

# Finding Proverbs in the Venda Dictionary: Tshivenda - English

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## Abstract

Since Tshivenda was reduced to writing by the Berlin Missionaries in 1872, a dictionary of proverbs has yet to be produced. Only now has the Tshivenda National Lexicography Unit begun working on such a dictionary. The only dictionary, although not specifically of proverbs, that has included these in its definition of headwords is the Venda Dictionary: Tshivenda – English. The proverbs provided in this dictionary have been included as part of its illustrative examples. Only when headwords happen to be key words in proverbs have the latter been provided. Illustrative examples occur at the end of the definition of a headword in many dictionaries. It is often difficult for dictionary users to find specific or relevant proverbs because they do not recognise the order of their arrangement. This is partly because of the absence of information on how to find proverbs in the user's style guide. The proverbs in this particular dictionary are listed under their key words. A dictionary user must therefore identify the key word in the proverb and look for this word in the dictionary. Information regarding how to find the proverbs in this dictionary could be valuable to dictionary users. The purpose of this paper is to provide important directions to dictionary users to assist them in finding proverbs, and to discuss the importance of finding proverbs in dictionaries such as the Venda Dictionary: Tshivenda – English.

## 1. Introduction

Tshivenda, one of the minority languages in South Africa, has produced only a few dictionaries since the spoken language was reduced to writing by the Berlin Missionaries in 1872. All these dictionaries are bilingual, except for one, *Improved Trilingual Dictionary: Venda – Afrikaans – English*. Up to the present time, no monolingual dictionary or dictionary of proverbs has been produced in the language, probably as a result of African languages not receiving the same funding as that English and Afrikaans had from the former government. However, there are grammar books such as *Thahulela Luvenda* by T.J Makhado and M.E.R Mathivha, and *Ngoma ya vhatei* by N. A. Milubi which include a list of proverbs and their corresponding meanings in Tshivenda. These books are only accessible to speakers of Tshivenda; non-native speakers learning the language will find it difficult to understand the meanings. Despite there being no dictionary of proverbs in this language, one dictionary, *Venda Dictionary: Tshivenda – English*, written by N J van Warmelo, does have a record of proverbs as part of the definition of some of the headwords. *Venda Dictionary: Tshivenda – English* is a bilingual dictionary, with Tshivenda as the source language and English as the target language. The definition of the headword in some instances includes a proverb which is used as an illustrative example. The proverbs are provided in Tshivenda and their literal translations and meanings are rendered in English. Users, especially those who have little knowledge of how to find a proverb in a general dictionary such as *Venda Dictionary: Tshivenda – English*, may experience some difficulty when searching for a specific proverb because the lexicographer does not use an easily recognised order when arranging these proverbs. The target users of this dictionary are both young Vhenda and non-native speaking learners of Tshivenda. Many children among the Vhenda, especially those who live in urban areas, struggle to interpret proverbs. A Tshivenda dictionary of proverbs is crucial in this regard. Proverbs are used in daily conversations and in literary works. Without a source of reference it is difficult for learners to interpret proverbs when they read literary works in the

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language. In the absence of a dictionary of Tshivenda proverbs, Van Warmelo's *Venda Dictionary: Tshivenda – English* goes some way towards solving the problem. The same applies to non-native speakers of Tshivenda learning the language; they find it difficult to interpret Tshivenda proverbs without a source of reference. For these learners to communicate effectively in the community of language speakers, they need sources to refer to in order to infer the meanings of proverbs. This dictionary is useful because the literal translation of the proverb and its meaning are provided in English, the language most of these learners will understand.

Proverbs in the *Venda Dictionary: Tshivenda – English* have been spread throughout the entire dictionary. A dictionary user, looking for a specific proverb in this dictionary, would have trouble knowing where to start. This is partly because of the absence of information on how to find proverbs in the user's style guide. Had such information been included, it would have made looking for proverbs a simple task. The purpose of this paper is to provide some useful hints which could help dictionary users to find proverbs without difficulty, and to discuss the importance of finding proverbs in the *Venda Dictionary: Tshivenda – English*.

