. Community members were not merely fed and prepared for the life hereafter, but they were empowered as church and community leaders of their own people. Calvin Maphophe joined the Swiss missionaries in Valdezia as a domestic servant at Paul Berthoud's house, but he ended up wearing many hats. He was trained as a teacher/evangelist, translator, globe trotter, missionary and a pioneering priest whose calling spanned half a century (see Maluleke 1995).

7.2.3   Paving the Way for Submissive Colonial Faith

The 1929 edition played a role in empowering and legitimising colonialism and paving the way for submissive colonial faith within the Vatsonga society. The question which comes to mind is how did Bible translation enhance the Xitsonga cultural identity when the Swiss missionaries abhor almost everything that is Xitsonga culture? To paraphrase Sir Winston Churchill (1874-1965), the answer to this question in one word: It is civilisation, civilisation at all costs, civilisation in spite of shame, civilisation, however long and hard the road may be; for without civilisation there is no survival for the evangelising enterprise. According to Masumbe (2002:23):

> For their entire tenure in this country, the Swiss clerics tried by all means to civilise Africans in line with 'the Swiss' value system. No effort was made to try to understand what Africans were capable of doing in their daily lives save for cataloguing what were perceived to be heathenistic practices. Missionaries' prejudices determined what should be done and how it should be accomplished. There was little if any room for the indigenous populace's self-actualisation according to their traditional customs.

The missionaries' burning ambition was to evangelise and civilise at all cost – to use everything in their disposal to deliver the African heathens from the abyss of darkness into the sanctuary of light. The Swiss missionaries were driven by the Eurocentric belief that they had been called to deliver the heathen population from the darkness of sin into the light of Christianity, and to replace their way of life with the acclaimed civilization. For the Swiss, particularly members of the Free Churches: "the missionary was a heroic figure engaged in liberating Africans not

only from the wages of sin, but from superstition, backwardness, despotism, and slavery" (Harries 2007:53). When the Swiss mission arrived in Vutsonga, they aimed at a total annihilation of the Xitsonga traditional system and its replacement with "civilisation". For the Swiss missionaries, it never entered their mind that a person could be an African and a Christian at the same time; rather, an African should become "civilised" (i.e. westernised) before he could become a Christian. What happened instead was that Xitsonga traditional life and the "civlisation" of the Swiss missionaries merged to become what is known today as Xitsonga cultural identity.

7.2.4 Language as a Conversion Strategy

Language discourse is used mainly as an instrument of control and manipulation (see Hermans 1999 for more insight on manipulation). Severo (2016) contends that "languages are a product of colonial enterprise whose purpose was to control people and lands. Thus the colonial discourses on languages are not neutral, but constitute a paradigm of modernity, which is strongly rooted in both Christianity and Enlightenment." Literacy and education in indigenous languages were thus used both for social control and for emancipation. Translation also bears a relationship to colonialism, namely: "(i) as a channel of colonisation, parallel to and connected with education and the overt or covert control of markets and institutions; (ii) as a 'lightning-rod' for cultural inequalities persisting after the demise of colonialism; and (iii) as a channel of decolonisation" (Robinson 1997:31). On the role played by Bible translation, Harrison (2015:vii) has this to say:

> Bible translators (both indigenous and expatriate) were doing crowd-sourced translation and language revitalization long before these concepts existed. They have made major contributions to the introduction of orthographies, literacies, and texts into languages that were otherwise exclusively oral. And they continue to make an outstanding contribution to language vitality. Bible translation is transformative for a language, especially during the life of the project itself, when it engages some of the best minds of the community in solving formidably difficult problems in semantic mapping, orthography, metaphor, and language standardization. But it also extends in influence far beyond the original project, and shines as an example of best practice in ensuring language survival.

Makutoane & Naudé (2009:88) describe the "colonial interferences" in the translation of the Bible into Sesotho. These colonial interferences involve the use of foreign linguistic items which interfered with the process of interpretation. However, they argue, these colonial interferences are positive "because during the translation of the Bible in Southern Sotho, these interferences became part of the culture and language of the prospective audience" (ibid.).

The Swiss missionaries were not trained in linguistics as postcolonial scholarship claims; however, their knowledge and expertise on sociolinguistics was very far ahead of the times. They saw language not only as a medium of communication, but as an agent of transformation. When the Swiss missionaries arrived amongst Vatsonga, they never hesitated to learn and speak Xitsonga. Although they numbered less than a hundred they endlessly endeared themselves to the Vatsonga nation by their readiness to speak Xitsonga.

Once the Swiss missionaries had mastered Xitsonga, they read the Bible and preached in Xitsonga as "the Swiss missionaries saw the Tsonga language as a means of spreading the gospel within their linguistically-defined mission field" (Harries 1989:41). They utilised Xitsonga even during the time when it was a 'taboo' for whites in Southern Africa to speak let alone read an indigenous language. Writing about indigenous people in Mexico, Gallaher (2007) paints a similar scenario where missionaries made use of language as a strategy:

> Other scholars explain Protestantism's role in indigenous renewal by citing its use of indigenous languages as a medium of conversion and worship. In Protestant circles reading the Bible is central to worship, so pastors use indigenous language Bibles to reach potential converts, and to preach to existing ones. Given low rates of literacy among the indigenous, pastors also tend to do literacy work with their congregations. Learning to read a mother tongue allows indigenous people to take pride in something government has long denigrated.

Maluleke (1995:32) posits that "the missionaries regarded language to be a very important, if not the most important window into the Gwamba-Thonga tribe." Henri Philippe Junod (1938:29) describes the Swiss missionaries' viewpoint: there is "no better means of understanding another man's mind than by studying his language thoroughly." The way the Swiss missionaries were obsessed and possessive with Xitsonga is vividly expressed by Harries (1989:43, 48) in the following lines:

The monopoly held by the mission and later the government over the publication of Thonga books, crucially shaped and determined what Africans read. The written Thonga language was not only controlled by the missionaries but, in a manner that combined endearment, loyalty and possession, they almost owned it; Thonga was 'our' language with 'our' orthography.

7.2.4.1 Language as a Boundary Marker

Language also acted as a fortification against encroachment by members of other missionary societies. In other words, language also formed a boundary of a mission society's sphere of influence. This idea was explicitly unfolded by Sitwe (2013) in the following lines:

> Although they were all Christians, their doctrines differed in respect to their churches. For instance, the London Missionary Society (LMS) had its own principles which were different from the Jesuit Fathers' principles or doctrines. No wonder Snelson (1974) and Mwanakatwe (1974) show that these churches would fight for areas of domination. No other missionary society was to encroach in another missionary society's land. Thus each missionary society organized itself and therefore, organized the kind of education it felt was going to be effective in raising the number of converts.

On the one hand, by unifying orthography, harmonising all Vatsonga's dialectal variants and binding them together into one language, the 1929 Bible translation edition became the Vutsonga's Magna Charta. It did not only liberate spiritually, but also helped to create what Harries (1989) referred to as "linguistic borders" which identified Vatsonga in South Africa as an ethnic group. On the other hand, according to Noss (2004:23) "the translation of the Bible affirms the language and culture of the people. Through the Bible, the people enter a global historical community of 'People of the Book'. They are no longer an isolated community but form part of a fellowship of believers who have heard God speak in their own language as the Jews from many nations did on the day of Pentecost in Jerusalem." Noss's assertion is true of Vatsonga who are part of the world community since the 1929 edition moved them from orality to a society with literate language. A revision of the Tsonga Bible (copyright 1929) was undertaken during the period 1950-65 by a group which included ministers from Mozambique, led by the Revd Paul Leresche, but apart from the publication of the Gospels of Mark, Luke and John, this collaboration bore no fruit. In 1967, a new group, the Tsonga Bible Translation

Project consisting of the Revd Theo Schneider, co-ordinator, and the Revds Daniel Marivate and Elias Mashava and other translators, began working on a new dynamic translation of the New Testament.

7.2.4.2 Literacy

The first and foremost aim for introducing literacy amongst Vatsonga was to enable the converts to read the Scriptures and to make their own assessment of Christianity in general. Literate individuals who had previously relied on the interpretations and teachings of the Bible could read the Word of God on their own. Harries (1989:42) asserts that "Literacy allowed the mission to spread without incurring evangelization costs and appealed to converts as it allowed them some independent interpretation of the Christian faith." However, some of the Swiss missionaries' expectations were a bit far-fetched. Apart from their hope and trust that, "literacy would aid them to combat alcoholism and avarice as effectively as the devil and disbelief'" (Harries 2007:188), the Swiss missionaries also expected that "literacy would domesticate the savage mind by providing knowledge, the analytical skills of grammar, and the power of exegesis" (Harries 2007:188). As a product of both literacy and translation, the book enticed scores of people to the new religion. Harries (1989:42) maintains that "their Bible reader, the *buku,* was a powerful instrument of evangelization. People were impressed by reading as a means of communication, particularly when this was in an idiom with which they had some familiarity. Bible readings immediately resulted in conversions to Christianity." No theme would be allowed to appear on any indigenous literature unless it was about Christianity or moral issues (also see Maluleke 1995 and Harries 2007). Almost all pioneering Xitsonga literary authors produced texts which sought to proclaim and propagate Christian and moral virtue. This task was easy for the authors because they were mission tutored Christians. According to Ntuli and Swanepoel (1993:59) "the development of Tsonga literature has been characterised by an early preponderance of non-fiction and translations. However, this is not a unique phenomenon, as can be seen in the parallels that exist between the respective developments of Tsonga literature and Northern Sotho literature. Tsonga literature has followed almost the same path as that of Northern Sotho literature, in that its origins are to be found predominantly in biographies, autobiographies and translations." By grabbing Xitsonga from the clutches of orality to the freedom of literacy, the Swiss mission set Xitsonga on the long road of development as a modern language.

7.2.4.3   Oral Translation

Oral translation played a significant role in Xitsonga Bible translation as the forerunner of the actual translation. With the Basotho evangelist Eliakim Matlanyane as its chief advocate, oral translation chanted the way for the arrival of the new religion. Matlanyane's translation of the Lord's Prayer into Xitsonga introduced the locals to a totally new and different prayer from *ku phahla* ("traditional prayer"). The translation of the Lord's prayer also opened their eyes as to the fact that instead of invoking the powers of the forefathers, the new style of praying directly addressed "Our Father who art in Heaven…" With the help of domestic workers and Evangelist Eliakim, Paul Berhoud finally transformed the Lord's Prayer to its written form.

7.2.4.4   Inclusion of Indigenous Bible Translators

In dealing with the Xitsonga Bible translation, the Swiss mission's pioneering team had applied the same indigenous strategy which they used in their evangelical enterprise, and in the development of education and health sectors. They trained mother tongue speakers as Bible translators, language practitioners and researchers. Gideon Mpapele, Mandlati and Joseph Mhalamhla were, for example, the first native speakers trained by the Swiss missionaries in this regard. In this way, the Swiss missionaries avoided the exclusion of mother tongue speakers from the translation project. They were instrumental in identifying and gathering words and phrases from different dialects which are scattered throughout the 1929 version. As in other African societies, Vutsonga has a considerable number of mutually intelligible dialects. To transform all these dialects from their oral status to a literate language, the Swiss missionaries used harmonisation of dialects, an approach used by other Protestant missionaries elsewhere. They unified/harmonised mutually intelligible dialectal variants into Xitsonga. In this way, the unification of dialect variants reinforced orthographic uniformity. Their translation project did transcend boundaries. Referring to the early translators in general, Mojola (2002:202) says, "translators are usually the first theologians in any language or community. They have to grapple with all complex problems arising out of the need to express the ancient and eternal message of the Bible in their own language. They face the challenge of how to translate Bible concepts, ideas, practices, festivals, rituals, spirituals beings, cultural artefacts, metaphors, beliefs, etc. in terms that make sense in the local vernacular." Sterk (2004:181) adds, "Bible translation of quality can only be produced by mother-tongue speakers. One of the features of such a translation is that it respects the genius of the target

language because the only way that a reader can be given access to what the source text means is by expressing that meaning in the words, syntactic structures and idioms that are those of the target language." In a striking contrast with languages like German where one reads of High and Low German, Xitsonga is a non-hierarchical. It was easy for the translators because they translated the Bible into a common language spoken both by members of the royal families and by mere servants. The egalitarian nature of Xitsonga made it easy for the translators to proceed to the end of their journey.

7.2.4.5   Enriching the Spoken and Written Language

Popularly known as *Bibele ya Khale* ("the old Bible [translation]") by multitudes of the faithful within Vatsonga, the 1929 Bible version was essentially a revision of the 1907 version and is based on formal equivalence. As shown in Chapter 5, this version was mainly translated by the Swiss missionaries assisted by a column of African teachers/evangelists. The 1929 edition used the old orthography oriented to French which entered Xitsonga via the influence of Sesotho, and the Swiss missionaries who were French-speaking Swiss nationals. The influence of Sesotho is still seen in this version in the presence of diacritics such as š, ŝ, ṱ, ḓ, ṅ etc. Its writing style is similar to that of Sesotho language, as can be illustrated by the title: *Buku ya Tšikwembo tŝiṅwe na Tisimo ta Hlengeletano* ("The Book of (one) God and Hymns of the Congregation") *Buku* ("book") is a borrowing from English *book* and/or from Afrikaans *boek*. *Tšikwembo* ("God") starts with the consonant, c [ʧ] – a voiceless prepalatal affricative rather than the consonant, x [ʃ] – a voiceless palato-alveolar fricative. The word *tŝiṅwe* ("one") is formed by the combination of the consonant, c [ʧ] – a voiceless prepalatal affricative and the consonant, n [ṅ] – a voiceless alveolar nasal. *Tšikwembo* ("God"), *Tisimo* (hymns") and ta *Hlengeletano* ("congregation") All these three words are marked by "o" as the final vowel - an influence of Sesotho style of writing. The phrase *Tšikwembo tŝiṅwe* ("one God") has been strategically placed to emphasise that the Christian faith has one God as opposed to other religions. Nevertheless, it is still used side by side with the 1989 edition, mostly by the old generation who are familiar with the old orthography.

No doubt, words imported from the source texts into Xitsonga have contributed a great deal to the growth and development of Xitsonga. Word borrowing as examined in this study may specifically be defined as a process by which Xitsonga mother tongue speakers import and incorporate linguistic features from other languages their own language. In the Bible

translation, *manna* and *synagogue* may pass for cultural borrowing as they were introduced to Xitsonga from Hebrew and Greek, respectively. The word *kosher* is another typical example of cultural borrowing which has since been adopted into South African English. Many words from the source text were incorporated directly into the translation with minor changes to make them sound like Xitsonga. Among these are the terms Pharisee, Sadducee, temple, Sabbath, tabernacle, etc. Most of these words from the source text are indigenised to make them sound like Bantu words (ex. *Sinagoga*, *tempele*, *sabata*, etc.) through a derivation process, which creates new words from foreign words or existing words by means of prefixes and suffixes. For instance, <u>*Va*</u>apostola ("the apostles"). The prefix *va* has been added to the noun *apostol,* to turn it into a plural word, and the terminal vowel *a* has also be added to make the word attain a Xitsonga pronunciation. Once the derivation of word/s from other languages is completed, the word/s is naturalised by an adaptation process, classified in one of the noun classes before it becomes entrenched in the language. As a second example, take the word *sasek<u>isa</u>* ("beautify/prettify/decorate"). The suffix *isa* has been added to the root *sasek*, thus turning the noun *saseka* into a verb *sasekisa.* In Xitsonga, a noun can be changed into a verb, an adjective, adverb, etc. Derivation was therefore, one of the most powerful tools for Bible translators into Xitsonga.

Transliteration seeks to modify proper names in the Bible, thus adopting them as Xitsonga words by giving them relevant pronunciation. At a meeting of the Tsonga Bible Revision Committee held in the Swedish Church Hall. Johannesburg, 29 November to the 2nd December 1966, the transliteration of Bible names were approved. Names are also mentioned in a memorandum of the Tsonga Bible Translation Project, transliteration of Proper Names into Tsonga, Phase 11 (O.T), 1977 – 1987. In accordance with Xitsonga usage, all syllables are of the shape CV [Consonant-Vowel] and so the final syllables have been provided with a terminal vowel in the Xitsonga transliteration of proper names. Examples of the indigenised names include:

> *Mariya* rather than *Maria*
> *Nanasi* rather than *Manase*
> *Mugriki* rather than *mugreki*
> *Yayiro* rather than *Yayiru*

Like any other word formation, coined words have done their bit to enrich the language by creating new words. In traditional Xitsonga world, there was no such thing as referred to as *Xikomba-ndlela* (Jr.31.21) (literally "road-pointer") which refers to the "sign-post or way marker" as there were no specialised, long distance roads to warrant a sign post. Again, traditional Xitsonga shelter consisted of an entry and exit in one. There was no need to label the doors as *Vuhumo* ("exit") and *Vungheno* ("entry") in Ezek.43:11 until Bible translation alerted the community that some buildings have an entry and an exit. According to the minutes of the Tsonga Bible Revision (Johannesburg 18.9.63), the loanword *Filakatera* ("phylacteries") was replaced by "*swibomiso swa loko va khongela*" (Matt. 23:5). *Swibombiso* ("beautifiers") from the verb *bomba* ("to be nice/fashionable") has been coined as it is not a normal/traditional Xitsonga word.