The discussion below will commence with a sketch of the theoretical framework of the study, followed by the method of ordering proverbs in the *Venda Dictionary: Tshivenda – English*. The study will also reflect on the importance of finding proverbs in this dictionary.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

A dictionary is a source that lists words in alphabetical order and provides their meanings. Many scholars provide similar definitions of the concept "dictionary". The general argument is that a dictionary provides the meanings of words. Underhill (1980:32) argues: "Giving the meanings of words is often thought to be the main purpose of a dictionary. But, as we have seen, the dictionary also contains other areas of information useful to the student." Landau (1984:5) defines the concept "dictionary" as "... a book that lists words in alphabetical order and describes their meanings. Modern dictionaries often include information about spelling, syllabication, pronunciation, synonyms, and grammar, and sometimes illustrations as well." The above definitions are summed up by Hartmann (1984:1) when he writes that a dictionary is a reference book containing words of a language or language variety, usually alphabetically arranged, with information on the forms, pronunciation, functions, meanings and idiomatic uses. Hartmann's emphasis is on the arrangement of words in the reference book. Jackson (2002:22) concurs with Hartmann (1984), saying that dictionaries are reference books which people consult to find information about words. A good dictionary will include alphabetically arranged words, with information on the forms, pronunciation, syllabication, grammar, functions, meanings and examples. Dictionaries that include illustrative examples are popular among users because these illustrations contribute to their understanding by demonstrating the use of a word in its context. In the *Venda Dictionary: Tshivenda – English*, proverbs have been included as part of such illustrative examples.

Proverbs are a combination of words to create a particular meaning. This meaning can seldom be guessed from one's knowledge of the individual words making up the proverb (Underhill 1980:39). According to Dalfovo (1997:42), "Proverbs may be described as sayings originating from experience, being expressed in a pithy, fixed and metaphorical language and conveying a message". The meaning developed in a proverb differs from the literal meaning of the words used. Learners of Tshivenda, and non-native speakers learning Tshivenda in particular, may find it difficult to interpret proverbs if these are not explained to them. Although proverbs

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lack in transparency, they express reality and thus reflect reality in communities in which they are spoken and are important in documenting archaic words, i.e. words that are no longer in regular use but which may occur occasionally in particular contexts. Zgusta (1971:153) notes that the important thing in this connection is that apart from other formal characteristics, we frequently find that proverbs have as their constituent parts obsolete words and expressions which are not used elsewhere. Proverbs also make a comment on the culture of the language community. A dictionary of proverbs is thus very important in understanding a language.

Proverbs are an important aspect of communication in African societies. They are used in everyday conversations. Regarding this importance of proverbs, Mkunhu (1997:107) writes:

Proverbs can be used in formal or informal settings. Informal situations may be ordinary day-to-day conversations to advise, rebuke and instruct. Proverbs can also be used in formal gatherings or special occasions. Such gatherings can be a ceremony to mark the end of a period of mourning, a meeting called to smooth over a disagreement/conflict, or the payment of dowry and initiation rites.

In this regard, Saayman (1997: ix) says: “Certainly, any social scientist who has done research among African peoples will testify to the enormous importance of African proverbs in African culture and society”. According to this author, this is one aspect which the processes of urbanisation, industrialisation and westernisation have not been able to sweep away. It is therefore important to have a dictionary of proverbs in the African languages or at least to include proverbs in general dictionaries because they are used in everyday conversations in African societies. In this regard, Lusimba (2002:1) says: “They will therefore have to form part of the composition of dictionaries. In fact, for lexicography as discipline of linguistic science, the treatment of proverbs and idioms is of cardinal importance because they are the bearers of the culture and customs of a people.” The *Venda Dictionary: Tshivenda – English* is very valuable in this regard because it helps learners to communicate effectively in Tshivenda and to experience the culture of the Vhavana in this regard.

### 3. The nature of ordering proverbs in the *Venda Dictionary: Tshivenda – English*

As indicated above, the proverbs included in the *Venda Dictionary: Tshivenda – English* have been spread throughout the dictionary. At first glance one might think that there was no order to the arrangement of the proverbs included in this dictionary, but in fact there is a logical arrangement; the problem is, though, that no information was included in the style guide for users regarding how to find these proverbs. Without this information in the style guide, some dictionary users might overlook the proverbs, concluding that Tshivenda does not have a dictionary which includes proverbs. However, what users can identify at a glance when browsing through the dictionary is *Prov:* which has been used as an abbreviation of the word *proverb*, and this indicates the presence of an explanation of a proverb. In fact, Van Warmelo uses not only proverbs as illustrative examples of the definition of the headword; he also makes use of idioms and riddles for the same purpose. Idioms can be identified through the use of the abbreviation *Phr:* whereas the riddles are identified by *Thai:*.