Although these foreign words initially were an obstacle to understanding by any Mutsonga who wished to understand the Bible, over the years some of these words have been regularly used and absorbed into the Xitsonga language. As a result, the Xitsonga language was enriched and broadened and the cultural identity of its speakers was strengthened. A literal translation of the source text often results in cultural estrangement in the 1929 version. For instance, in Psalm 23:5 the symbolism represented by a table, oil and cup in this verse combine to form powerful imagery that implies a feast, blessing and happiness respectively. Xitsonga has its own genuine style of expressing a feast, blessing and happiness. This version enhanced the vocabulary inventory of Xitsonga by expanding the range of items that are described in the language. By replacing some indigenous words which referred to traditional religious practice and practitioners, colonial Christianity was promoted. The 1929 translation shows the influence of colonisation by the use of loanwords from colonial languages.

Although the 1989 version used Nida's dynamic equivalence approach which emphasised readability and comprehension, foreign words still remain in this version, especially the names of stones, trees and currency, or the word *demona* (demon). The name for Psalms could have used the indigenous word "Tinsimu." The Tsonga Bible Revision Report (1960-1961) points to the fact that "both versions (i.e. the 1929 and 1989) used the disjunctive way of writing which was introduced by first missionaries, who simply analysed sentences in Bantu languages as they would have done in their own home languages' English, French or German."

The first interaction between God and man is witnessed here in (Gen. 3:9-10) where the writing styles of the two versions is revealed.

Table 17. Examples of direct and indirect speech

1929 Xitsonga Bible	1989 Xitsonga Bible	KJV 1611
Kutani Yehova Šikwembu a vita wanuna a ku: U kwihi? Yena a ku: Ndzi twe rito ra wena entangeni, kutani ndo tshava hikuva a ndi ambalanga ntshumu, kutani ndo tumbela.	Hiloko Hosi Xikwembu xi vitana wanuna xi ku ka yena; "U kwihi xana?" Kutani yena a ku; "Ndzi ku twile loko u famba –famba entangeni, kutani ndzi ya tumbela, hikuva a ndzi chava, leswi a ndzi nga ambalanga nchumu."	And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where are you? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.

The 1929 version is characterised by the absence of the inverted commas ["/"] in its direct speeches, save only the colon which alerts the reader that a direct speech is about to start. On the other hand, the 1989 has clear cut boundaries between the indirect and direct speeches. The differences between the writing styles allude to the development improvement of writing styles on the part of the 1989 version. The difference between the two versions in their use of inverted commas shows the development of Xitsonga from the time it became a literate language to where it is today.

7.2.4.6   Unification of the Spelling System

Changing from the old orthography to the new orthography as shown below led to the standardization of Xitsonga. Bill and Masunga (1983:8) show how Xitsonga words were initially written in Xitsonga before the unification of spelling system. "Words were translated directly from Sesotho to Xigwamba, the local dialect of Tsonga, hence the obvious Sotho influence on the first written Tsonga works. For example, the Sotho b for Tsonga v; the Sotho o for Tsonga u; and the Sotho e for Tsonga i." During the ensuing years, the 2nd and 3rd person pronouns were changed from "*o*" to be phonetically pronounced as "*u*" ("mood") in English.

The apostrophe in writing the demonstrative adjective, and relative pronouns, which used to denote elision was dropped. For instance: *vanhu lava'kulu* ("great men") to *vanhu lava kulu*

(great men) *vanhu la'va teke ("*the people who came") to *vanhu lava va eke* (the people who came.") The unification of orthography played a crucial role in consolidating Xitsonga spelling system.

7.2.4.7 Numerals

Translators have had challenges in translating numerals in the 1929 version. Translators used borrowing as a strategy and tended to write numerals in words, whereas in 1989 they wrote numerals and used the metric system for measurements. This challenge also show that not enough spadework had been done to translate arithmetic or mathematics into Xitsonga. These subjects had been taught mainly in English. The teaching of these subjects in a foreign language often creates discomfort and abhorrence amongst leaners. This might also explain why there is a high rate of failure of maths learners at most African schools. The use of the metric system in the 1989 edition means that a semi-literate reader might go through a chapter and end up not sure how long is say, 5 metres or how heavy is 5 kilograms. Untranslated language of numerals, and the use of metric system increases confusion rather than comprehension.

7.2.4.8 Indigenisation

Indigenisation in this study refers to the process of making translation more native, that is, translating in a manner that suits Xitsonga culture. According to Venuti (1995), domestication is the strategy of making text closely conform to the culture of the language being translated to, and this may involve the loss of information from the source text. According to Makutoane & Naudé (2009:88) the notion of an *indigenous* text was advocated by Masoga (2004:143) who argues that "the Bible relates to the communities that read it, using their indigenous contexts to interpret this indigenous text". Masoga was emphasising the notion that the indigenous wisdom, knowledge, science and technology that the indigenous communities bring to the text (Bible) must also be acknowledged. Furthermore, Miller-Naudé & Naudé (2010) assert that one of the aims of indigenisation is to "provide a fuller, more explicit translation that spells out one of the more features of the cultural background of the proverb and/or its pragmatic function." Borrowed words were shed off from the 1989 version and replaced by native words. For instance, God is addressed as *N'wini wa matimba hinkwawo* ("The Almighty') *Hosi Xikwembu* ("Lord God"). Jesus Christ is referred to as *Murisi lonene* ("The Good Shepherd"), while Saints are called *Vahlawuriwa* ("The Chosen Ones"). Like all common translation

features in this study, indigenisation points to the growth and development of Xitsonga. Most importantly, they increase readability and comprehension of the target text.

In the 1929 Bible translation some of the words and phrases are transferred into the translation as they are, without being translated. Examples of words taken verbatim from the source text and used in the target text are *filosofia,* (Col. 2:8), *Mu-Barbari* (Col. 2:11), *Va-barbara*, (Acts. 28:40), *fever* (Mk. 1:31), *Vapatriarka* (Acts 7:11.) However, it is interesting to note that none of these word or phrases are found in 1989 Xitsonga Bible. They had either been translated or paraphrased. Rather than leaving these foreign concepts the translators of the 1989 edition opted for explicitation and indigenisation, thus absorbing these foreign concepts into the Xitsonga language. The fact that the 1929 version was in use for more than half a century, means that it had be surpassed by cultural and linguistic changes and developments. For instance there was a need to adopt a new orthography, and that Xitsonga had since been a standardised language.

7.2.4.9   Explicitation

Translators usually use this strategy to change some information of the source text, added; or deleted to make the text more or less explicit. For instance, had the translators not used explicitness as a translation strategy, it would not have been apparent that the ruler of Sheba in 1 Kgs. 10 is in fact a queen rather than a king. Explicitness not only added to the growth of the language, but also made the speakers of Xitsonga aware that in other countries, a woman can indeed be a ruler.

7.3   Growth in Cultural Knowledge

7.3.1   Servanthood

For all its nihilism and melancholic stance, the translation of Ecclesiastes into Xitsonga offers the Vatsonga a different way of perceiving life – that servanthood to one's Maker is most crucial.

7.3.2   Cementing of Oral Law

The appearance of the Ten Commandments in Xitsonga Bible translation did not only invigorate their oral knowledge of social justice, but also made them aware that there is a deity watching them whenever they commit a sin. This perception is supported by the fact that the

articulation is in imperative form: *U nga tshuki u dlaya* ("do not kill"). What Bible translation did was to serve a record of their oral laws which generally resemble the Ten Commandments. They knew them, but they were interpreted differently from place to place as they were not jotted down.

7.3.3 Enriching of Ethical Philosophy

Wise sayings such as *tihlo hi tihlo or tino hi tino* ("an eye for an or a tooth for a tooth") in Ex 21:24 and in Mt. 5:38-42 helped to beef up the language of the court in particular. Other examples include the following: *Tiya mbilu* (literally, "be strong of heart") which implies to ("have courage") in Josh. 1:6, 1 Chr. 28:10, 20 and 29:19 and *Swo biha swi huma eka lavo biha* ("evil deeds stems from an evil being") in 1 Sam. 24:14. For a man to be a respected elder or a sage, he needs to display a thorough knowledge of wise sayings – he should be a walking encyclopaedia of idiomatic language. Idiomatic expressions in the Xitsonga Bible motivated mother tongue speakers like Ntsanwisi (1965) to research and to write a Masters dissertation later published as a book (1968).

The Vatsonga have had the same experience with the Book of Proverbs as they had when they read the Ten Commandments for the first time. The Vatsonga preserved their didactic knowledge and traditional ethics by transferring it from the old generation to the next. Since the beginning of 20th century, several writers had laid the foundation in the study of Xitsonga and Hebraic proverbs and have tried their hand in compiling and translating both traditional and Hebraic proverbs into Xitsonga. *Vutlhari bya Vatsonga* ("The wisdom of the Tsonga people") which appeared in the book markets in the early 1930s became the first compilation of the Vatsonga proverbial lores. Compiled and edited first by HP Junod and AA Jacques (1936), the collection contains 1671 proverbs and wise sayings from the main branches of the Xitsonga language: Xitshwa, Xitsonga and Xironga.

7.3.4 Strengthening of Socio-Cultural Life

Bible translation has motivated the Vatsonga to believe that socio-cultural life in ancient Israel is not different from their own traditional life. Some even go so far as to say that their perception is similar to that ancient Hebrew thought. This belief is strengthened by the story of Ruth in the Bible. Nomadic life, famine, poverty, fields, harvest, marriage, remarriage, loyalty, perseverance are all too familiar to the traditional Vatsonga in their rural environment. For the Vatsonga, Ruth cuts across an ideal wife with the undying spirit of tenacity – against all odds

(see Schneider 1982:301-308). Despite minor linguistic and cultural ambiguities (such as when Naomi offered to seek a husband for Ruth) this book is seen a true reflection of Xitsonga traditional life. As a human interest story, it becomes more acceptable to the Vatsonga society by showing that other people in faraway lands experience life in the same way as they do.

7.3.4.1 Anointing

The pouring of oil on the head as found in the Bible in passages such as *U totile nhloko ya mina hi mafurha* ("you poured oil on my head") (Ps. 23:5) and *Ku chela mafurha enhlokweni* ("anointment") (1 Sam. 10:1), is not known in Vatsonga society. This is especially the case in the use of pouring of oil upon Saul's head and the kissing to symbolise the election as a king of Israel in 1 Sam. 10:1. According to the Xitsonga tradition, a king is neither anointed nor is he elected to the throne. *Vukosi byo tswaleriwa* ("one is born a king") just like Shakespearean people who are born great. The first born child of a king, particularly a boy automatically becomes an heir to the throne. For this reason, it because unnecessary for a king to be elected, let alone anointed, because the future king or a heir automatically comes from the royal house. However, the act of anointing contributes to Vatsonga cultural knowledge as they have since been introduced to the practice.

7.3.4.2 *Hosi* ("Lord")

In Vatsonga society a ruler is known as *hosi* ("lord, chief"). In the Bible, the worldly *hosi* ("*lord*") is differentiated from the divine *Hosi Xikwembu* ("Lord God") and *Hosi Yesu* ("Lord Jesus") only with capital letter /H/. In the 1929 edition, the honorific title *Yehova Xikwembu* ("Jehovah God") is now referred to as *Hosi Xikwembu* ("Lord God") in the 1989 edition.

The son of a worldly *hosi* ("lord") is referred to as *hosanna* ("prince") in Xitsonga. In the Greek New Testament, the crowd shouts *hosanna* when Jesus Christ triumphantly entered Jerusalem (Mt. 21:1-11; Mk. 11:1-11 and Lk. 19:28-38). This Greek transliteration of the Hebrew *hôshiʿâ-nā* ("please save"), is often directly represented in translation:

KJV (1611): *Hosanna*

Sesotho Bible (1881/1909): *Hosanna*

Tswana Bible 1909: *Hosana*

Xitsonga Bible (1929): *Hosanna hi leswaku wa nga ponisa* ("that is, please do save").

Xitsonga Bible (1989): *Hozana*

Die Bybel (1933*): Hosanna*

A Biblia Go basa (1995): *Hozana*

In the 1929 Xitsonga Bible, the translators added an explanation of the phrase ("that is, please do save") so that readers should not understand *hosanna* as the Xitsonga honorific term. The1989 Xitsonga Bible changes the spelling to *hozana* in an attempt to differentiate the word from the Xitsonga term *hosanna*. Nevertheless, the similarity of the Greek word to the Xitsonga word possesses the capacity to mislead an undiscerning reader.

7.3.4.3 Obliteration of Words Used in Traditional Practices

Hisopa (Heb. 9:19) is defined as a plant used for cleansing in biblical times (Lev. 14:4, 6, 49). Its Xitsonga functional equivalent is *Nxuva/Ndzedze* ("Peltophorum africanum Sond/African Wattle/Huilbos/Kajatanhout/Dopperkiaat") (De Winter et al. 1966:73). The bark and leaves of this tree are used in traditional cleansing ceremonies, for instance, at the end of mourning period. However, "the weeping tree" did not feature in the 1989 translation because the translation strategy was to obliterate words used in traditional religion and in traditional medical practice. Traditional healers' jargon like *tihlolo* ("divining bones"), *ku hlavuva* ("the act of divining") (Act 1:26), *timhamba* ("sacrifice"), *vuhlolotwana,* a functional equivalent word for urim and thummim (see Ex. 28:30, Num. 27:21, 1 Sam. 14:41 and Ezra 2.63), *musingasoro* ("a specialist"), *nyamisoro* ("headgear"), and *ku phahla* are used with caution as they are believed to be ungodly. *Musingasoro* and *nyamisoro* (Ex. 22:18) are archaic whose etymology indicates that they are essentially part of sorcerers' and soothsayers' jargon.

7.3.5 Linguistic and Literary Enhancement

7.3.5.1 Metonymy

One of the areas in which Xitsonga abundantly benefited from Bible translation is in metonymy. This a typical figure of speech which refers to the use of concrete terms that alludes to some wide idea that it characterises. Characteristics of people dubbed Judas Iscariot, a Goliath, a Samson, or a Good Samaritan can be easily identified by the Xitsonga mother tongue speakers. The following are instances of metonymy.

Kanana ("Canaan") has metaphorically been described as *tiko ra ntswamba ni vulombe* ("the land flowing with milk and honey") (Exod. 33:3). This phrase evokes an imaginary land – *Ka Byandlanni huku yo fa hi mafurha* ("an extremely fertile land capable of producing food in

abundance that poultry die of plumpness"). This imaginary land creates a picture of a Utopia just like Canaan.

Xihambano ("The Cross") (Mt. 10:38; Lk. 14:27; Jn. 19:17). Traditionally the Vatsonga affirm their statements by spitting saliva on the palm of their hand and show it to the audience as a sign of sincerity. In his history of the Vatsonga (1498-1650) Junod (1977:53) writes, *Loko vahlambanya, va hefemulelana mahlo, wu nga hlambanyo wa vona leswi va nga tiveki Xikwembu* ("when they swear, they breathe into one's eyes, which is their verification as they don't know God"). Now that Christianity has penetrated a tap root in Vutsonga some have developed the habit of declaring, *Hi Yesu eXihambaneni, a ndzi hembi* ("I swear by Jesus on the Cross, I am not lying").

Yesu: Murisi lo'nene ("Jesus: the Good shepherd") (Jn. 10) is known in Vatsonga society in that the shepherd was once a profession in the traditional Xitsonga world.

Tomasi, makholwa hi ku vona ("one who believes only by seeing"): This is said of Thomas of Didymus – one of the 12 Apostles who did not believe that Jesus rose again until Jesus proved it to him. Any person who suffers from doubt or disbelief is automatically dubbed a Thomas in Xitsonga.

King Herod and the Pharaohs: These are a symbol of tyranny in the mind of the Vatsonga. Having gone through oppression and persecution in their history, the Vatsonga associate any despotic leadership with the biblical Pharaohs and Herod.

Sodom and Gomorrah: These are synonyms of infidelity. Any community which whose members choose to forsake socio-cultural values of their society will earn one or both the names of these cities.

7.3.5.2   Literary Inspiration

As the world's most famous literary work, the Bible translation inspired renowned authors around the world, and in Vutsonga in particular. For this reason, the Xitsonga Bible translations or Bible translation literature has also contributed highly to the growth of the language. In less than a decade after the publication the 1929 version of the Xitsonga Bible; one of the Vatsonga pioneer priests and Bible translators, Marivate published a novel, *Sasavona* (1939) which has since become a classic. In later years, Sasavona Publishers and Booksellers which publishes Xitsonga literature was established in honour of the first writer of this first novel. Calvin

Maphophe, an African missionary with the Swiss Mission establishment who had been a priest for a period spanning 50 years as already mentioned, and was the first Mutsonga to own a plough, penned an autobiography titled *Ta Vutomi bya Mina* ("My Life") (1945). Other texts include *Aggrey wa Afrika* ("Aggrey of Africa") (1956) by Maboko (1956), and *Muhlabai: Hosi ya va ka Nkuna* which was written by Regent P. M. Shilubana and H.E. Ntsanwisi in 1958, and a biography of *Mufundhisi John Mboweni* ("Reverend John Mboweni") by Junod in 1960. Ecclesiastes in particular, motivated Mtombeni (1966a, b) to be a worshipper of reason and he wrote his novels along rational lines. Masebenza (1965), who excelled in English and Latin, became a leading light in Xitsonga poetics. Ntsanwisi (1920-1992) was an author, linguist, university professor, first black moderator of the Swiss Mission Church in South Africa (now the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in South Africa), and finally a Chief Minister of the former Gazankulu homeland. Behind them follows a host of luminaries such as C.T.D. Marivate, D.I Mathumba, N.C.P. Golele to mention but few.