The lexicographer has recorded as many proverbs as he could in this dictionary. The number of proverbs used as illustrative examples exceeds that of idioms and riddles. As indicated above, proverbs in *Venda Dictionary: Tshivenda – English* have been included as part of the

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definition of the headword. In all cases, the proverbs provided serve as illustrative examples to show the use of the headword in context. Illustrative examples are helpful in clarifying meaning discriminating among senses, understanding usage or connotation, and for supplying added information (Hartmann 1984:1). The proverb is identified by the use of *Prov:* followed by the proverb in Tshivenda, and then the literal English translation and the meaning thereof as shown hereunder:

**-anetshela** (applic. of –anea) narrate, recount, relate

Prov. *U anetshelwa ndi u dzimiwa* “To be told is to be stinted”. A report always leaves something out; better go and find out yourself (Van Warmelo 1989:3).

The headword in this regard is *-anetshela*, which is followed by its English equivalents. The proverb that follows serves as an illustrative example. A dictionary user better understands the meaning of the headword *-anetshela* when it is used in context in the proverb.

Lexicographers can order idioms and proverbs in different ways in their dictionaries. Humble (2001:105) states: “In traditional dictionaries, idioms can be classified either under their first word; under the word which is considered most important; or according to the semantic field. Not all of these orders can be used at the same time. The traditional dictionaries often have the right information but they have limited ways of making it accessible.” Regular users of dictionaries are aware of this classification, but many learners are not familiar with it and they need to be informed in the style guide. Proverbs in the *Venda Dictionary: Tshivenda – English* can be accessed by identifying a key word in the proverb which, according to Humble (2001), is considered most important, and by looking for it as headword in the dictionary. The ordering of headwords in this regard is according to the letters of the alphabet. Underhill (1980:39) makes this comment about finding an idiomatic expression in a dictionary:

To do this you must first decide which word in the expression is the *key word*. The key word is usually the main word in the expression, and is the headword in the dictionary under which the idiomatic expression will be found. If you do not find the idiomatic expression the first time, then try another key word.

The above explanation also applies to finding a proverb in a dictionary. One may end up trying more than one key word in order to find the exact proverb for which one is looking, but in the end, one will be in the position to find the proverb. When a dictionary user tries to search for a proverb, for example *Musadzi wa muluki u hwala nga tshiteto*, he or she will first identify the key words in the proverb, which are *musadzi*, *muluki*, *-hwala*, and *tshiteto*. The dictionary user will first try to find the proverb through the headword *musadzi*. In the definition of the headword *musadzi* no proverb has been provided as an illustrative example. The dictionary user will have to try the second key word, which is *muluki*. In the definition of this headword, the proverb mentioned above has been used as an illustrative example. There is no need to continue searching for the proverb through the remaining key words because the dictionary user has found it. The proverb in this regard is introduced as follows:

**muluki** 1 (cf. –luka) one who plaits, basket-maker.

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Prov: *Musadzi wa muluki u hwala nga tshiteto* “The basket-maker’s wife has to carry her things in a worn-out winnow”. The tailor’s wife goes in rags (Van Warmelo 1989:225).

In *Venda Dictionary: Tshivenda – English*, both the verb stems and nouns are used as key words. Hereunder follow some examples:

**-tahula** weed (with the hoe)

Prov: *Dza musanda dzi tahula tshene* “Royal cattle (don’t damage crops, they merely) pull up weeds”. Children & others from the chief’s place can do no wrong (Van Warmelo 1989:349).

**tsevhi** 9 (cf. –sevha) one who warns another of impending danger, who gives a tip or hint

Prov: *A hu na muthu a faho a si na tsevhi* “Nobody dies without having been warned by someone”. One always gets a hint of impending trouble. The difficulty lies in acting on it (Van Warmelo 1989:387).

The word *-tahula* is a verb stem, whereas *tsevhi* is a noun. The two words are considered to be key words in the two proverbs.

A proverb can appear under two separate key words, a noun and a verb stem; under two separate nouns; and more than one proverb may occur under one key word in *Venda Dictionary: Tshivenda – English*.

### 3.1. A proverb appears under two separate key words (noun and verb stem)

In order for a dictionary user to more easily find the proverbs, the lexicographer uses both the verb stem and the noun as headwords to identify them in the *Venda Dictionary: Tshivenda – English*. This means that either verb stems or the nouns in the proverb can be identified and used as key words. If a dictionary user fails to find a proverb under the verb stem identified as the key word, he or she can look for it under the noun identified as the key word. Van Warmelo (1989) has used this arrangement in his dictionary to make sure that dictionary users end up finding the proverb. The following proverb can be located through the use of both the verb stem and the noun as headwords: *Hu ambuwa vhuñanga; vhukololo a vhu ambuwi*.

**-ambuwa** ford, wade through

Prov: *Hu ambuwa vhuñanga; vhukololo a vhu ambuwi* “The medicine-man who crosses a river [into foreign territory] takes his craft with him, but royal rank cannot be taken abroad.” Away from home high birth does not count (Van Warmelo 1989:2)

**vhukololo** 14 noble birth, rank or circumstance of being a mukololo

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Prov: *Hu ambuwa vhuñanga; vhukololo a vhu ambuwi* “Professional status crosses rivers but royal descent does not,” i.e. a doctor is still a doctor in a strange country but a prince who crosses the frontier becomes a nobody (Van Warmelo 1989:463)

The two words, the verb stem *-ambuwa* and the noun *vhukololo* are both found in the proverb *Hu ambuwa vhuñanga; vhukololo a vhu ambuwi*. A dictionary user could consider *ambuwa* as the keyword in the proverb and locate it by searching for it as headword; at the same time, if he or she considers *vhukololo* to be the key word, the same proverb could be located by searching for the noun *vhukololo* as the headword. Identifying these two words as key words in the proverb can help dictionary users to find the proverb.

### 3.2. A proverb appears under two separate nouns

In certain instances, the same proverb can appear under entries for two separate nouns. Identifying the two nouns in the proverb as key words will help dictionary users to find the proverb. The proverb *Mutsinda ndi khwine, shaka ndi bulayo* is one example which illustrates this.

**bulayo** 5 (cf. *-vhulaha, -vhulaya*) massacre, murder; a great killing, heavy mortality, as in epidemic of stock or people

Prov: *Mutsinda ndi khwine, shaka ndi bulayo* “A non-relative is better; a relative is murder”. Relations cause more trouble than other people (Van Warmelo 1989:16)

**mutisinda** 1 non-relative, person not belonging to one’s patrilineal kinship group, i.e. anyone who, not being descended from a common, known patrilineal ancestor, may not take part in the family ancestor-cult.

Prov: *Mutsinda ndi khwine, shaka ndi bulayo* “A stranger is better than a relative; a kinsman may be the death of one” (Van Warmelo 1989:250)

Both *bulayo* and *mutisinda* are nouns found in one proverb and could be identified as key words to help find the proverb in the dictionary. In this instance, Van Warmelo uses both nouns to search for the same proverb.

### 3.3. More than one proverb appears under one headword

Van Warmelo not only provides one proverb under one headword; at times he lists a number of proverbs under one headword as illustrative examples. This is always done if the headword can be used in different contexts. In some instances he lists up to four proverbs as illustrative examples for one headword. The following is an example of three proverbs listed as illustrative examples under one headword, *-fhalala*:

**-fhalala** (intr.) 1 spill, overflow, disperse. 2 (= *-phalala*) rush out to rescue (of a lot of people). 3 die away from home

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Prov: *Mukange a fa, vhana vha Mukange vha a fhalala* “When Mr Guinea Fowl dies, his chicks scatter”, i.e. when a great man dies, his children and dependents disperse and the household is broken up

Prov: *Thakha ndi mulambo, a i lengi u fhalala* “Wealth (property) is like a river (in flood), it goes down quickly”

Prov: *Zwivhuya a zwi dāli, zwa dāla zwi a fhalala* “Good things are not common, and when they do appear they soon vanish again”

The key word in the proverbs provided above is the verb stem *-fhalala*, which in this case is the headword. This verb stem has different meanings depending on the context. As a result a number of proverbs are provided as illustrative examples, depending on the sense in which the word is used. So, dictionary users must check all the proverbs listed under the headword in order to find the sense for which they are looking.