Words, phrases and sentences taken or adapted from Xitsonga Bible translation in the study appear prominently in various novels. For instance:

Thuketana, F.A. 1968. *Xisomisana* (Novel)

- *A dlayiwa emahandzeni ya tindlela* ("She was killed on the cross ways") an adaptation of crucifixion of Jesus Christ (Mt. 27:32)

- *Vanhu va tumbuluxiwile hi Xikwembu* ("human beings have been created by God") Gen 1:27)

- *Tana hi famba n'wananga, ku xaniseka ka wena ku herile* ("Let us go my child, your suffering has ended") (Luke 7:50)

Terrisse, B. (ed) 1954. *Xihlovo Xa Elim. Mati Ya Vutomi. Xitsundzuxo xa Jubilee ya 75 wa malembe* ("Oasis of Elim. Waters of Life. A Memoir of 75 years Jubilee"). The title derives from Exod. 15:27.

Baloyi 1965. *Rhuma Mina* ("Send me") is a title for church history book (SMSA) and derives from Ezra 6:8.

Cuendet 1950. *Rivoningo Emunyameni* ("Light in darkness") derives from Ps 112:4.

Mtombeni, B.K.M. 1967. *Mibya ya Nyeka-Nyeka.* Pretoria: Beter Books.

- *N'wananga,u nga yingiseli swa ngati ni nyama* ("my son, do not obey flesh and blood") (Lev 19:26; Gen 9:4)

- *Ndyangu wa hina a wu rivoningo exikarhi ka xinyami, rivoningo leri vonakak ku suka ekule… Hi rivoningo ra vanhu v aka hina exinyameni: Hi fanele hi va rhangela eka hinkwaswo leswo lulama…* ("our household has become a light amidst the night, a light which can be seen from far. We are the lights in the darkness of our people; we must lead them in all things that are good, constructive, good habits, humaneness and progress in general"). The wording is similar to Mt. 5:14.

Mtombeni was also fascinated by proverbial wisdom and biblical philosophy as can be seen from the titles of his works and phrases in his writings.

- *Vuhava bya swa hava* ("Nothing of nothingness") from Eccl. 1:2.

Maphophe, Calvin (1945) *Ta Vutomi bya Mina* ("The Story of My Life") is similar to *Ta Vutomi bya Yesu* ("The Life of Jesus") Mt 1.

- *Ndzi fana ni nhongani leyi weleke mbiteni ya ntswamba* ("I was like a fly in the bowl of milk") are words adapted from "fly in the ointment" (Eccl. 10:1)

7.3.5.3 Role of the Books of Job, Psalms and Lamentations

In their happiness and sorrows, in their achievements and failures, in their triumph and defeat, the Vatsonga express their sentiments through singing and meditation. Bible translations provided a refuge to accommodate their feelings in the form of the books of Job, Psalms and Lamentations. The Book of Job gives the Vatsonga a picture of a meditating man in sorrow, and Psalms provided any song one can think of. Apart from being a tranquiliser for their emotions, these books are a source of wisdom as well. Together with Ecclesiastes and the Book of Proverbs, Job is part of poetry referred to as wisdom poems.

Euphemism as a figure of speech not only makes literature both readable and acceptable to most of the Vatsonga, but also helps the young ones to manage when they happen to come face to face with obscene language.

7.3.5.4   Translation of World Literature into Xitsonga

As for the translated texts, Xitsonga boast of more translated texts from English than there is Xitsonga translated literature in English. There is little if any Xitsonga literature that has been translated into English. Texts that have been presented bilingually (i.e. in Xitsonga and English) also serve to explain the exotic language that is Xitsonga. Jacquemond (1992:139-158) offers four main hypotheses regarding translational inequalities:

(i) A dominated culture will invariably translate far more of a hegemonic culture than the latter will of the former;

(ii) when a hegemonic culture does translate works produced by the dominated culture, those works will be perceived and presented as difficult, mysterious, inscrutable, esoteric, and as requiring a small cadre of intellectuals to interpret them, while a dominated culture will translate a hegemonic culture's works with a view to easy accessibility for the masses;

 (iii) a hegemonic culture will only translate those works by authors in a dominated culture that fit into the former's preconceived notions of the latter, and

 (iv) authors in a dominated culture striving for a larger audience will tend to write for translation into a hegemonic language, and this will require some degree of compliance with stereotypes.

Historically, Xitsonga early literature emerged in the late 1930s, and gained momentum in the 1940s up to the end of 1950 when several writers published their literary works. However, it cannot be referred to as fiction or creative writing in the true sense of the word in that is consists of translations, autobiographies and biographies. Nevertheless, the work heralded the dawn of Xitsonga's authentic tradition of the 1960's onwards. What follows below are some pioneering works in Xitsonga to substantiate the fact that from its inception, Xitsonga literature has many texts translated from English. David Livingstone's (1941) biography was translated by Marivate (1941) who belongs to the early group of influential Christians. Booker T. Washington's *Up from Slavery* was translated by Baloyi as *Ku hluvuka ku huma evuhlongeni* in 1953. He also translated Julius Ceasar into Xitsonga. Felix Shilote and Charlotte Nkondo have translated Macbeth (1982).

7.3.5.5   Xitsonga Publications

Apart from the first grammar books and dictionaries authored by the Swiss missionaries, the two Bible translations inspired dozens of Xitsonga creative writers. Bill and Masunga (1983) indicate in *Mbita ya Vituvi. Tibuku ta Xitsonga* 1883-1983. *Tsonga Bibliography* over 550 titles as proof of the vitality and viability of this language, and this bibliography forms the basis of the information in this section. The first 55 years of writing in Xitsonga were dominated by white, European and predominantly Swiss writers and translators. From 1938 onwards, however, the Xitsonga literary scene has witnessed the emergence of numbers of Xitsonga writers who demonstrate their growing self-awareness, developing skill in the handling of literary genres, and their search for self-identity through literature.

There was a growing demand for grammar books for Xitsonga schools, especially after the end of World War II and again after the passing of the Bantu Education Act in 1956 when control was in effect removed from the missions and churches and syllabuses became standardised. Valuable textbooks include N. Nkatini's *Madyondzisele ya Xitsonga* (1982) for mother-tongue teachers and C.P.N. Nkondo's *Xiletelo xa Xitsonga* (1982) for university students. A grammar book for foreign language learners is Mariette Ouwehand's *Everyday Tsonga* (1965). School textbooks are now available for health care and hygiene and arithmetic. In 1967 the dictionary of Rene Cuenod, which is based in large part on material collected by his father-in-law, Henri Berthoud, made its appearance. Xitsonga linguists include Professor H. W. E. Ntsanwisi's *Tsonga Idioms* (1968), Mrs C.P.N. Nkondo's *The Compound Noun in Tsonga* (1973), Dr C.T.D. Marivate's *Tsonga Folktales* (1974) and *The Ideophone in Tsonga* (1983). Non-Xitsonga linguists who have published in this field include T.M.H. Endemann, with *Die Intonasie van Tsonga* (1952), Professor E.J.M. Baumbach, *Introduction to the Speech Sounds and Speech Sound Changes of Tsonga* (1974), reprinted as *Tsonga Phonetics and Sound Changes* (1981), *Analytical Tsonga Grammar* (1987), Louw (1983) on tone in Xitsonga, Herbert (1992) on the interface between phonology and syntax in Xitsonga, Du Plessis, Nxumalo & Visser (1995) on *Tsonga Syntax*, and, more recently Herbert (2002) on language shift in Xitsonga and Zerbian (2007) on information structuring in Xitsonga,

It is, however, in the field of creative writing that the last 50 years has seen the greatest flowering of Xitsonga talent.