Proverbs listed in this dictionary are very helpful to dictionary users, especially learners and non-native speakers learning Tshivenda. Instead of just providing the meanings of the proverbs, the dictionary also provides their literal translation which helps in the learning of meanings of other words in the proverb. Under the next sub-heading the discussion will focus on the importance of finding a proverb in the *Venda Dictionary: Tshivenda – English*.

#### 4. The importance of finding a proverb in the *Venda Dictionary: Tshivenda – English*

Dictionary users learn a great deal from the information provided in proverbs in the *Venda Dictionary: Tshivenda - English*. Besides enriching their understanding of the word they also get to know other aspects of the headword through the inclusion of the proverb as an illustrative example. Through proverbs, dictionary users get to know the existence of archaic words in the language, and the accompanying meanings/equivalents of other key words in the proverb. Furthermore, proverbs inform dictionary users about the culture of the society in which they are found. Van Warmelo’s use of proverbs as illustrative examples helps to enrich the Tshivenda vocabulary of dictionary users as well as their knowledge of the culture of the Vh Venda.

##### 4.1. *Finding proverbs enriches the vocabulary of dictionary users*

The definition of a headword in a bilingual dictionary entails the provision of the equivalent word in the target language. In his definition of the headwords in the *Venda Dictionary: Tshivenda – English*, Van Warmelo provides the English equivalents which help a non-native speaker of Tshivenda to understand the meaning of the headword. As indicated above, the lexicographer also provides a proverb to serve as an illustrative example. The meaning of the headword becomes clearer when the word is used in context. The proverb is made up of many words; some of them cannot be found individually as headwords in the dictionary. After providing the proverb as an illustrative example, the lexicographer provides the literal meaning of the proverb. In the literal translation of the proverb English equivalents of the words in the proverb are provided. Dictionary users get to know the meaning of other words of the proverb without searching for

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them in the dictionary; thereby increasing their Tshivenḁa vocabulary. This is illustrated by the definition of the headword *bulayo* below:

**bulayo** 5 (cf. –vhulaha, vhulaya) massacre, murder, a great killing, heavy mortality, as in epidemic of stock or people

Prov: *Mutsinda ndi khwine, shaka ndi bulayo* “A non-relative is better; a relative is murder”. Relations cause more trouble than other people (Van Warmelo 1989:16).

The headword which needs some definition is *bulayo*. The lexicographer has defined it, and has provided a proverb as an illustrative example. In the proverb there are other key words which a dictionary user may like to search for their equivalents. Words such as *mutisinda*, *khwine* and *shaka*, together with *bulayo*, are key words in the proverb. By providing the literal meaning of the proverb *Mutsinda ndi khwine, shaka ndi bulayo*, a dictionary user can identify the equivalents of *mutisinda*, *khwine* and *shaka* by association, which are *non-relative*, *better* and *relative* respectively. The dictionary user’s vocabulary is enriched without going to the trouble of searching for the equivalents of these other words in the dictionary.

#### 4.2. Finding proverbs introduces dictionary users to archaic traditions

Proverbs have been used since time immemorial in the life of Africans. They have been and remain a most powerful and effective instrument for the transmission of culture. Finnegan (1970) states that the use of proverbs is a social mode of communication which has a dominant role in most African societies. With the development of languages and the modernisation of life in general, some words become archaic because they cease to be used regularly. Mafela (1996) defines archaic words as words that have become outdated. Few people in the society use them for conversation purposes, besides the aged. However, their use in proverbs does not change. As a result, young learners and non-native speakers of Tshivenḁa need to know the meaning of archaic words because they are frequent in proverbs which are used on a daily basis. Children growing up in urban areas have little grasp of the meaning of proverbs because of the presence of archaic words. Proverbs with archaic words are further used in creative works such as prose and drama. The only place where young learners of Tshivenḁa and non-native speakers of Tshivenḁa can find the meanings of these proverbs and archaic words is *Venda Dictionary: Tshivenḁa English*. By making use of proverbs as illustrative examples in his dictionary, Van Warmelo has made it simple for such people to acquire the meanings of archaic words. In the example below, dictionary users discover the existence of an archaic word of which they may not have been aware.

**ḁumbu** 5 1 storm, gale. 2 Hunting Wasp (*Hemipepsisvindex* Smith), from its buzzing

Prov: *ḁuvha ḁa maḁumbu dzi lala na mavhoḁa adzo* “When there are storms the cows are allowed to have their calves with them for the night”. Circumstances alter cases. Necessity knows no law (Van Warmelo 1989:23).



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*Dumbu* is the headword which is followed by the English equivalents. Dictionary users discover the meaning of the headword through the provision of these equivalents. However, when the headword *dumbu* is used in context, by using a proverb as an illustrative example, the dictionary user understands the meaning of other key words, including *mavhoḁa*. *Mavhoḁa* is an archaic word and its use in the language community is fading. From the literal translation of the proverb one realises that *mavhoḁa* refers to calves. In daily conversation in present day Tshivenda, calves are referred to as *namana*. The provision of the literal translation of the proverb thus assists in illuminating the meanings of the other words, such as *mavhoḁa*. When the proverb *Duvha ḁa maḁumbu dzi lala na mavhoḁa adzo* is used in daily conversation, dictionary users are able to follow the conversation because they know the meaning of the word *mavhoḁa*.

#### 4.3. Finding proverbs introduces dictionary users to the Tshivenda culture

Users of the *Venda Dictionary: Tshivenda – English* gain more than just a meaning from the definition of the headword, especially when these headwords are included in proverbs as illustrative examples. Certain proverbs inform dictionary users about the culture of the Vhavana, and how the Vhavana organise their life. The definition of the headword *-hula* below serves as an example:

**-hula** grow; attain maturity (puberty), grow old; (in perf.) be big, of things. thoma u - - menstruate for the first time.

Prov: *Muḁinda ha huli* “A messenger never grows old” He is still sent on errands when old (Van Warmelo 1989:86).

The headword *-hula* has more than one meaning although all of the senses refer to *grow*. However, the literal meaning of the proverb provided as an illustrative example refers to growing old. Thus the meaning of *Muḁinda ha huli* is *A messenger is still sent on errands when old*. This proverb specifically refers to the messenger in a royal village. According to the Tshivenda culture, a chief’s messenger should serve him until his death. As long as the chief is alive, the messenger, regardless of his ageing condition, will be sent on errands for his chief; no younger messenger will be appointed to replace him.

The proverb used as an illustrative example of the definition of the headword *munwe* also sheds some light on cultural practices:

**munwe** 3 finger. Individual names: 5 munwana, tshinwanwane; 4 mukulo-watsho, makhulu-watsho; 3 mulala-hari; 2 musumba-vhaloi; 1 (thumb) gunwe

Prov: *Munwe muthihi a u ḁusi mathuthu* “One finger cannot take boiled mealies from the pot,” i.e. one should maintain good relations with others, since alone one is powerless.

In the definition of *munwe*, Van Warmelo has provided its English equivalent, which is *finger*. In addition to this equivalent, he mentions the different types of fingers, from the little finger to the

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thumb. All five fingers on the hand are identified by Tshivenda names. In addition to this explanation, a proverb, *Munwe muthihi a u xusi mathuthu* has been used as an illustrative example. The meaning of this proverb is *One should maintain good relations with others, since alone one is powerless*. Through this proverb dictionary users learn that the Vhavana believe in communal work; people should help each other. In order to achieve this, one should always have good relations with others. Individualism is a foreign concept to the Vhavana.

## 5. Conclusion

Not all bilingual dictionaries include proverbs as part of the definition of headwords. The *Venda Dictionary: Tshivenda – English* is one of those which included proverbs as illustrative examples. Finding proverbs in this dictionary may seem frustrating to dictionary users because of the absence of information on finding them in its style guide. However, having realised how the proverbs are ordered according to the list of headwords and after finding these proverbs, a dictionary user learns a great deal from the information entailed in the proverbs provided; the user gains not only the meaning of the proverb, but also increases his or her Tshivenda vocabulary through the literal translations of the proverbs provided. The user thus increases his or her vocabulary by acquiring the equivalents of other words and archaic words in the proverb in addition to the meaning of the headword. The use of proverbs to demonstrate the use of headwords further equips dictionary users with knowledge about the Tshivenda culture. Proverbs are important in African societies because they are bearers of culture and custom.

At present, no other dictionary besides the *Venda Dictionary: Tshivenda – English* exists which users, especially non-native speakers learning Tshivenda, could consult to find the meaning of proverbs. However, the Tshivenda National Lexicography Unit is currently working on a dictionary of Tshivenda proverbs which will be published in the near future.

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