In addition to the novels mentioned in section 7.3.5.2, six novels were published in the decade 1960-1970, and fourteen were published between 1970-1983. For example, a novel like *Mukhacani* (1974) deals with the events affecting the life of Mukhacani, a migrant labourer on a railway-building project. The first collection of Tsonga poetry *N'wampfundla N'wasisani* (1940) was a re-writing by Henri-Philippe Junod of a selection of Xitsonga folktales, which are traditionally told around the fire in the evening. He set them into Western verse-form, adding a concluding verse to each tale which seeks to point out the moral. The first poetry book written was Etienne Ndhambi's *Swiphato swa Xitsonga* (1949). Ndhambi's attempt to write in a syllabic verse-form was a natural response to the teaching of the works of Wordsworth, Shelley and other masters of English literature in the mission-run schools. This example was followed, though without the strict syllabic control of Ndhambi, by Patrick Ntsan'wisi in his collection *Vuluva bya Switlhokovetselo* (1957) and by E. Rasengane in *Mitlhokovetselo ya Xitsonga* (1963). Western poetry continued to influence Xitsonga poets during the 1960s and 1970s, but at the same time there was the appearance of works by Benson J. Masebenza *Chochela Mandleni* (1965); Eric Nkondo *Emahosi* (1969); Winston Nkondo *Mbita ya Vulombe* (1969) and George Maphalakasi *Xihungasi* (1973). In all these works there is a search for new techniques. Some of these modern poets made a deeper exploration of the traditional eulogistic praise-poetry style, but at the same time they moved towards the expression of their own individuality both in style and content. A notable addition to the corpus of Xitsonga poetry was the publication of the poetry of the late Gabriel Makavi, whose *Muambi wa Vubumabumeri* appeared in 1980 shortly before his death. Makavi was a minister of the Igreja Presbiteriana de Mozambique, the sister church of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, both independent churches which grew out of the work of the Swiss Mission. His experiences during the turbulent period leading to the handing over of the former Portuguese colony to the indigenous peoples of Mozambique are reflected in poetry of great depth and rich linguistic expression. Since 1960 a total of twenty-three collections of poetry have been published.

In 1965 three plays appeared, *Jim Xilovekelo*, by Cornelius Marivate, *Gija, Wanuna wa Matimba* by Henry Muzwayine and Bill Mageza; and *Ririmi Madlayisane* by Hector Mangwane. No less than twenty-six plays appeared between 1972 and 1982. Historical plays in Xitsonga include Samuel Baloyi's *Xaka* (1960), a long play on the life of the Zulu leader Shaka, with a cast of some 100 players and *Dingana* by Thompson M. Rikhotso, another play based on the life of a Zulu leader, appeared in 1982.

Ten collections of short stories have been published before 1983, mostly for school children and much of the material is folkloric in nature. For example, George Mbhombi's *Tindyelo* and Bennet Mtombeni's *Ndzhaka ya Vusiwana*, both published in 1973.

The earliest Xitsonga newspaper was a small publication entitled *Nanga ya va-Thonga* ("The Tsonga Trumpet"), produced at the turn of the century in Pretoria by the Revd Numa Jaques. In 1911 a proposal was brought before the Synod of the Swiss Churches meeting in Lourenço Marques that a newspaper for the churches should be established. Revd Paul Rosset was given the task of translating the Zulu copy into Xitsonga and in December 1914, Vol. 1, No. 1 appeared with the equivalent Xitsonga title, *Mupfuni wa Vamanana*. The newspaper for the churches of the Swiss Mission was eventually launched in 1921 with the title *Nyeletiya Miso* ("The Morning Star"). It was printed initially with some articles in Xitsonga and some in Ronga, and the first editors were the Revd Paul Fatton and Samuel Bovet. The paper continued as a polyglot monthly, and articles in English, Portuguese and Tswa were also occasionally included. It ceased publication in 1969, having at that time a circulation figure of 14000. Daniel Marivate, at the time a young schoolteacher, decided in 1931 to write his own newspaper and the first copies (February-November 1931) of *The Valdezia Bulletin* were simple hand-written stencils duplicated on a renograph machine and selling for one penny. From the December 1931 issue, the stencils were typewritten. In 1936 the newspaper changed its name to *The Light: Ku Vonakala ka VaTonga* (Vol. 7, [sic, i.e. 6] No. 62).

In common with other Portuguese colonies, Mozambique made teaching of all subjects through the medium of Portuguese compulsory. Printing houses were state-run, those who needed to publish in the vernaculars had to resort to parallel texts in Xitsonga and Portuguese. These works were obviously not very durable, being bound in cardboard, and all deal with the basic skills, reading, family and health care, or with religious subjects. These are all publications of the Swiss missionaries and represent their efforts to provide material in the vernacular while all formal education was being carried out in Portuguese. They undoubtedly helped to preserve the written Xitsonga language in this Portuguese colony. Speakers of the vernacular were deprived of the possibility of creative writing in their own language, and most of the educated elite turned to writing in Portuguese, witness the protest literature of Luis Bernardo Honwana, a mother-tongue Xitsonga speaker. In the early years of the twentieth century, the publications for schools of the Swiss Mission, initially from Lausanne, and subsequently from Johannesburg, were sent to Mozambique for use there, as well as Bibles, hymn-books,

catechisms for use in the churches, and other titles to supply the small demand from the adult reading public. From 1929, however, the use of the Xipele and Vahlayi readers was stopped in the schools of the Igreja Presbiteriana de Mozambique and other Protestant-run schools. The Catholic-run schools had never made use of these books. Some Bible translations, for example *Marika Marcos* ("The Gospel of Mark"), which was published by the Swiss Bible Society in Zurich, were prepared especially for distribution in Mozambique, with parallel texts in Portuguese and Xitsonga on facing pages. The Catholic priests made very little attempt to fill in the gap themselves, and in spite of the Portuguese presence in Mozambique dating from 1650, no more than a handful of works written by them in Xitsonga has been traced. In post-independence Mozambique, the stance of the new regime has yet to be clarified as regards vernacular publications. Suffice it to say that Sasavona still sends large orders of literature to Maputo.

7.4   Conclusions

Several issues raised in this chapter as part of analysis and evaluations, point to the fact that the Swiss missionaries managed to succeed in their operation by means of their organisational skills, strategizing expertise, formulation of plans and policies. The Swiss missionaries were a high culture – they were learned people trained in theology, education and public health – so knew what they were doing. On the whole, Swiss mission was a success in Vutsonga. In this the Swiss missionaries were fortunate in that there were very few challenges to obstruct their work. By arriving in South Africa in the decades of gold and diamond discovery in the Rand and the Free State, the Swiss missionaries found that this mining revolution pulled thousands of the local people to Vutsonga where they became part of immigrant labourers in the gold and diamond fields. The Swiss missionaries counteracted by opening evangelising cells in the mines' compounds. The tropical climate pronounced itself as the most hostile to the missionaries, in that it wiped out members of the whole families. Another challenge was having to live with the baggage of being dubbed being "a government at prayer" (a phrase coined by Sanneh, see Sanneh 1989), that is, a collaborator of colonial government. However, the Swiss missionaries were resilient, they used whatever strategy they could lay hands on in order to succeed.

Today there is no Swiss missionary in Vutsonga. They left behind a highly organised, autonomous church and two editions of Bible translations which are a treasure trove of the

Xitsonga language. Part of the reason why a Mutsonga can raise his head amongst his African brothers and sisters is as the result of these Swiss men and women.

CHAPTER 8
CONCLUSIONS AND AREAS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

8.1   Introduction

In this chapter the conclusions of the thesis are presented and areas for future research are delineated. The second section of this chapter (section 8.2) summarises the main aspects of the research as contained in the discourses of the preceding chapters. The roles of the two Bible translations as agents of change in re-creating and re-shaping the Xitsonga language, culture and society are summarised. The third section (section 8.3) presents the findings of the study as well as a contextualisation of the research. The final sections describe the limitations and implications of the research (section 8.4) and make recommendations for further study (section 8.5)**.**

8.2   Main Aspects of the Research

8.2.1   Research Question, Approach and Methodology

In section 1.2 the research question, which forms the nucleus of the investigation, is unravelled, namely, the way(s) in which the Xitsonga Bible translations of 1929 and 1989 re-created, re-arranged and re-shaped Vatsonga cultural identity. As the first text to be translated into Xitsonga – and then re-translated – the translated Bible has had a profound influence on Vatsonga society. This ground-breaking research by a Xitsonga first-language speaker explores the role of the Xitsonga Bible translations in laying a foundation for cultural identity (see sections 1.1 and 1.4).

Based upon an analysis of the research question and previous research on the history of translation studies and Bible translation, it is determined that the best approach for this research is qualitative, historical and descriptive (sections 1.3, 2.2-2.5). In this regard the Narrative Frame theory of Baker (2006) is utilised to describe the socio-cultural frame, the historical frame and the organisational frame (the source text, translators and translation process) in which the Bible translations were done (section 2.5.3).

The core of the study is the frame theoretical analysis of the 1929 Xitsonga Bible translation and the 1989 Xitsonga Bible translation in chapters 5 and 6, respectively. Of particular importance to the study are the notions of frames and framing – chapter 3 provides the socio-

cultural frame of the Xitsonga Bible translations, while chapter 4 provides the historical frame. Chapters 5 and 6 include additional frames relating specifically to the two main Xitsonga Bible translations, namely the organisational frame and the translation frame. The role of power in the Xitsonga Bible translation is explored in chapters 5 and 6 with a detailed examination of the use of loan words as opposed to indigenous terms and expressions. The Descriptive Translation Studies analysis of the two Xitsonga Bible translations is further enhanced by extensive archival research to provide additional perspectives on the translational processes of the two translations and their social and historical contexts.

8.2.2   Linking Translation Studies and Bible Translation Practice

Both the 1929 and 1989 versions of the Xitsonga Bible translations are analysed and explained with respect to the ways in which particular cultural, political and religious identities were formed (see inter alia chapter 3). Section 2.2 surveys pre-linguistic approaches to translation; it is shown that these approaches are relevant to understanding the translation practice employed in the first Xitsonga Bible translation. Section 2.3 introduces linguistic approaches to translation, especially the ground-breaking work of Nida. It is shown that this approach is important to understand the translation practice of the second Xitsonga Bible translation, which was directly influenced and shaped by Nida's dynamic equivalence approach to translation. Section 2.4 describes functionalist approaches to translation and the notion of *skopos* (from the Greek word meaning "purpose" or "aim"), which shows how cultural factors such as intentionality and ideology are incorporated into the translation during the translation process.

8.2.3   Linking Language and Cultural Identity

Chapter 3 discusses the role of language in the formation of cultural identity (section 3.2) as well as indications of Vatsonga cultural identity before the advent of the missionaries as evidenced by means of Vatsonga clans/lineage (section 3.3.1), names for the Vatsonga (section 3.3.2), Vatsonga oral literature (section 3.3.3), Vatsonga traditional religion (section 3.3.4) and other minor identity markers (section 3.3.5). The Swiss missionaries' activities re-shaped, re-created and in some ways strengthened Vatsonga identity (chapter 4).

8.2.4   Translation, Colonialisation, Missionaries and Cultural Identity

Translation links culture to power through the manipulation of ideology and identity in the re-writing of the text (see section 2.5.2). Translation among the Vatsonga occurred before the watershed event of the arrival of the Swiss missionaries in the late 1880s as seen, for example,

in the oral translations which facilitated communication during Vatsonga's first contact with Portuguese seafarers (section 4.2). But translation became widespread in the interactions of the Swiss missionaries with the Vatsonga as the missionaries introduced "civilisation" and sought to replace various aspects of the old traditional Vatsonga cultural identity which were deemed in conflict with Christianity. The missionaries influenced Vatsonga cultural identity by their mission stations, Bible translation and evangelisation. In particular, the Swiss missionaries reshaped Xitsonga language identity through their efforts to learn the language (in spite of their initial expectation that they could use Sesotho for their evangelising work), the harmonisation of dialectal variants, orthographic development and literacy (section 4.3). In certain respects, the status of Xitsonga in colonial South Africa differed from that of Xitsonga in colonial Mozambique. The difference in status continues to the present day in the recognition of Xitsonga as an official language of South Africa, but not of Mozambique.

8.2.5 Foreignisation and Cultural Identity Creation

Using narrative framework analysis, chapter 5 gives an analysis of the 1929 translation by looking at aspects such as the organisation of the translation, the translation process and the translation teams. Other features include the strategies, linguistic frames, prestige and social pressures of the translation. Foreign words from the source text were extensively used where no equivalent words existed in the vernacular. Translation strategies like borrowing, derivations of words and new coinages were used in the translation process. For clarification and more emphasis, pioneering translators used explicitisation. This chapter also revealed the presence of cultural challenges and ambiguities in the translation which were formidable challenges for the translators.

Of particular importance is the finding of the influence of Sesotho and the early Sesotho Bible translation on the 1929 Xitsonga translation. The influence is far-reaching, involving orthographic influence, extensive use of Sesotho loan words as well as the use of the existing Sesotho translation as a model for the Xitsonga translation. The source of the Sesotho influence is to be found not only in the Basotho evangelists who accompanied the Swiss missionaries to Valdezia and assisted with the Bible translation, but also in the Swiss missionaries themselves who had learned Sesotho in their orientation to African life and culture in Basotholand before their arrival in Valdezia. What is not clear, however, is the extent to which Sesotho was used and understood in Vutsonga in pre-colonial times. In this regard, the recent work on the notion of "*ubuntu* translanguaging" as a means to conceptualise the complex multilingual, pre-

colonial African multilinguistic encounters may provide new avenues for future research (see Makalele 2016).

8.2.6 Domestication and Cultural Identity Creation

Chapter 6 contains an analysis and description of the 1989 translation. This translation is characterised by orthographic changes, the addition of metatranslation material and indigenised transliteration of proper names. Indigenisation was used to reduce a number of loan words, yet pockets of loan words and borrowings, especially from English and Afrikaans, still exist, largely because they had already been incorporated into the Xitsonga language and were not viewed as loans.

8.2.7 Cultural Impact of the Bible Translations

It was through Bible translation that a multi-faceted and diverse ethnic group such as the Vatsonga was able to attain its modern selfhood or identity. Chapter 7 shows how the two Bible translations effected the identity of the Vatsonga through language development and standardisation. The chapter also describes the differing contributions of the two translations to the culture, society and ultimately, identity of the Vatsonga.

8.3 Findings

8.3.1 Justification of the Hypothesis

From the findings, it emerged that ambiguities and cultural estrangement are more prevalent in the 1929 version of Xitsonga Bible translations primarily because of the formal equivalent approach used in the translation and by the many loan terms from dominant languages, namely English, Afrikaans and Sesotho (section 5.5.1). The hypothesis is thus justified that the first Xitsonga Bible Translation (1929) played a role in empowering and legitimising colonialism and paving the way for submissive colonial faith within the Vatsonga society. Most importantly, the 1929 version bound together the diverse sub-units of the Vatsonga people around a single translation of the Bible. In this sense, the Bible assisted the creation of identity through the unification of its readers around a single translation. The hypothesis is further justified that in contrast to the 1929 Xitsonga Bible translation, the role of the 1989 Xitsonga Bible translation is to strengthen the cultural identity of Xitsonga itself by utilising not only indigenous cultural terms of Xitsonga (section 6.5.4), but also to indigenise the Bible translation by utilising and coining natural Xitsonga equivalents (section 6.5.5). Today the

Vatsonga from many different polities are viewed as a single ethnic group as they are speaking the same language, that is, the language of the Bible in Xitsonga. Bible translation in Xitsonga contributed enormously to the national government's eventual recognition of Xitsonga as one of the national languages of South Africa.

8.3.2 Creation of New Identity

The Swiss missionaries created a new identity by introducing a new religion and a new way of looking at life. This resulted in a new social order in the life of the people. Emerging from the findings, the Swiss missionaries might have been "saints, exemplars of piety in the midst of persistent savagery" (see Andrews 2009), but their engagement with the public, their methods of implementation, their perception and attitudes towards Africa and African people tarnished their missionary work. In transforming Vatsonga's socio-cultural and religious life, the Swiss missionaries employed religion, education and health as a three-pronged approach. In using the three-pronged approach, the Swiss missionaries were confronted by multi-faceted challenges such as lack of literature in the vernacular (i.e. in Xitsonga), reference texts and professional translators. They also had to grapple with socio-political challenges. For instance, the Swiss missionaries chose to create a new culture rather than cultivate and improve the Xitsonga culture and its world view partly because they were convinced that the Xitsonga customs and traditions were inferior to those of their European counterpart from which the missionaries originated, but chiefly because they were convinced that Xitsonga customs and tradition were contaminated with "pagan" practices. Swiss missionaries sought to replace the old traditional system with civilisation, but instead they succeeded in creating a polarised society of converts and the so-called "heathen."

8.3.3 Standardisation of Language

Emerging from the findings in this study, it is clear that the language known today as Xitsonga might have been modified or its various dialects harmonised, but it is not an invention. It was spoken even before the Swiss missionaries arrived in Vutsonga. The Swiss missionaries developed the language, enhancing its linguistic aspects to a scientifically acceptable standard. In other words, they improved a language that was already in existence. Their unification and standardisation of the various dialects of Xitsonga had two contradictory results. On the one hand, harmonisation of dialectal variants in Xitsonga bequeathed the language with a wealth of vocabulary as dialectal words were incorporated into the Bible translation and entered the

standardised language. On the other hand, the harmonisation of dialectal variants meant that some dialects and dialectal forms were diminished in prestige and usage.

Like Leresche in the Report of the Revision of the Tsonga Bible (Nov. 1960 – Dec. 1961), the study has found that "the first and the second editions of the Bible have had already a deep influence on its standardization." This profound influence forms part of general re-arrangement of culture as a whole.

In translating the Bible into Xitsonga, the Swiss missionaries unified orthography, harmonised dialectal variants, borrowed words from the source text and incorporated them directly into the translation with minor changes to make them sound like Xitsonga.

Word borrowing, word coinage, derivations in the 1929 version translations partly attest to the fact that Xitsonga was scientifically underdeveloped compared to the source languages. Borrowing also points to the novelty and eccentricity of Christian faith amongst Vatsonga. Xitsonga needed words to define or label concepts, creatures and objects which did not exist in Vutsonga. By expanding the vocabulary of the language through loanwords, the language was strengthened. The final result was the acceptance of Xitsonga as a national language of South Africa in 1994.

8.3.4   Bible Translation as Shaping Tool for Cultural Identity

This research aided comprehension of the tangled and intriguing phenomenon of Bible translation as an agent of change which is attested and shown by the following instances below. The study has established that the 1929 version of the Xitsonga Bible translations was translated entirely by the Swiss missionaries assisted by members of the SMSA. All the same, it was established from the findings that this version:

- enhanced the vocabulary inventory of Xitsonga by expanding the range of items which can be described in the language;
- by replacing some indigenous words which referred to traditional religious practice and practitioners, colonial Christianity was promoted;
- extended the influence of colonialisation by the use of loan words from colonial languages.

Although the Swiss missionaries used the Hebrew and the Greek texts in their translation of the Bible into Xitsonga, their conscience and resolutions were guided by their home language

biblical texts with which they were more comfortable. It has also been established by the study that the Swiss missionaries were all French speaking natives of Switzerland who received their primary and secondary education in French, yet it is surprising to note that there is no trace of French and only one borrowed French word (itself a calque of the Hebrew source text) in the Xitsonga Bible translations. Untutored as many of them were, the Xitsonga translators brought their oral knowledge, acumen and expertise to the Bible translation process, but these talents were not acknowledged, save only the mention of their respective names (see also Ekem 2011 for a similar situation in Ghana). It was also found that the translation team of the 1989 version consisted of some members from other denominations, but the SMSA membership was dominant.

8.3.5   Shaping of Religious Activity

It has emerged from the study that the essence of Christianity in Vutsonga is anchored on Xitsonga Bible translations. It has been established that the Xitsonga Bible translations are the most read literary text in Vutsonga compared to all Xitsonga literary genres combined.

8.3.6   Censoring Literary Creativity

It has become evident in the study that the Swiss missionaries controlled the Xitsonga printed word to the extent that they did not allow Xitsonga literature to go beyond Christian themes. Xitsonga written works were censored before they could be published. In this way, Xitsonga writers and their works became part of the evangelising drive. However, this censorial activity by the missionaries in literacy and printing also meant that aspects of traditional Xitsonga culture were suppressed.

8.4   Limitations to the Study

Publications dealing with the Xitsonga Bible translations are a rarity. Articles and pamphlets with important information preserved in the archives are mainly in French. In attempting to interview Xitsonga mother language speakers who participated in the translation of the 1989 Xitsonga Bible translation, the researcher was repeatedly told that they "know nothing virtually about the whole business" of translation, and that they "were only working there." They refer all interviewers to the Bible Society in Cape Town. There is no Mutsonga who can speak with authority on Bible research save only for the elderly 1989 Xitsonga Bible translation coordinator who is thousands of kilometres away in Switzerland. This does not bode well for future research on Bible translation in particular.

8.5   Future Research

The research conducted for this thesis has opened up a multitude of future avenues for research. Among them are the following:

* Further research is needed to find out more about the Tonga, and to determine whether there is indeed a socio-cultural link amongst the Tsonga, the Tonga in Mozambique, in Malawi and on the Zambezi Highlands.

* It is recommended that the Swiss mission documents and reports in various archives be translated into Xitsonga and English to facilitate readership and increase comprehension of researchers.

* The study recommends that Vatsonga should preserve the Swiss mission's legacy as part of its own history.

* Orthographic harmonisation of all Xitsonga dialects is a must if Xitsonga wants to continue growing and developing as a language.

* For a person to decipher messages from the Bible s/he needs to be literate. In other words, the two Xitsonga Bible translations only cater for the educated. The faithful who cannot read must rely solely on oral communication handed down by preachers and electronic media. However, what Makutoane (2011:234) bemoans for the Sesotho translations is also valid for the Xitsonga translations. The fact is that both the 1929 and 1989 versions of the Xitsonga Bible translations, which had been translated and published during the same translation periods as their Sesotho counterparts, do not "solve the problem of the oral communities to understand the Word of God in a proper and fair manner, because it concentrated on ensuring readability" (Makutoane 2011:234). The Xitsonga Bible translations are exclusive, in that their expediency as the medium of divine communication can only be exercised by the learned. The catering for members who are utilising oral culture needs new reflection in Bible translation, performance and media studies.

* Van der Merwe and Van der Merwe (2006:57) state that the segregation index for the Xitsonga language is relatively low, which emphasises an integrated spread of the speakers of Xitsonga. This index value indicates actually that Xitsonga exhibits the most integrated spatial pattern of all the Black African language groups (Van der Merwe & Van der Merwe 2006:57; see also Palmberg 1999). What does this mean for Xitsonga identity?

* Postcolonial scholarship expresses concern that mission history gives only one side of Vatsonga history, and that it is reluctant to acknowledge contributions made by Africans who were committed in missionary work (Maluleke 2003:156-176). The time has now arrived for African researchers to delve deep in the bowels of the research field so that they can provide a full and balance his/her-story. A particular reading led the missionaries of the Swiss Romande Mission to Africa and their concern to promote the Bible led to the translation of the Bible into Xitsonga. The availability of the Bible in Xitsonga led to new ways of understanding church and society from the perspective of Vatsonga and this in turn led to the demise of the colonial mission society and its conception of mission (see also Jeannerat, Morier-Genoud & Péclard 2004, 2011, Du Toit 2002, Nuttall & Michael 2000 and Bekker et al 2001). The Xitsonga Bibles now belong to the Vatsonga and they alone can (and must) decide how they should be read, interpreted and appropriated, neglected or rejected. Future research must be based on this premise.

8.6   Concluding Remarks

Throughout the research, the study strove to show how the Xitsonga Bible translations in particular served to bind together a large and diverse group into unity, despite the fact there are political boundaries which hamper communication across countries. Bible translation has indeed exerted a profound influence on the socio-cultural life of the Vatsonga people. Hayes (1971) posits that "because of its religious importance, cultural influence, historical value, and existential significance, a study of the Bible can be extremely meaningful and helpful" to the development and growth of society as a whole. However, the study would also like to emphasise the fact that Vatsonga's identity was not enhanced by translation alone. Secondary factors were also instrumental in re-shaping Vatsonga's identity. One of these factors was the Swiss mission's personality and ethos, that is, its behaviour as an agent of change. Masumbe (2002:98) draws attention that "the Swiss clerics' civilising mission in this country was based on the principles of paternalism and trusteeship over the indigenous populace."

Scholarship on translation has moved well beyond the technicalities of converting one language into another and beyond conventional translation theory (Kelly & Zetzsche 2012). One assumption of this thesis is that language (the *we*-creating sense of belonging) is a defining feature of national identity by way of Bible translation and is therefore a site of power (see McClintock 1995:352-390; Quayson 2000:76-102). Consciously or unconsciously, language appropriates and excludes, supported by a dialectic of otherness (see Castells 1997:5-67). This

brings us to the ethics of translation: How much of the "otherness" of the "foreign" should the translator highlight, mute or erase in order to make texts easier for the target audience to assimilate?

Bermann (2005:5-7) argues that Western contemporary translation theory makes strong claims for translation's necessity in the sense that translation is essential to the continued life of original texts. As translation reinterprets the original for different audiences, it provides for its continued flourishing and, in the process, for the future of national and transnational cultures. If translation is necessary in order to emancipate and preserve cultural pasts and to build linguistic bridges for present understandings and future thought, the response must be ethical with respect to each language's contexts, intertexts, and intrinsic alterity (see Zimmerman 2013). This dual responsibility may well describe an ethics of translation (Bermann 2005:8). It is hoped that this thesis will stimulate further research on Xitsonga in the fields of translation studies, linguistics, poetics and even media studies, both as a means to understand the past and to build contexts of understanding in the present and future.

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